STRAIGHT KITS F/OR QUEER BODIES?
An Inter-textual Study of the Spatialization and Normalization of a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) soccer league sport space

by

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Abstract

Sport is an inherently hegemonic hyper masculinity-building project. Therefore, tensions exist when non-hegemonic groups reclaim sport. This thesis questions how normativity is constructed and resisted in non-normative sporting spaces. Drawing from semi-structured interviews, participant observations, self-reflection qualitative methods and post-structural, spatial and post-colonial theory, I problematize how sportsmanship (sportspersonship) is “cultivated” in a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) soccer league. Specifically, I interrogate how queer sporting bodies negotiate (homo/hetero)normativity by either contesting or confirming neoliberal values of ‘sportsmanship.’ Five interlocking themes that emerged from my data suggest that ‘a queer musculinity’ and ‘a normative queer nationhood’ is being (re)produced by and through queer sporting bodies and sports spaces. I argue that we need to be vigilant of queer sporting spaces that claim to be or are assumed to have greater inclusivity because these spaces may actually facilitate the (re)production of dominant discourses and norms.
Acknowledgments

_Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself, I am large, I contain multitudes._

_Walt Whitman_

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The truth is rarely pure and never simple

Oscar Wilde
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Chapter 1
Introduction: Hard & Strong

*The only real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.*

*Marcel Proust*

This thesis documents the experiences of queer bodies in queer spaces. Specifically, it examines queer sportspersons’ bodies and what happens to bodies and through bodies within a sport context that is specifically organized for queer bodies by a queer sports organization. Explicitly, the queer space is a soccer league that I have participated in since its inception. I believe my own subject position within the league is a central aspect to this work because it gave me ‘insider’ access to many aspects of the league, which I could interrogate within the framework of my own experiences. I conducted semi-structured interviews with current and past members of the league. Additionally, an inter-textual analysis of league materials along with participant observation and memoir were conducted.

The core of this queer project is to make the familiar strange (to not take what space and bodies are or perceived to be or are (re)producing for granted but to critically question space and bodies and the normalized) and to start questioning the familiar at a local level, which is linked to global movements. This project takes as its point of investigation a unique grassroots level sport space: A multi-gender\(^1\) LGBTQ and allies soccer league. My reason for engaging in this project was because I had personal experiences with queer sporting organizations. I am particularly interested in concepts of sportsmanship (a gendered term) and muscularity and if normative bodies were reinforced or challenged in the league. These were of interest because of my personal experiences and observations in the league and in other queer spaces. I wondered: Are constructs of muscularity and ‘sportsman’ articulated and are they related to the process of building strong bodies locally and build strong nations globally? I also believed that muscularities (e.g. Christian, Jewish) are related to whiteness (Presner, 2007), colonialism,

\(^1\) The league describes itself as co-ed but I believe the term co-ed reinforces the gender binary and thus will use the more inclusive term, multi-gender, where it is possible. As far as I am aware this term and detail to semantics describes the experiences of people in the league more fully.
gender, class, race, ability, sexuality, health and space and that the concept of sportspersonship would act as a fulcrum for problematizing all of these social structures and/or institutions in which interlocking forms of oppression occur. Moreover, my four main theoretical lenses; 1) post-structuralism, power and sexuality; 2) spatiality; 3) post colonialism; and 4) healthism should be able to assist me in my analysis of these oppressions, systems of power that are produced through muscularities. The central question of my study was:

What kind(s) of sportsperson(s) is/are being cultivated through the Metropolitan Soccer League’s (MSL) spaces? This central question also addresses the following three theoretically linked research sub questions:

1) How is sexuality spatialized in MSL?

2) What subjectivities and/or positionalities do players foreground or find that others foreground for them? And which need to be hidden?

3) What kinds of subjects and spaces are produced within the MSL?

In order to address my central question of what kind of sportsperson is being cultivated through this league, I begin with why I want to do this research now. First a review of literature led me to realize the gaps in research and how my study might extend seminal queer sport research. Sport, historically has been known to be hegemonic space (Kidd, 1996; Pronger, 1990). Many groups have decried the inequities of sport, including but not limited to women, youth, and people of colour. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) communities, which include men, women, youth and people of colour are also a group to denounce the homophobic and

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2 This phrase is used to illuminate how different forms of oppression are closely connected and to interrogate one the others must also be addressed (Stoler, 1995)

3 Sportsman is the sexist, gendered term usually used when discussing issues of sportsmanship. I believe that the term sportspersonship and sportsperson is more inclusive.

4 Spatialized is meant here in terms of Lefebvre’s (1991) seminal work on the production of space and is discussed in the theoretical frameworks section of my literature review.

5 Subjectivity is defined in terms of the property of being a subject and thus the effect of relations of power.

6 Positionality is how a subject is situated in space (social, physical, lived, abstract).
marginalizing nature of mainstream sport. In response, like many other groups before them, LGBTQ groups have created a space of their own, teams of their own and leagues of their own. Often there is an assumption in mainstream and LGBTQ communities that these disenfranchised leagues are by their very nature more inclusive. Sport sociologists, generally, have criticized mainstream sport, denouncing its exclusionary and hegemonic hyper-masculine processes. However, they have not questioned how hegemony operates in these “othered” sport spaces. Sport spaces for LGBTQ communities, by their sheer existence, make claims and are assumed to be more inclusive. This often unchallenged assertion is where my project begins to problematize inclusive assumptions. Why do groups that have been explicitly hindered, if not harmed, by sport retain a relationship with sport? This thesis takes a critical look at one particular “othered” sport space and examines how sport is being utilized within a ‘queer’7 milieu. Examining “othered” sport spaces is important to the study of sport sociology because it continues to queer who and where is studied, questioning what is (re)produced in these spaces through sport. Examinations of such spaces allows us to have a greater understanding of how sport may be changing queer spaces and how queer spaces may be changing sport.

Sport has been and continues to be used by many peoples, regimes and nations to mobilize, unite, and control bodies and concurrently to exclude many other bodies and peoples (Brownell, 1995; Guilianotti, 2005, p. 104; Messner, 1992; Stempel, 2006). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) communities, have historically, been systemically marginalized in sport. Given sport’s hegemonic history of marginalization, how do (marginalized) communities use sport for their own means, be it for pleasure, enjoyment, fitness, health, visibility, etc.? An answer, I argue, may lie in looking at other (marginalized and non-marginalized) groups such as Jews (Presner, 2007), Christians (Hall, 1994; MacAloon, 2008; Mathisen, 1999; Putney, 2001), Sport for Development NGOs (Darnell, 2007; Giulianotti, 2004; Kidd, 2008) all of whom have

7 Queer in contemporary usage may be used as an inclusive sociopolitical umbrella term for people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, transgender, transsexual, intersexual, genderqueer and recently has been used as a synonym for such terms as LGBT but because of the context in which it was reclaimed queer has sociopolitical connotations making it preferred by those who are activists, those who resist traditional gender and sexuality norms and by those who see themselves as oppressed by the heteronormativity of the larger culture (Jagose, 1996, p.1).
employed sport, at one time or another, as a means to build a specific space/place and a specific people: to build hard bodies and build strong nations. My project interrogated, at an empirical level, the construction of what I see as a new kind of queer sportspersonship and queer muscul arity and the production of hard queer bodies and a hard queer nation.

There has been a recent acknowledgement of the lack of queer sport sociology (King, 2008; McDonald, 2006) and a call for this work to be done on multiple levels and scales (grassroots to elite, local to global). Furthermore, McDonald (2006) specifically calls for a queering of the whiteness that exists in queer sport sociology and King (2008) calls for researchers to critically interrogate rather than reproduce white bourgeois normativity, and to do writing that is not nationally bound and insular but rather engaged with the geopolitical urgencies of our time. Adherence to their calls would result in work that would not collude with heteronormativity and homonormativity. A combination of theoretical frameworks and theories helped me come to my questions and continue to help me push my analysis and questioning. Methodologically and interpretively, I approached this research in a way that would allow for a rich story of queer sports experiences to be told. I contextualize the league from my own field observations and textual analysis. I discuss participants’ narratives and analyze those in light of the theoretical frameworks I advance. These analyses generated thematic findings around gender and racialization, sexual behaviour, healthy lifestyles, athletic skill, and economics. I connect these themes theoretically to a discussion of an imagined queer nationhood. Before concluding the thesis, I reflect on my own positionality and its role in the thesis. I conclude with recommendations about theorizing queer scholarship on sport, space and (global) queer movements. Fusco (2005, p. 305) paraphrasing Rich (1980) states that if we are truly committed to building non-exclusionary spaces then we might have to literally dismantle (or reinvent) the master’s (sports) house(s). Before this kind of dismantling takes place some acknowledgement of the ‘house’ of sport and its historical marginalization of queer bodies is in order. I hope that this thesis extends the dismantling and reinvention of the master’s sports house. Through self-reflexivity and keeping an audience for this work in mind, my thesis was written with a queer sensibility.
1.1 Self

My own positionality in this project is both central to my analysis and methodology and explicitly and implicitly directs why I did this work and how I have come to know what I know. My perceptions have been informed by my own experiences and knowledge. Articulating my own history is important to acknowledge and connects with my passion to research queer sport. I outline some of the main ways I am read as a subject, as queer, as male, as white. I purposely challenge the use of static identities because I think that we are always in a state of becoming, of movement and I find ‘staticness’ limiting and not useful for examining queering subjectivities. I therefore use processes and language of “doing” (e.g. doing queerness) where I can, although often given contextual limitations I have to settle with stating: “I am queer”.

Currently, I do queerness or am queer in most contexts unless it is easier for the person(s) (e.g. my mother at first) due to social discourses to understand “gay” or “male” as opposed to queer. Challenging and breaking down of that understanding often comes later. I came to the realization that I was different very early on in my life (elementary school) and although never verbalizing this until later (end of teens) I spent the in between years working through much self-hatred (internalized homophobia), over compensation and hiding. These coping strategies brought me to sport but also made me leave sport. I was perceived as queer for many reasons; I was interested and good at school and learning, interested in girls but just as friends, and interested in dressing with a unique style, etc. These differences often made others, mostly other boys, feel threatened and uncomfortable around me. I learned quickly I could be perceived as less queer if I played, and was good at, sports. I begged to be put in a soccer league and at age eleven was finally allowed to join. My parents had always been big supporters of physical activity but they liked their children to pursue swimming. I attended a private Christian Elementary School that was very strict, both religiously and academically. The school did not have a gym and therefore I was never really exposed to formal sports until joining this youth soccer league. I was very determined to succeed and to develop my prowess in order to move up through the ranks of the soccer. I started off in a house league and then moved to a ‘rep’ team and finally a select team that played in the central soccer league. Although, I was not the worst player at the sport, my skill set and disposition were not suited to this elite and competitive environment (according to the coach and other players) and hence I was more often a “bench warmer” or substitute for my teams. However, I relentlessly pursued sports as I desired the
privileges that came with playing (i.e. normative masculinity, body capital, social capital, assumed heterosexuality). Upon reflection, I think this was connected to my desire to “pass” or be welcomed in the hegemonic hyper masculine and heteronormative sports environment. After playing for both my high school, in junior and senior years, and on the select team, I eventually felt intimidated, excluded and worn out. I could no longer endure the homophobic climate and the resulting abuse and violence I was experiencing while playing. Being called a fag on a regular basis by certain other teammates, being the brunt of homophobic jokes, and being pushed, shoved and disrespected all took their toll. I left my soccer world for what I thought was for good. I returned to soccer five years later due to feelings of longing for the game and discovering a group in Toronto that were gay positive and sporty. I will further discuss this returning in my self-reflection chapter located after my findings and analysis and before my discussion and conclusion.

As well as attending a private religious elementary school, I also went to a Catholic High School, because it was more inclusive for my sister who has cerebral palsy, and it had a strong academic program. However, it had a weak athletic history. I grew up in a very religious home and was brought up as Christian-Baptist/Protestant household, where ‘fags’ were condemned to hell. I lived in a small town, Orillia, which at the time of my childhood, had a population of 28 000. In Orillia, diversity, ethnicity and race were seen as the ‘unholy trinity’. Anything that did not fit in was abjected. This is what I was constantly exposed to, from a young age and was further compounded because of my sister’s (dis)ability. There was much bigotry of all kinds. The majority of the town, like me, was White. I became aware of racial diversity and difference when visiting Toronto with my mother and sister who had different hospital appointments. Growing up in a hotbed of racism and religious fundamentalism has made me very sensitive to the normalizing and overpowering effects of Whiteness and religious dogma.

I also became very aware of marginalization at a young age because of my older sister’s (dis)ability. I was her advocate throughout my youth and felt I “cut my teeth” on activism in ability issues while advocating for her. Having her along side me as I developed resulted in having much responsibility at a young age but she made me appreciate how able I was in my own body. My family could also be categorized as lower class or lower middle class, which meant I learned what it was like not to have access to things or material goods that I desired. I had to work to earn money for them. Our religious upbringing and financial situation meant that I
started sports later than other children and why soccer was chosen because it is one of the most inexpensive physical activities to play in terms of equipment needed.

Now as a “queer”, I challenge the stereotype that “gays do not do sport”. This is a stereotype or myth that has worked to keep hegemonic hyper masculinity in place (Anderson, 2002; Eng, 2008; Hekma, 1998; Pronger, 1990). There are many queers in sport but they are not always out. Being skilled in the specific sport of soccer has certainly had its advantages for doing this research as is having my body type, which in many context is perceived as svelte, lean and fit. I have a body type that is often conventionally attractive in many queer contexts. I have been with one of my partners for over nine years. My one partner identifies as Portuguese; he is read as white in some spaces and not in others, which again has made me very much aware of how racialization is context-dependent. I am sex positive, and would say that my way of living is based on an anti-oppressive framework. I believe these five intersections (my athletic skill, physical body, relationship status, racial awareness and activist background) have had a direct impact on how I imagined my project, gained access to my participants, conducted my analysis and formulated my conclusion about my topic. My own sexual and body capital affected my theoretical and methodological approaches, which will be apparent throughout this thesis.

1.2 Audience

I wrote this thesis for queers and queer allies. Not just for queer scholars and sportspeople interested in queer scholarship but for queer activists, queer leaders and for the queer community en masse. I believe the thesis will allow us to reflect on how we queer the world around us. My work is intended for a queer readership partially because too often queer works are written for other audiences with preconceived notions, agendas and stereotypes about queers and queer scholarship. This work is not for those audiences. Queer encompasses many bodies, peoples and ideas. Queer is doing things differently, which does not mean erasing the familiar, the norm or the ideal completely, but challenging it, flipping it on its head and playing with it, something that is elemental to sport and physical activity. Taking the familiar, norm or ideal, that is assumed to be the original and marginalizing others as copies, in ways that expose all these forms as copy to copy (Butler, 1999), meaning that none are more authentic than another, is a very important task of this thesis. This task of exposing is hard work as there are lots of discourses to legitimize the familiar, norms and ideals as the authentic originals, and as the ‘Truth’. Those interested in making the familiar strange and in provincializing the centre will be interested in this work.
There are many discourses that are missing in the academy. I hope my work contributes to the queer scholarship that is ongoing in the academy. Queer work, recorded, visible and retrievable for future generations is my goal.
Chapter 2
Literature Review

The scholarly queer literature in sport sociology is situated within the broader context of equity and diversity scholarship in sport studies. These studies along with feminist and critical race literature, as well as a focus on the ethics of youth and children’s sport are all part of a larger critical studies scholarship that seeks to critique and challenge hegemonic mainstream sport. Therefore, before reviewing the queer sport literature, it is necessary to contextualize my proposed study within the general social inequality literature in sport and physical activity studies. Understanding this as the context from which queer sport studies emerged is important and will demonstrate that my proposed work on LGBTQ sport spaces will theoretically and empirically contribute to and expand the sociology of sport literature.

2.1 Approaches to Social Inequality in the Sociology of Sport

Social inequalities in sport and physical activity have been studied since 1965 and these studies have drawn on the very self-conscious and self-reflexive enterprise of sociology (Ingham & Donnelly, 1997). As a scientific discipline, sport sociology is the first to admit that sociological and all scientific endeavors occur within social structures and are shaped by social forces (Ingham & Donnelly, 1997). These social forces have had an impact on what was studied and shaped how the field has developed. Social inequalities in sport have been studied from various perspectives theoretically, empirically and methodologically, and the studies have moved through different inequalities such as class, gender, race, youth rights, and sexuality. As divergent as the work is in sport scholarship, much has been built upon the critique that sport was originally made for specific men in specific contexts (Ingham & Donnelly, 1997) and specific environments (Vertinsky & Bale, 2004). This “for men by men” history has caused sport sociologists to research inequalities in a variety of ways that I review below.

The theories used to study inequalities in sport have gone through three movements. First there were reflection theories that looked at sport as a reflection of society at large, a mirror image, and thus reflected the inequalities that existed in society. Betts (1953) discussed the history of how sport came to be and how it reflected society. Luschen (1967) extended this theory by suggesting that there was a dependency between culture and sport. Gruneau (1988) began to theorize how inequalities in sport were related to modern society and hegemony. The move to each theory was
not linear as my narrative might suggest but as reproduction theories began to become more valued, reflection theories started to fade. Gruneau (1976) acknowledges that he worked with both theories, eventually favouring the work on meritocracy that made it possible to discuss a reproduction theory, where parts of society were reproduced within sport. Beamish (1990) identified how inequality in society was reproduced through Canada’s high performance athletes but reproduction theory still offered no agency for change for sport participants. Both reflection and reproduction theories were able to locate inequalities in sport but were inadequate in terms of their analysis of power relations. Subsequently, resistance theories sparked a wave of research on social inequalities because finally the formula recognized that not only does society impact sport but that sport impacts society. Moreover, the experiences of marginalized groups within these studies were able to be analyzed in concert moving beyond the notion of discrete categories giving these groups a voice and space (Donnelly, 1996). Historically three areas of inequality were first focused on in relational analysis: class relations in sport (Gruneau, 1983; Hargreaves 1986); gender relations in sport (Birrell & Cole, 1992; Birrell & Richter, 1987; Messner & Sabo, 1992); racial and ethnic relations in sport (Birrell, 1989; Foley, 1990; Majors, 1992). However, as relational analysis is more sensitive to context, it has been at the forefront in recognizing the misrepresentation that is produced through separate analyses in research and has advocated the “blending” of such analysis in research (Birrell, 1992; Donnelly, 1996). My own work owes a great deal to this period and the sport sociologists who were willing to take risks professionally and personally to challenge and change the way we think about inequalities in sport.

The methods used to study inequality in sport have also differed and developed. Again three main periods of analysis have been recognized in the literature (Hall, 1996). Categorical and distributive analyses focused much like the first two movements of theories on class or social economic status. Later a third period, relational analysis, which is really crucial to my study, enabled scholars to discuss interlocking forms of oppression, and discuss how inequalities in sport were not only connected but dependent upon each other (Anderson & McCormack, 2010; Birrell & Cole 1990; Wheatley, 1994; Willams & Bedward, 2002) in order to sustain hegemony.

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8 Gramsci’s (1992) sociological concept of hegemony entails that a culturally-diverse society can be ruled or dominated by one of its social classes. It is the dominance of one social group over another where the dominant social group’s ideas come to be seen as the norm, as universal ideologies, perceived to benefit everyone whilst only really benefitting the ruling class. This concept has been extended beyond class and is able to explain the hegemony
in sport. Relational analyses are most often conducted using ethnographic methods “in order to determine the meaning of sports to individuals representing various social categories, and the relationships among those individuals” (Donnelly, 1996, p. 229). Willis’ (1978) advocacy of a “cluster of methods” (p. 196) in relational analysis (participant observation, observation, just being around, group discussion, recorded discussions, informal interviews, use of existing surveys) is something my study incorporates. Understanding how hegemony is negotiated and contested is crucial in relational analyses (Dewar, 1991) and such analyses starts with the assumption that hegemony “is never total or exclusive” (Williams, 1977, p. 113). Gruneau (1988) characterized sport as partially hegemonic:

because no dominant social order ever completely exhausts or determines the range of possible available practices in cultural life, hegemony is an ongoing process. Social and cultural forms and practices, which are either residual or emergent, always pose a potential threat to dominant ones. So does the capacity to dream, to theorize, and to imagine a different world (p. 29).

Another aspect of sport culture, which is also connected to hegemonic social formations, is sport’s Protestant roots where achievement and success (winning) is looked upon as being blessed by God (Luschen, 1967). This “muscular Christianity” is important as, historically, it links to class, gender, race, and sexuality issues in sport (Kidd, 1996). Before I continue to review sport sociology studies on these inequalities, I want to reiterate the importance of muscular Christianity to sport because with it came a certain notion of “sportsmanship”. I will use this concept of sportsmanship as an analytical tool and a fulcrum for analysis in this thesis. Conceptualizing my research, I wondered if within the “the league”, there was a “race to sportsmanship”? Budd (1997), Davin (1997), as well as Mangan (1992), discuss the deep roots that Muscular Christianity has to nation building, imperialism, colonialism, masculinity and normative embodiment. Grayson (1983) states:

Muscular Christianity was a concept which embodied Public School morality, in that it stressed physical fitness, conformity to the needs of the team, and

that exist throughout interlocking forms of oppression. Specifically in sports studies it has been noted that a white, middle class, heterosexual and male domination persists in sport even though the mechanics of how groups dominate/control (and resist) has changed over time.
discipline. A sermon by Charles Kingsley in 1876 exemplifies its masculine, physical, and moral nature: ‘Its (muscular Christianity’s) first and better meaning may simply be a healthful and manful Christianity; one which does not exalt the feminine virtues to the exclusion of the masculine.’ (Thorp, 1937: 172). The games field with its emphasis on physical striving, discipline and team effort, was the embodiment of muscular Christianity (p.5).

Grayson (1983) continues by making the explicit link between muscular Christianity and nation building:

It is probably far from coincidental that the ‘virtues’ expressed by muscular Christianity and extolled by Kingsley, were coterminous with the establishment of a colonial empire: ‘If asked what our muscular Christianity has done, we point to the British Empire. Our Empire would never have been built by a nation of idealist and logicians’ (Minchin, 1901: 113). Sport at this time was thus synonymous with certain notions of masculinity, discipline, and power in the form of empire building (p.6).

Athena & Aberbach (2002) and Presner (2003) state that Muscular Judaism came later than Muscular Christianity but was also very much linked to nation building, perhaps in a different way than Muscular Christianity, but it also had links to colonialism, masculinity and normative ideals of the body. The sense of making yourself strong for your nation and your God are strongly imparted sentiments in both Muscular Christianity and Muscular Judaism. Presner (2007) in his seminal work, discussed within the context of Zionism at the time, states:

Nordau’s idea of “muscular Judaism” can also be understood as a call for corporeal and spiritual regeneration. Although fundamentally connected to the Jewish body, “muscular Judaism” was not about weight training or body building per se; rather it was about the cultivation of certain corporeal and moral ideas such as discipline, agility and strength which would help form a regenerated race of healthy, physically fit, nationally minded and militarily strong Jews (pp. 1-2).

These muscularities (or body hardenings) have an interesting connection to gay men and the resurgence of sentiments akin to hegemonic gay masculinity, one of which values strength and muscles such as seen in gay gym culture (Pronger, 1990, 2002). Both Mathisen (1990) and Presner (2003) discuss how both Muscular Christianity and Muscular Judaism have changed historically but that both produced a specific kind of body, which remains the mainstay, even if that kind of body has ‘evolved’ over time. Most often that ideal body is perceived to be muscular,
male, and “straight”\(^9\). Coupling this body with sport or physical activity is powerful as sport is viewed as hegemonic, white and middle class (Kidd, 1996).

So, how might the supposedly non-normative subjects of the MSL take up sportsmanship or “religious” muscularities? Using the analytical framework of sportsmanship and muscularities as the fulcrum for my project has enabled me to ask questions within the context of race, gender, ability, and sexuality. Perhaps most importantly, it allows me to focus on what kinds of subjects are being produced in the space and to what end. This is an important aspect that I will return to in my theoretical framework. Sportsmanship and muscularities are concepts that need further examination in sport sociology.

The hegemonic and “muscular Christian” nature of sport historically is tightly linked to modern discourses of health and wellness, and sport scholars have investigated the relation between ongoing inequalities and new neo-liberal discourses of health and wellness (Ingham, 1985; Wheatley, 2005; White, Young & Gillett, 1995). The health related discourse of “pulling yourself up by your bootstraps” that used to make individual bodies (subjects) feel guilt, fear and take responsibility for their own state of health, while discounting and ignoring any structural institutional and social barriers that prevent participation, is becoming more prevalent in LGBTQ communities (Puar, 2007; Richardson, 2005). I will explore how these discourses influence LGBTQ sports participation. Moreover similar to other class institutions, sport is integrated into the framework of capitalist relations of production and class (Brohm, 1978). Although, Brohm does not take into consideration how sport may be able to be used in ways that promote resistance, as opposed to simply being a reflection or a reproduction of society, the link between sport and capitalist production is an important one. I will problematize this link through exploring how players in the league may contest and continue class and neoliberal (re)production through a “race to sportspersonship” and wellness.

Inequality based on socio-economic status in sport and the overrepresentation of the upper middle class in the Canadian context, are well documented in the sports scholarship (Donnelly, 1993). A similar pattern of inequality is seen when socio-economic status (SES) is taken into consideration in Canadian high performance contexts, where there is overrepresentation of upper

\(^9\) Straight is an expression for a heterosexual person as an antonym to gay or queer.
SES groups and a significant underrepresentation of lower SES groups, despite successive government sport policies based on meritocracy (Beamish, 1990). Indeed, most national sport policies have not considered the social and structural barriers that prevent many from attaining a level of high performance sport, let alone the barriers to participating in grassroots sport. When considering issues of social class and sport, Donnelly (1993) advocates the use of democratization, not displacement, to reform and transform current practices (p. 416). This connects to social economic status because when we enable a free and equal representation of people in sport instead of token attempts at greater inclusiveness or segregation in sport, it is more democratic. However, what democratization lacks is a realization of the real barriers that exist for some populations. Furthermore, realizing inclusive sport may be more about making sport equitable, where these barriers are recognized and accounted for instead of making sport equal. An “equal” approach would mean that anyone can play if they can make it to the game, whereas an equity approach ensures the barriers to come to the game are lessened. I explore the kinds of equity practices that are apparent in the league, and whether the same kinds of inequalities that are found in mainstream sport, are (re)produced in the social space of the MSL. These equitable practices may be represented by affordable registration fees, or sliding scale registration fees, using accessible parks in terms of public transportation within the downtown urban space, SES outreach programs that provides a full or partial grant or scholarship to play, or even a child care program. Alternatively through having these practices in place, it may suggest that the normative subject in the league is middle class with an expendable income, a car, a non-downtown urban address, no children and is male. Further inquiry as to whether these equitable practices could be considered (un)sportspersonlike is needed.

Sport sociologists have also wondered why women or any disenfranchised group would want to be involved in an activity that is “tilted in the political–economic favor of White masculinist body practices and institutionalized patriarchy” (Ingham & Donnelly, 1997, p. 393). This is a good question to consider, especially when one may encounter reluctance to participate in this model of sport. The status of women in sport has been well documented in sport sociology and many still conclude that inequality remains (Cunningham, 2008; Griffin, 1998; Jamieson & Villaverde, 2009; Kidd, 1996; Lenskyj, 1987, 1990, 2003; McKay, Messner & Sabo, 2000; Messner & Sabo, 1992; Wheatley, 1994). Although Title IX, a law which barred sex bias in any education program or activity receiving government funds, was introduced in the United States
on June 23, 1972, a huge disparity between women’s and men’s athletic participation, coaching and leadership remained through the 1990’s (Acosta & Carpenter, 1994). These disparities still remain today in Canada (Lenskyj, 2003; Young & White, 2007). But is this the only framework for sport? Can it be changed or will it always be rooted in exclusively patriarchal culture? Although many scholars and participants point out the limits of mainstream sport, some suggest that “through reflexive social action, women (and by extension other traditionally disenfranchised groups) can overcome the hegemonic grasp of alienating ideologies and institutional social practices which have authentic meaning in their own lives” (Birrell & Richter, 1987, pp. 221-222). I examine if the MSL is a space of transformation or if this space privileges “outcome” over “play” as this may impact on the reproduction of power and social relations in MSL spaces which could reinforce the disenfranchment of those whose have had (some women, some queers) less opportunities to develop their skills. Access to, and participation in, sport allows for the inclusion for populations otherwise marginalized by social, cultural or religious barriers therefore cooperative sport programs can play an important role in: “peace-building, conflict resolution and social inclusion” (Borms, 2009, p. 458). Although inclusion is a potential outcome to sport, sport more often exhibits similar modes of production to capitalism: “competition, commodification, alienation, labour-process specialization, nationalism and so on” (Budd, 2001, p.1). I bring the point up of what is valued in relation to gender to flag the pre-conception/stereotype that men are better and more skilled at sport than women, not to reinforce this gender myth but to challenge it. Traditionally, women have not been socialized into sporting culture the same way as some men (Donnelly, 1996) but some women have been socialized more than some men. This is important because when outcome (i.e. winning and the rational strategies to ensure that end) is valued more than play, I argue that physical activity can become exclusive to those subjects who can meet these ends, because ability is often correlated with accessibility, coaching, time to practice, socialization and power relations, etc. For example, individuals who identify as women or men in MSL may have been socialized into very different bodily practices (some more than others) which will impact on and how much body/physical capital they bring onto the field.

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10 Capital is being used in a Bourdieau sense where a subject’s social capital is relational to their power in a context (Grenfell, 2008).
The traditional practice in sport is to separate genders. The accumulation of sport research along gender lines is pervasive but many continue to ask how to question these gender lines as cultural constructions (Anderson, 1999, Birrell & Cole, 1990; Travers, 2008). Birrell & Cole (1990) attempted to question and blur sports gender lines in their seminal analysis of tennis player Renee Richards, who identified as a male to female transsexual. They argued that Renee Richards was privileged in a sporting environment because she was socialized (brought-up) male, had male lived bodily experiences, as well as the physical, financial, and social privileges more often experienced when living as male. The questioning of what is “natural” ability and what is taught or socialized is a critical point that the queer sport literature needs to draw on more. The Renee Richards case exposes “sport not only as a gender producing, gender affirming system but as a difference and power producing system” (Birrell & Cole, p.392). This of course can be extended to thinking about sports as a ‘sexuality-producing’ and (hetero)sexuality-affirming system, which I will discuss in the review of literature in the next section. This seminal work made me think about analyzing what sexualities are produced and affirmed in the MSL.

Returning to the issue of inequality, Kidd (1995) indicates that much inequality exists in Canadian sporting contexts and identifies three strategic directions to support and advance equity, one of which is “specific undertakings of social equity that identify disadvantaged majorities (girls and women) and minorities (blacks, francophones, gays and lesbians, members of first nations, persons with disabilities) and set out concrete policies to end discrimination and enhance inclusion” (p.13). Moreover, in terms of hegemonic and bodily practices, Sparks (1990) reviews how both hegemonic and bodily practices have been and are connected (using Quebec’s history to demonstrate that the state played a cultural role in changing the standards of physical practices) and how important it is to investigate bodily practices as they can have implications for political-civil society relationships of power. My study responds to Sparks’ and Kidd’s calls to encompass other sectors of struggle in the social definition of bodily norms such as gender relations, class relations, and ethnic and racial struggles, by adding sexuality struggles and

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11 Transexual is a term that usually means someone who has had physical surgery to alter and transition their body from one of the two mainstream-recognized-sexes to the other. I argue that this term reinforces the gender binary and will use the more fluid and umbrella term of ‘transgender’. In this specific article, Renee Richards self-identified as transsexual and was identified as such in the media as well.
sexuality spaces ‘to the mix’ in order to open up explorations of how these various struggles may be interconnected in LGBTQ specific contexts.

In sport sociology, early research studies, for the most part, focused on investigations of social relations with respect to gender, race, and social class, which worked against the democratization of sport (p.417), and was found to be lacking (Donnelly, 1993). My study has the articulation of the player’s subjectivities and positionalities as a core element of its analysis, and hopes to explore how those articulations, especially with respect to sexuality and ability, relate to space and context. Exploring the articulation of players’ subjectivities and positionalities is critical to examine sports values, such as sportspersonship.

Ingham & Donnelly (1997), argue that the last thirty years of research has done very little to radically transform the institution of sport or the implications that has had for sporting bodies. In order to “delve into the fundamentals concerning the politics of gender, the politics of sexuality, and their articulations and contradictions as they are embedded in sport”, they suggest that “we must begin with corporealties (bodies and the physical cultures that give rise to their constructions) before the issue of equality/difference in sport can be addressed” (Ingham & Donnelly, 1997, p.393). I believe my study continues the work of addressing inequality as it takes an in-depth look at genders and sexualities in LGBTQ sport, as well as an analysis of bodies (subjects) in space to determine how identity construction is formed/changed within sport and how sport is formed/changed due to identity construction, especially with respect to sportspersonship.

In this section of the literature review, I have illustrated some key literature in sport sociology that has examined inequality and its impact on participation in sport and physical activity. In the next section, I will review the literature on sexuality studies in sport, which grew out of these earlier studies on inequality. I will specifically explore the literature that has examined the intersections of LGBTQ identities and sport.

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12 What I mean is the interplay between a subject’s subjectivities and positionalities and the dynamic movement of this interplay depending upon space, time and other subjects.
2.2 Sociology of Sport & LGBTQ

Research examining the intersections of sport and sexuality has developed over the last couple decades. I owe a great deal to the scholars who took risks both personally and professionally to research sexuality issues. In this section, I will review some of the key pieces of literature in this area and outline how my work is situated in this field, hoping that I will contribute to the growing research work in this area, particularly as I examine several intersections that have not, as far as I know, been brought together. With respect to studies in sport sociology and LGBTQ populations, there has been a proliferation of work on lesbians in sport (Fusco 1995, 1998; Griffin 1998; Lenskyj, 1987, 1990, 2003). There have also been many studies on masculinity and sport (McKay, Messner, & Sabo 2000), some on femininity and sport (Kidd, 1996), and on male homosexuality and sport (Anderson, 2005; Pronger 1990, 1999). The ideas of these forementioned researchers have influenced, to a large extent, current discourse and scholarship.

Research in the area of sport and sexuality made a huge contribution at a time when the kinds of theories that I can employ now (poststructuralism, queer theory, postcolonial theory, etc.) were not widely applied or accepted. This research was done at a specific time and in light of current theories and perspectives this work has some limitations. Individually highlighting their limitations is important but also a collective analysis is vital to seeing the broader themes that are missing.

First, through problematizing each area of the currently available research, areas for future research are made visible. For example, most of the work on lesbians in sport continued to establish that hegemony existed in mainstream sport for all women and how “out” lesbians (read: nonconforming bodies) complicate, challenge and resist that hegemony. However, little work has been done on complicating the plurality of femininities that exist, and even work specifically on lesbian identified-teams, is lacking. My work does take into account the plurality of femininities but given that the league is a multi-gender space, work on a specifically lesbian identified team is beyond the scope of this thesis. Given the kind of identity politics that were

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13 I mean the wide spectrum of femininities including hyper-feminine and hyper-masculine.

14 Refers to political arguments that focus upon the self-interest and perspectives of social minorities, or self-identified social interest groups (Kauffman, 1990).
operating during the 1980s, and 1990s, to have researched hyper-feminine queer athletes would have reinforced hegemony in physical ways and further marginalized the non-conforming bodies that did exist in these spaces. With respect to masculinities, the same observation can be made: that only a very narrow, specific hetero-normative kind of masculinity has been deconstructed in sport sociology circles and very little attention has been paid to other masculinities. For example, the concept of the “sissy boy”, which has been examined in education research on “gay and gender non-conforming” bodies (McCready, 2004), is almost completely missing in sport sociology analysis. This invisibility may be due to how homophobia in sport can operate, in that the “sissy boy” is represented or present only as the abject and as a derogatory discourse in the hyper-masculine world of sports (e.g. “you throw like a girl”, “you’re a bunch of puffs”). This has negative implications for both female identified and male identified subjects alike as this discourse keeps the status quo of the heterosexual male as the most privileged subject in sport.

For the most part, the work on male homosexuality and sport has been very focused on all-male gay identified teams, specifically at the gay games (Lenskyj, 2002; Wait, 2003, 2005). There has been little research on LGBTQ athletes who play on mainstream teams or on multi-gendered teams and leagues (i.e. co-ed teams). Problematizing the stereotype “that gay men do not play sports” could be furthered if research examined gays in mainstream teams, in co-ed teams or explored a spectrum of masculinities, but there is a noticeable need for more work to be done. There is little research exploring the many kinds of masculinities that exist in mainstream and queer sport in general. I am suggesting that, unfortunately, both areas (queer sport and mainstream sport) have yet to be adequately problematized, and are thus taken for granted and assumed to be static, weighty categories, when in fact they may be much more dynamic and fluid in terms of what gender performativity exists versus what is encouraged. Another issue is that current sport

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15 A sissy boy is a pejorative term for a boy or man to indicate that he fails to behave according to the traditional male gender role.

16 Co-ed is a dated term that usually means a “mixed” physical activity group of participants that identify as male and female. I believe this term reinforces the gender binary and prefers the term multi-gender league, however the league identifies itself as a co-ed league which is a point that must be taken into further consideration.

17 Gender performativity, a term created by post-structuralist feminist philosopher Judith Butler (1990) in her book Gender Trouble, is the effect of reiterated acting, one that produces the effect of a static or normal gender while obscuring the contradiction and instability of any single gender act.
sociology literature on LGBTQ has only begun to study heterosexual (Messner, 1996) and bisexual identities. Moreover, we are only beginning to examine the experiences of trans-identified athletes (Cavanagh & Sykes, 2006; Travers, 2006), which may open the way up for further studies on transgender, transsexual and two spirited individuals within the matrix of sexualities in sport and further complicate and challenge gender norms.

My study - *Straight Kits f/or Queer Bodies? An Inter-textual Study of the Spatialization and Normalization of a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) soccer league sport space* is well situated within the sport sociology and LGBTQ studies in sport and is poised to “come in”18 to the field in order to fill some of the theoretical and empirical fissures that exist. I propose to explore the multiplicity of sexualities and genders that may exist in an LGBTQ sport space in ways that will investigate how subjectivities are articulated in the MSL league and whether players’ subjectivities impact on their participation and body production specifically within the context of sportsmanship. Moreover, these subjectivities are experienced within a gay and lesbian co-ed league, a space that has not received much attention in current queer sport scholarship. Finally, although there is some current research that has examined sexuality in sport with respect to analyzing bodies and spaces (see Caudwell, 2007; Fusco 2006; Pronger 1999, 2004; van Ingen, 2003, Vertinsky & McKay, 2004), this is a fairly new area in sport sociology, which I hope to contribute to with my study. I therefore take account of recent developments in critical geography in sports sociology that puts bodies and their experiences in space at the centre of analysis (Fusco, 2006; van Ingen, 2003). Thinking about the relationships among sexualities, bodies and space opens up new possibilities for research in LGBTQ studies. Finally, I adhere to King’s call to continue to “queer” the sociology of sport (2008) through being aware of the exclusionary discourses that characterize homonormativity19. By this, I mean noticing how the league may reproduce normalcy and respectability through certain kinds of discourses (e.g.

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18 “Come in” is being used here in specifically opposite ways to the usual notion of “coming out”. I believe that the “coming out” process can be viewed as a violent act that can further marginalize LGBTQ populations, while reinforcing heterosexuality. A “coming in” perhaps suggests a movement in from the margins, but more importantly a move towards inclusion, self-esteem and a recognition of diversity.

19 Homonormativity, a term coined by Lisa Duggan (2004), upholds neoliberalism rather than critiquing monogamy, procreation, and binary gender roles as heterosexist and racist. Duggan asserts that homonormativity fragments LGBTQ communities into hierarchies of worthiness. LGBTQ people that come the closest to mimicking heteronormative standards of gender identity are deemed most worthy of receiving right (Duggan, 2004).
sportspersonship, citizenship, etc.) and what and who those claims enable and constrain. To problematize my main fulcrum of sportsmanship, I will need to employ several theoretical frameworks.
2.3 Theoretical Frameworks

“He who fights with monsters might take care lest he thereby become a monster. And if you gaze for long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you”

(Friedrich Nietzsche, 1886)

“He’s a tramp and they love him and I wish that he would travel my way yeah…”

(Disney, 1955)

Many major theorists have helped me conceive the focused theoretical structure of this project. I feel it is very important to acknowledge no researcher or work comes as a Tabula Rasa but that researchers are always already bringing perspectives and concepts to their work, myself included. As Grillo and Wildman (1991) have so pointedly stated, “as long as we are human the first filter through which we look will be the one constructed by the events of our individual lives” (p.409). In the following section, I outline the lenses I employed to analyze my data and discuss why these lenses were useful to my project. I chose to employ these theorists and lenses to help pose and complicate the questions I have about bodies and spaces in the soccer league. My previous experience of six years as a player, including two years as a coach/captain, in this gay and lesbian soccer league had led me to certain directions for this research and also helped inform my major question on ideal league citizenship and sportsmanship. I use this question in this theoretical literature review as a frame for my evaluation of the literature in relation to my research. Specifically I have grouped the theoretical works into four different lenses that I bring to bear on my research: 1) Post-structuralism, power and sex(uality), 2) Spatiality, 3) Post-Colonialism and marginality, and 4) Healthism. I will outline how each lens is useful to my study and analysis.

2.4 Post-structuralism, power and sex(uality)

The theorist that has had the most impact on how I came to think about the structure of my project and the analysis of my data, is Michel Foucault. Specifically, his concepts of power and resistance, surveillance, and sexuality have greatly influenced how I see the queer sportscape. In the History of Sexuality, Foucault (1978) points to the direct relationship between sex and power. He states: “discourses on sex did not multiply apart from or against power, but in the very space

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20 Nikolas Rose describes “healthism” as a doctrine that links the “public objectives for the good health and good order of the social body with the desire of individuals for health and well-being” (Rose, 1999, p.74).
and as the means of its exercise” (p. 32). The conceptualization of sex being directly linked to power also outlines how sex is linked to pleasure and pleasure to power, what Foucault calls: “a sensualisation of power and a gain of pleasure” (p. 44), and also how sex is linked to the “will to knowledge” and the pleasure and power in knowing, organizing and managing sexuality in specific spaces. When conceptualizing an overall “regime of power-knowledge-pleasure that sustains the discourse on human sexuality…” (p. 11), I am able to think about how this regime might be at work in the specific space of the soccer league. Hence, I am alerted to think: “how might the discourses on sex and sexuality in the league be linked to power and power relations?” I ask who is speaking and who is listening and what is said and what is left unsaid in relation to sexuality and sex in the league? The idea of the confessional is central to Foucault’s understanding of the history of sexuality and a point I will return to after explaining Foucault views on power.

The idea of power works differently for Foucault than Marxist conceptions of power. In order to conceptualize how power might work in the league and its relationship to sex and sexuality, Foucault’s conception of power is useful. Due to my readings of Foucault, I am poised to think of power not simply as a juridico-discursive representation for: “it is this conception that governs both the thematics of repression and the theory of the law as constitutive of desire” (p. 82) but a much wider context than merely the law. Foucault views power not as a one-way top-down repressive and dominating force that acts upon us. His wider conception of power makes possible not only a theory of power but what he calls an “analytics” of power (p. 82). Power then can be analyzed in a broader frame enabling a fuller understanding of the discourses of sexuality (in the league) and, conversely, a fuller understanding of the discourses that might facilitate a greater perception of the multi-faceted nature of power. This conceptualization of power causes subjects to no longer be able to claim themselves as a separate or distinct entity from power or view power as only something that acts upon them; rather, power acts through them: they are its points of application (Foucault, 1978). Foucault has been heavily critiqued for this concept of power because viewing power in this way causes subjects to not be able to claim status as free and independent beings (Bevir, 1999; Deveaux, 1994; Rozmarin, 2005; Sawicki, 1991). However, the framing of power in this way enables power to manifest itself not just in domination but also in resistance which allows power to act through all subjects. Once power is understood this way, the possibility of power within and through disruption to the law or the
sovereign via resistance is evident and possible. As Foucault states: “where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (p. 95). In summary Foucault considers power “as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization” (p. 92), and as the processes, the support, and the strategies in the various social hegemonies. Moreover, he acknowledges that “power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere” (p. 93). Conceptualizing power like this means thinking about power differently in terms of the league. For example, using Foucault’s concepts of power, means considering all spaces and bodies, whether on the pitch, in the bar, in executive meetings or on the league’s websites as part of the multiplicity of force relations. Foucault’s ideas on the relationship among sexuality, power and resistance are an integral part of my lens in analyzing power, power relations and sexuality in the league. Two other key concepts to Foucauldian understanding of power are the confession and the idea of self-governance both of which relate to sportsmanship. To be a sportsperson, it is necessary to “confess” this desire and govern yourself and your body to meet the expectations of sportsmanship. I will now discuss the confessional and self governance.

In Questions on Geography, Foucault (1980) points out the role of the attorney general as the eyes of the emperor and that the same gaze watches for disorder, anticipates the danger of crime, penalizing every deviation (p. 72). This panoptic system, where subjects do not know whether they are being watched or not and therefore govern their own actions, is a very economical and efficient way to hold power (a juridico-discursive idea of power) over populations. I will relate the panopticon to the gay gaze (a look that causes self governance over how one presents oneself as gay). This gay gaze, I suggest, is related to Foucault’s idea of power both as part of a panoptic system but also as a confession. However, I argue the gaze involves no verbal communication and thus I suggest that it expands the idea of what the confession can be. I will explain the confession and then return to how I see the gay gaze expanding this concept below.

Many find the act of telling something secret about oneself as quite liberating or freeing. However, Foucault (1978) does not agree with this: “the obligation to confess is now relayed through so many different points, is so deeply ingrained in us, that we no longer perceive it as the effect of a power that constrains us” (p. 60). The production of truth is imbued with relations of power and the confession is an example of one form of truth production. Moreover, for Foucault
the confession is a ruse because subjects or subjectivities are made through a story of the self that is elicited by the listener. We have “become subjects in both senses of the word” (p. 60), meaning we are subjected to powers that draw meaning from us and through confession we come to see ourselves as specific kinds of subjects. The idea of a prior essential self and the self’s relationship to confession or the very creation of self due to confession is very important to understanding Foucault’s idea about how visibility of one’s histories is a trap (Foucault, 1978). The act of stating “what we are” (confessing) locks us into how intelligible we are or how we are understood according to how we (or others) have named ourselves. In the 19th century Foucault sees that a change occurred from the temporary sodomite to the “new” species of homosexual (p. 43) and that this new intelligibility (or naming and confessing) was implanted in bodies and then made them visible (p. 44) has continued to become mainstreamed in the 21st century, where identity politics and being visible have begun to be seen as liberating (Stryker, Owens, & White, 2000, p. 29). Thinking about not only who is speaking and who is listening and what is said and what is left unsaid in the league but also about who is participating and how they are participating in verbal and non verbal ways, is important with respect to power relationships in the league. Could it be that “hiding” is liberating? In this thesis, I set out to determine what was concealed, revealed, what were the apparent contradictions in the league and how resistance and capitulation worked in the context of the league. Moreover, I examine whether the gay gaze has become a new kind of non-verbal confession where a subtle look communicates a subjectivity and can be used as a panoptic tool to communicate inclusion or exclusion. Using a Foucauldian analytics of power allows me to further problematize whether “hiding” may be liberating. The concept of the gay gaze can be further problematized in multi-faceted ways by using Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) concept of desire, which is similar to Foucault’s concept of power, in that it is everywhere and can work through everyone. Therefore if desire (not sexual but motivational) is productive and can work through anyone I am able to ask: “what desires make the league work?”

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) also warn us, as Foucault does, that visibility or being hailed into society is just a trap: “you will be a subject, nailed down as one, a subject of the enunciation recoiled into a subject of the statement – otherwise you’re just a tramp” (p. 159). Using the conception that visibility is a trap, I want to highlight any tensions that may exist in the league between being forced into an identity box versus being a “tramp” and the paradox of being both at either the same time or at different times being one or the other. Could finding ways to
articulate the discrepancies inherent to intelligibility open up multiple ways to avoid marginalizing queers? Kapur (2005), builds on the idea of the visibility trap and further problematizes how one can simultaneously discuss the subaltern and avoid further marginalization. She points out that the erotic subject can: “create heterogeneous ways in which to speak about sex (in and outside the law) from an excluded subaltern location and shift the stigma associated with this location” (p. 93). This “speaking about sex” of the subaltern is not intended to negate their struggle but it can give them a voice and challenge the attempts at silencing. I wondered if this ‘sex talk’ occurred in the league and what its effects were: “Did it continue the marginalization (in the league) and hence continue to privilege the ideal normative subjects?” Kapur warns how visibility may be a trap, not just a trap but has repercussions, not simply in a Foucauldian sense, but as the homosexual, or other sexual subalterns, assert their agency through claims of pride and erotic desire, “they simultaneously risk familial and social rebuke and even violence for expressing their subalternity” (p.93). Kapur is speaking specifically of an Indian context where familial and social rebuke and violence are likely to occur. I am suggesting that these traps are also risks that need to be considered in the analysis of power and sexuality in Canada, in Toronto and specifically in the MSL. These risks are in part due to these claims of pride and desire causing a rupture in the normative narrative between, for example, sport and sexuality (maybe sports are not so ‘straight’ or ‘masculine’) but this rupture creates the potential of telling more complex stories and to speak from a space “somewhere in between” (p.93). This in between space is also the place in which Deleuze and Guattari (1990) advocate to do research, although, they do admit the difficulty of doing such research. However, through paying attention to concepts of power in my work, more complex stories may be brought to the fore about this “in-between” space.

Foucault’s concept of the confessional is an act that entails verbal communication, where a subject stated what they were to a listener/elicitor. The gay gaze is a look that is imparted between bodies where both may be confessing to each other in a non-verbal form of communication. As both are confessing it may be seen as more equitable; however, it is also foreseeable that this gaze can silence another subject or convey to them that they do or do not “pass” in whatever the desire for “pass-ability” is in that context – straight-acting, masculine, sporty, queer, etc. As well, the gay gaze privileges those subjects and bodies that can choose or have the option to hide or be visible. These concepts, and their relationship to a panopticism
within the league, as well forms of confessional may have great consequences for what new “law” may be imparted in relationship to queer sportsmanship in the league.

Another important theorist who also discusses the idea of the law and power and production of subjectivity is Judith Butler. Butler (1990) establishes that the “law” claims the existence of a pre-ontological being and through that claim the law (juridical power) legitimizes itself, by “producing” what it claims to represent (p. 3). This important distinction requires that I look at not only the juridical nature of the league, but also what subjects the league is producing and how these legitimize the league’s existence. Claiming an identity is often a normative act (Butler, 1990, pp. 9-10), therefore subject production (performativity) can be used as a tool of normalization. Butler theorizes how the “norm” changes (p. 40) and destabilizes notions of claims of authenticity by heterosexuality and homosexuality. Butler, through establishing that neither heterosexuality nor homosexuality, are authentic or true or the original but rather that both performance-based, identities are as “copy is to a copy” (p.43). This means that the troubling of subjects, performances of identity and “norms” are possible, and so change can be enabled. This insight has allowed me to ask questions such as: 1) What performances are occurring in the league that solidify (re)production of a normative subject? 2) Which performances are heteronormative and which are homonormative and which are neither? And finally, 3) how are these normalizing performances disrupted? Furthermore, Butler’s term the “tyranny of (metaphysics) substance”, illuminates the subject’s shift in self-perception from “what will I be?” to “what can I be?” (p. 10) given a particular matrix of intelligibility. This tyranny is also related to Butler’s concept of foreclosure, meaning the options that are available for a subject “to be” are always already not available. The concepts of the matrix of intelligibility and foreclosure are interesting as they suggest that a subject’s identity and performance of such are connected to their context(s) – space, time, past experience and the other subjects’ presence. Butler’s concepts are useful in unpacking how normative subjects are produced in MSL.

In a critique of the limits of performativity within geography, Nelson (1999) argues that for the most part performativity has been read and deployed uncritically (p.331). Moreover, the meanings and effects of identity performance are contingent on time and space (p.342) and on how individuals and collective subjects negotiate multiple and contradictory discourses. How they “do” identity, is an inherently unstable and partial process (p.348). Nelson advances a post-structural feminist understanding of subjectivity, with the notion of ‘betweeness’, a space that
captures the instability, partiality and situatedness of intersubjective relationships, self-reflexivity and knowledge production (p.348). It is helpful to problematize the multi-layeredness of the participants in the league and to realize that not only do bodies perform in space, but that bodies produce space. In other words, observing the participants and the “space”, the articulation between them, and participants’ bodies as sites of contested space is important. Similarly, Kapur, in a critique of her own limitations, points to the complexity of subjects. Kapur states “in challenging the universalising and disempowering implications of foregrounding the victim subject in feminist legal politics, I do not seek to revert to the fragmenting politics of identity” (p.135). Instead Kapur argues in favour of recognizing different subjectivities and fringe subjects in an effort to counter the false homogenous feminist sisterhood created through the victim subject. I did not want to examine “identity politics” but to give opportunities and a space for the voices of the heterogeneous mix of subjectivities that are present in the league to be heard. Finally, the heterogeneous mix of subjectivities that I believe Butler, Nelson and Kapur are all discussing and advocating for may seem difficult to analyze but is possible by allowing space and opportunities for these voices in the league to be heard. I also analyze how the league and its participants “become”. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) replace the idea of being with the idea of becoming (p.160). This means looking at participants as always in a state of becoming. This recognizes the possibilities and fluidities in participants’ identities. Moreover, this state of becoming, as I will discuss in the next analytical lens section on space, is greatly connected to space. As Brown (2000) suggests, “who we are is best conveyed by saying where we are” (p.8). Moreover, due to the inherent nature of sport and physical activity where one moves through space, participants are constantly in flux and reflect the nomadic nature of life. To return to ideas of power, desire and foreclosure within space, using Deleuze and Guattari, I was prompted to ask how has power and desire in the league been (re)territorialized? Does this territorialisation close off what is possible? Butler’s concept of foreclosure would suggest that it does restrict what is possible. However, it is not just about where we are, as most of these above mentioned scholars have discussed the complexity inherent to subjectivity, it is also about what we do in those spaces.

What bodies do in space can impact what individuals subject themselves to and how others subject that individual. For instance, if a woman is walking alone at night in specific areas of a city, others may view her as a sex worker (Razack, 1996). This establishes a relationship between
person and place. Nast (1998) disagrees that gender indicates sex as much as sex indicates gender, but rather states, that who is feminine is who is fucked (p.203). Becoming intelligible as feminine may/may not be discouraged in the league, if so is becoming intelligible as masculine (read: top) encouraged? Halperin (2002) recounts that, historically, and I would argue this continues today in arenas like sport, that the man who played the “active” role in sexual intercourse was not perverted, just perverse (p.114) or still has some claim to masculinity because he is still doing the fucking (“active”) as opposed to being fucked (“passive”). Masculinity, perceived as the active man, is linked to Razack’s (1996) ideas of what bodies can go into a space, perform actions, and leave unscathed – white straight middle class men, and to a less extent men in general. There is also the idea that to be the top, to penetrate, means you are still “man enough” (Carballo-Dieguez et al., 2004, p. 35). This top/bottom dialectic, which is very apparent in the gay male community, gives privilege to being a “top”. This dialectic also causes the possibility of being intelligibly versatile (“switch”) or a “bottom” less of an (desirable) option, if one at all. If a top/bottom dichotomy exists in the league how is it manifested through discourses (league) and narratives (interviews), and what does it mean for the kinds of subjects produced in the league and how is it related to sportsmanship?

To study the way sexuality is taken up in the league means paying attention to the situatedness of bodies. The way bodies are viewed as space is central to Longhurst’s (2001) concepts of “corporeographies” and corporealities. Both terms outline that bodies have insecure boundaries, which leak and seep (p.23-24). Furthering the idea of insecure boundaries and bodies, Halperin (2002) acknowledges that there is a difference between stating something is lesbian-like or “lesbianish” behaviour versus lesbian behaviour. This is a crucial distinction to consider because in spaces like the league, multiple sexualities and a plurality of subjectivities are present. There is a tension, as Butler argues (1990), between the messiness and fluidity of bodies and the desire to contain them. This tension prompted me to ask many questions: 1) If the league is constituted through its difference from mainstream leagues, what does that do to the body? 2) Does comportment of bodies/identities become more flexible or rigid? 3) Where are the marginalized bodies within the marginalized league (for example, think about gender bending bodies, openly poly-amourous bodies, and conversely heterosexualized bodies that are all non-normative in this space)? 4) Are these marginalized, within the marginal, even intelligible in those spaces? 5) What does it mean to be in and out of place? 6) Who is out of place in the league? 7) Are there
positive aspects of being mistaken or misread? Using theoretical lenses, provided by theorists like Foucault, Butler, Deleuze and Guattari enables a different set of questions to be posed and encourages the possibility of new understandings. These understandings about bodies in space and the actions that are done within those spaces also involve the language that is used in those spaces. I address language in the following section.

Language’s ability to injure, Butler (1997) argues, stems from its interpellative power and there is a distinct difference between illocutionary speech acts (in saying do what they say e.g., you are out of the game) and perlocutionary speech acts (leads to certain effects that are not the same as speech act itself e.g., I am going to score a goal) (pp.2-3). Butler, without explicitly stating so, draws attention to language being connected to space, as she suggests that “one can be ‘put in one’s place’ by such speech, but such a place may be no place” (p.4). No place is still somewhere and I believe that analyzing space extends Butler’s conceptions of hate speech. Butler argues that the “chain of utterance” incorporates all the force of the utterance behind and beyond the utterer (i.e. everything this is attached to that utterance) but Butler does not point to how space might affect the force of the utterance. For example, drawing upon my own personal experience, when I am called a “fag” in a sport setting, the hate speech has more force than it would in most other settings because of the experiences I have had with hate speech in sport settings. Therefore, in this research I paid attention to how terms are being “reappropriated” in the league and out on the field. Terms such as, fag, Mary, Poofter, etc., prevail in LGBTQ communities. So if they occur in the league, are they actively censored and by whom? And, what relationship does this have to sportspersonship?

Although, Butler does not use the word intelligibility specifically here, I believe that is what is being suggested in the argument that one “exists” by being recognizable (p. 5). This existence based on visibility or intelligibility causes me to ask: how is intelligibility conferred in the league? Does that intelligibility produce and enforce queer identities in specific ways?

I have attempted to demonstrate through this first lens the importance, as Foucault imparts throughout the History of Sexuality (1978), of examining sexuality and to concurrently examine supporting discourses. Therefore not studying sexuality in isolation but taking into consideration what is contextually intersectional with, across and between sexuality. Examining these supporting discourses continues in the next sections.
2.5 Spatiality

The most important concept in using a spatial analytical lens is establishing that space is not abstract but is a social product. Lefebvre (1991), emphasizes that we should not think of empty space as prior to whatever ends up filling it but to speak of “producing space” (p. 15). For example, the space of the league produces something or someone: that is what I interrogate in this thesis. Moreover, there is an interplay between space and subjects as subjects are produced in space but also produce the space. Lefebvre asks: “to what extent may a space be read or decoded” (p. 17)? In order to achieve a reading of space we must think about the genesis of how space came to be. He also states “(social) space is a (social) product”, and “that in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power” (p. 26). This power although different from Foucault’s notion of power can be thought of as imbued with hegemonic relations and panoptic mechanisms as well as moments of resistance.

Lefebvre’s triad concept of analyzing space allows for a reading or decoding of space but also a problematization of space. *Representations of space* [RoS] (conceived/mental/abstract space) is the dominant space in any society where subjects and relations are vanguarded by the “imaginers” that have conceptualized the space in a specific way (pp. 33, 38). An example of conceived space, is the park, which urban planners designated as recreational space and imagined specifically what could occur there. Conceived space has a substantial role and a specific influence in the production of space (p. 42), allowing little chance for the existence of representational spaces (lived/social) (pp. 49-50) due to conceived space being the space of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism (p. 57). Finally, conceived space always already relies on consensus more than any space before, due to it being bound up with the exchange of goods and commodities and written and spoken words (p. 57). This consensus is not necessarily of the individual’s own choosing but may be more of a complicitness or apathy in one’s own spatial subjection, a point to be expanded upon during my later discussion.

The second piece of Lefebvre’s conceptual space triad, *Representational spaces* (lived/social space) has a relationship to art, to difference and to resistance. Lived space is the space of inhabitants or users or for my purposes players/members/participants in the soccer league; it is the dominated space and therefore usually passively experienced (p. 39). Lived space has an important temporal element to it and is essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic, meaning it
cannot be captured except on the rare occasion through art, and I suggest some forms of physical culture too. An example of lived space might be the actual playing of a match and what happens pre and post match. Or it could be a player urinating in the bushes in the park or occur during the match when a player takes a throw-in on a line/field that is not to official (FIFA) measurement standards and receives a yellow card, or when, post-game, a player has a smoke before going for a beer. As the examples point out, lived space is when actions that are unexpected to occur happen in the space.

The third piece of Lefebvre’s triad is *Spatial practice* (physical/perceived), which includes an element of cohesion that guarantees a level of competence and a specific level of performance (p. 33). An example of physical space might be the soccer field itself, how it is laid out and set up, with two halves, a centre, etc. Perceived space confirms conceived space by physically producing what was already thought to be put in a place. Sport and the codification of sport has an important link to perceived space as sport spaces need to be the same in order for an understanding and an ability to play the game to occur.

Lefebvre helps me to use a spatial imagination when analyzing space; however, there are tensions with my other theoretical lenses as he does not use a post-structural framework and does not deconstruct interlocking forms of oppression (van Ingen, 2003). I believe, as van Ingen and Fusco in sport sociology have done (Fusco, 2005, 2006, 2009), that I can use Lefebvre’s triad and supplement that with a critical postmodern framework that does analyze interlocking forms of oppression within my own use of a spatial imagination.

Van Ingen (2003), draws attention to power and space through employing Brown’s reading of Lefebvre and it is made clear that the triad: “expands the scope and relevance of thinking about space and requires that explicit attention be paid to the ways in which space not only represents power but materializes it” (p.207). Van Ingen indicates that using the triad enables more to be conceptualized. Similarly to Foucault’s more inclusive analysis of power, the triad marks that space is not only symbolic of power but that space *produces* power in the space and *through* the space. Moreover, from this approach, concrete geographies, like sport landscapes, must also be understood as expressions of social relations, thereby more clearly linking the relation between identity and the spaces through which identity is produced and expressed (p.208). As I previously mentioned (in the sexuality and power section) Brown (2000), suggests: “who we are
is best conveyed by saying where we are” (p.8). These two points highlight how vital a spatial analysis and an analysis of who is being produced within the league is to this project. To achieve this, van Ingen (2003) insists on a spatial inquiry that attempts to disentangle the interrelatedness of space, politics and identity (p.208), and encourages us to move towards a critical postmodern spatial theory in sport sociology which by “placing the body at the centre of the spatial inquiry highlights the ways in which the body itself is a site of struggle over unequal power relations, such as gender, sexuality, and race” (p.209). The body is at the centre of my own spatial inquiry of the league – how it moves, where it moves, what it articulates and (re)produces itself.

Through incorporating a spatial imagination into my research, I answer a call to do “geography outside of geography” from Binnie and Valentine (1999), especially with respect to lesbian and gay sport geographies that link to the process of globalization (p.183). This link between the local and the global is apparent when thinking about how geographies of sexuality within the league may relate to global inequality. For example, our uniforms (where they are made and who is making them) and how we participate in and host international tournaments are manifestations of local/global nexus needs analysis. Another point made when doing queer geography, that Brown (2000), who used the closet metaphor to discuss alternative spatialities, warns against is the inside/outside binary and how we are often both inside and outside at the same time (p.23). This is an important point in noting the multiple places bodies can reside at the same moment.

For example, does the neutral/androgynous name of the league, Metropolitan Soccer League, coupled with the signs on the field (e.g. pride rainbow flag) that demarcate the space as queer produce an inside/outside embodying? Moreover, does the use of the rainbow flag itself accomplish this inside/outside situatedness? The assumption may be that only queers and allies of queers know what that symbol means therefore enabling an outside of the closet sign of visibility to queers and allies yet in the same moment an inside the closet to the others in the public park. Using a spatiality lens, can get at these questions of inside/outside.

The spatiality lens also allows me to consider the close relationship between space and bodies. Longhurst (2001) asks important questions about bodies and space, that encouraged me to look at which bodies are vilified and which bodies are being valorized and idealized in the league. Longhurst recognizes bodies as materially and socially constructed and can therefore state that, “bodies are also always in a state of becoming with places” (p.5). This builds upon Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) idea that we are always in a state of becoming by adding to the analysis of the
relationship where we are becoming. Similar to what both van Ingen and Brown are suggesting in terms of identity and place, Longhurst states that the question, “what is a body” can only be answered by ‘locating’ bodies (p.5). Longhurst asserts that focusing on “the body” offers a way of prompting new understandings of power, knowledge and social relationships between people and places. Likewise, Razack (1998) through her analysis of how the spaces of prostitution constitute bourgeois subjects and how the conditions of bourgeois nation-states produce prostitution, also suggests the possibility of more complex understandings of production of bodies through/for the nation through analysing bodies and spaces. Through incorporating a bodies and space analysis in my thesis, themes and topics that would remain challenging to link, are possible thus emphasizing the importance of exploring the body and space together.

The MSL exists in different spaces, some very public and others more private. Van Ingen (2003), states: “focusing on public spaces hides the multiple and contradictory ways in which sexualities are lived out across the shifting boundaries of the public and private” (p.206). Paying attention to the multiple, complex and contradictory ways in which players’ sexualities are played out on the field and the bar is important. How do players recognize or identify changes in the different spaces of the league? And, does the ideal sportsperson change in the different spaces of the league? These questions specifically address what is occurring in lived space. Van Ingen states that lived space is not only where processes of Othering are produced and maintained (oppressive) but is also the space of resistance (enabling) (p.211) or where counterspace can exist (p.204). Using Foucault’s concept of power, where power and resistance always exist together, makes lived space important to examine when considering what and how subjectivities are constrained or enabled in the league.

Foucault’s work (1975, 1978, 1980) has some other important relevance to my spatial analysis. Many of his concepts (panopticon and power) include a spatial element as do some of Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts (smooth and striated space). Foucault suggested that sexuality in the 18th century had moved into a “proper space”, by which he referred to the home and specifically the parents’ bedroom (p. 3). Another important move concerning sexuality took place during this, and subsequent historical periods, as male homosociality, perceived as hetero-normative sexuality (along with a specific kind of Christianity and Judaism) entered its “muscular” and “respectable” era in spaces of sport (Kidd, 1996; Leoussi & Aberbach, 2002; Mangan, 1981, 1986, 1992; Mathisen, 1990; Presner, 2003, 2007). Sex and sexuality was entrenched within
society’s structures and institutions as Foucault states, “…one only has to glance over the architectural layout, the rules of discipline, and their whole internal organization: the question of sex was a constant preoccupation. The builders considered it explicitly” (p.27). This quote analysed using Lefebvre’s spatial triad, specially referring to physical space (architectural layout, the rules of discipline) and conceived space (internal organization and builders consideration) demonstrates how there is some connection between the two theorists concepts of space and power production. Foucault’s idea of the panopticon or panoptic space is similar to Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) concept of striated space. Striated space can be thought of in terms of fabric that has a specific pattern and threads running parallel to each other (p.475) and similarly to panoptic space, striated space is organized and is able to be regulated. An example of striated space is a soccer match with a referee, thus causing players to self govern their actions in the game. Smooth space can be thought of as opposite to striated, like felt (the material) where the fibers run all over in different lengths and directions, this is the space where resistance is possible as regulation is not the “lay of this land”. An example of smooth space is unregulated children freely at play. Using Foucault’s concept of power, it is evident that both striated and smooth space exist concurrently. Likewise, Deleuze and Guattari would say that the relationship between the two spaces is a back and forth. This prompts me to ask: how does the league (re)produce panoptic, striated and/or smooth space?

The theorists mentioned above made me think about space and “the lack of sociospatial research that investigates bodies and the critical agency of producing alternative spatialities…” (van Ingen, 2003, p.212) in physical cultural studies. A spatial lens helps further unpack the analysis of power, as well as colonial spatial relationships that may exist in MSL spaces.

2.6 Post-colonialism

Post-colonialism is a vital lens to bring to my theoretical framework. McDonald (2006) decries the whiteness of sports studies and queer scholarship and King (2008) and others both directly and indirectly state the homonormative aspect of queer scholarship (Duggan, 2003; Griffin, 2007; Puar, 2007). Using post-colonialism to examine whether a white homonormative space is produced by the MSL contributes to an analysis of racialization and sport. Stoler’s (1995) critical and analytical tools aid in linking spatial practices to a colonial order, thus making it imperative
to deconstruct a possible *race to whiteness*\(^{21}\). Stoler’s work encourages me to ask: what colonial practices have been established and repeated in the league that allow sexuality to be understood only as European and white? Stoler views the colonies as former test sites for Europe’s bourgeois order, an order that was then brought home to the Metropole and then again back to the colonies (pp. 90, 75). Stoler’s point of entry into Foucault’s *History of Sexuality*, is race not sexuality (p. 7), which she argues was concurrent and mutually dependent on sex. Therefore, since I wanted to interrogate sexuality in the league, it was important to also look at how this sexuality may always already be colonial/imperial sexuality: one that may be (re)produced through the organization in the league. A feature of the relationship between the colonies and the Metropole is ‘othering’ or the “making of them” (p. 99). Stoler argues that identities (bourgeoisness or middle class heterosexual whiteness) “invented” themselves and could only emerge in and through the Other (the colonized). She is not the only theorist to discuss how “the Other” was used to create *hard* Euro-centric white middle class bodies (see for example Dyer, 1997; Fanon, 1992; John, 1996; Said, 1978). For example, Dyer (1997) states that ‘Blackness’ has no meaning unless it is related to the unacknowledged arrogation of ‘white’ as the ‘human ordinary’. Stoler attests that there is both an ontological security in the shoring up of bourgeoisie sensibility and a real violence that happens in the constructions of these identities. There may be some safety in supporting this middle class ideal as a social product, but these identities are real and have real and frequently violent consequences. Razack (1998) provides a clear example of the violence that these identities require through an explanation of how the spaces of prostitution constitute bourgeois subjects and how the conditions of bourgeois nation states produce prostitution. Connected to Razack’s analysis of prostitution, is Stoler’s call to be aware of interlocking forms of oppression that operate on gendered landscapes (p. 127) that enabled “authentic” bourgeois men to violate racialized Others (p. 128). Violence has been enacted in sport on racialized bodies (Messner, 2007) and has also impacted on those who are not masculine

\(^{21}\) Race to whiteness means a movement towards white respectability at the expense of leaving others behind. This term is related to Fellow & Razack’s (1998) concepts of a ‘race to innocence’, the process by which a person comes to believe their own claim of subordination is the most urgent and that they are unimplicated in the subordination of others (p. 335), and maintaining a ‘toehold on respectability’, “the ways in which we are able to mobilize aspects of our subject positions that allow access to the professions, acquisitions, and values that embody white, middle class notions of ‘respectability’ ” (Nelson & Gould, 2005, p. 329).
enough or straight enough (Pronger, 1999). Observing these legacies and their articulation in the league helps examine whether the league is a white(ned) space.

The bourgeois subject, that Stoler (1997) refers to, belongs to a white notion of citizenship; van Ingen (2003) also suggests that heteronormative space is also linked to white citizenship. Van Ingen argues that space is actively (hetero)sexualized (p.206). Drawing from van Ingen along with Duggan (2003), King (2008), and McDonald (2006), I will suggest that “homonormative” space enacts certain kinds of white citizenship. This white citizenship may have socio-economic links, such as the fees to participate, grants applied for, as well as how homophobia may be experienced differently across class boundaries. Finally, Fusco (2005) using Razack’s (1998) work suggests that the concept of “respectability” with respect to white middle-class Western attitudes towards the human body establishes a race to whiteness (p.284). With this in mind, it was important to ask: is there a project of desiring a “toehold on respectability22” and hence whiteness within the league? And, how might sportsmanship be part of these notions of respectability and whiteness? And, building upon Fusco (2005, pp.23-24), what does this mean for those socially abject bodies in the sport space of the league? Are individuals abjected on the basis of their sexuality, race, athleticism, age, and (dis)ability even in LGBTQ spaces? The league has many elements that make it well suited for this investigation, including its diversity of participants in terms of race, age, gender, ability and sexuality. For example, the multi-gender aspect of the league i.e. being “co-ed” is somewhat of an anomaly not only in queer sports but mainstream leagues too.

This diversity of the league’s participants and the complexity of its subjects must not be over simplified or generalized. By incorporating a post-colonial lens into my analysis, I am actively claiming “an awareness of who speaks for whom, how and where, as well as who is listening and to what end” (Kapur, 2005, p.4). Moreover, I am consciously heeding Kapur’s warning that: “there is a need to avoid slipping into a ‘native’ or ‘authentic’ feminist position of culturally relativist knowledge productions which serves only to erase or marginalize the heterogeneity of the Others” (p.5). Therefore, for example, I am careful to speak from the place of an individual

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22 Fellow & Razack’s (1998) concepts of maintaining a ‘toehold on respectability’ refers to: “the ways in which we are able to mobilize aspects of our subject positions that allow access to the professions, acquisitions, and values that embody white, middle class notions of ‘respectability’ ” (Nelson & Gould, 2005, p. 329).
who identifies as a queer but does not represent or speak for all queers. Kapur has also caused me to reconceptualise imperialism not as based in the past but to look for how colonialism’s methods of domination are reinvented\(^{23}\) within sport spaces and the subjects in the league. Another important tool of the postcolonial intellectual project that Kapur’s discusses is “culture as hybrid”. This *hybrid* “exposes the essentialism inherent in imperial discourse, which produced an Orient or a cultural Other or a native subject, as inferior reflections of the West” (p.8) and continues to inform about Others in contemporary societies. In relation to my own research, the queer community is often framed as “Other” but rarely within the queer communities is *othering* between claimed identities (e.g. Queer othering Trans) or within claimed identities (e.g. Gay: Twink\(^{24}\) othering Bear\(^{25}\)) and throughout all (othering people of colour or people of lower social economic status) theorized. This latter point on the method of colonial othering is not the same as the methods of othering that are internal to queer communities as colonial/racist attitudes persist even in supposedly libratory spaces. The concept of a ‘race to whiteness’ will be useful to discuss colonial othering persistence within the league. Another question to ask related to othering is how leadership roles are decided. Sexual subalterns, in which Kapur includes homosexuals, are diverse and pluralistic (p.9). She notes that when policy is put into place to “protect” the interest of the subaltern, the policy can cause restriction and further marginalization (in her case women’s transnational movement and in my own research it may be women’s involvement in the league). Are the instances of othering in the league structures? Finally, Kapur explains that when an erotic subject comes to law to claim rights or challenge a stigmatizing organization she balances the burden of both sexual and cultural normativity as she transgresses the boundaries of both (p. 92). Queer athletes who may be coming to sport to claim rights to play

\(^{23}\) An example of this reinvention may be if stacking (when players are assigned specific positions in a game based on race (Ball, 1973) occurs in the league.

\(^{24}\) Twink is a gay slang term describing a young or young looking gay man (in his late teens or early twenties) with a slender build, little or no body hair, and no facial hair (Herbst, 2001).

\(^{25}\) Bear is a gay slang term describing men that tend to have hairy bodies and facial hair; some are heavy-set; some project an image of working-class masculinity in their grooming and appearance, though none of these are requirements or unique indicators. Some bears place importance on presenting a hypermasculine image and may shun interaction with, and even disdain, men who exhibit effeminacy (Suresha, 2002).
or challenge the inherent homophobic structure of mainstream sport may be involved in both balancing and transgressing acts.

The postcolonial lens is a vital aspect to my analysis of the league as it advances my thinking of normative subjects in the league and what implications that may have on others. Furthermore, it enables me to address and interrogate if interlocking forms of oppression are operating in the league. Finally, this lens brings attention to how some subjects may be involved in a race to respectability and hence whiteness, and, as I discuss below, a race to health.

### 2.7 Healthism

Nikolas Rose describes “healthism” as a doctrine that links the “public objectives for the good health and good order of the social body with the desire of individuals for health and well-being” (1999, p. 74). Rose’s healthism represents “responsibilization”: here the burden of remaining healthy is no longer on the shoulders of the government, but must be carried by individuals, who then are held to be blameworthy if they get sick. Rose’s view represents an extension of Michel Foucault’s theory of “governmentality” (Rose, 1999).

Sport has been defined as a masculine hegemonic space (Kidd 1996, McKay, Messner, & Sabo, 2000; Pronger 1990, 1999) however, this may be changing, especially, in recreational physical activity as there seems to be a shift towards developing healthy persons and to take the “weight off” as part of the discourses of neo-liberalism. As Apple (2001) states

> neoliberal policies are not only based on ideologies of markets, privatisation, efficiency, and flexibility in class terms. They – profoundly – rest on an often unarticulated patriarchal foundation. This is while neoliberalism is usually seen as largely a class discourse, it has as its very basis masculinising logics and visions of citizenship in which paid work is its identifactory sign. (p. 116)

As Apple clearly outlines neo-liberal discourses have a patriarchal basis consisting of a masculinising citizenship. Therefore, new shifts in health practices also have a patriarchal basis. New forms of healthism that exist are ones where individuals are blamed for their own lack of health and are incited to “pull themselves up by their own bootstraps” (Ingham, 1985). This state downloading is not new but shows the way the discourse is linked with neo-liberal sentiments. Wheatly (2005) states that there is a shift in messages about risk to lifestyle determinism, individualizing illness and reproducing biological and behavioural reductionisms of biomedicine. Moreover, Fusco (2007) states that there is a shift in messaging about how to engage in healthy
living in spaces that are replete with a discourses of ‘healthification,’ civic engagement and consumerism. These shifts are problematic as they (re)produce moralistic messages (similar to Muscular Judaism and Christian Muscularity) that render the body “moral” in making the body, and hence the nation, strong. At the same time, moralistic messages stigmatize and blame people for their “unhealthy” lifestyles and disease, which masks social sources of disease. These new messages that Ingham (1985), Wheatley (2005), and Fusco (2007) discuss carry with them ideas of ideal bodies, health, class, citizenship, masculinity and the spatialization of those discourses. I am prompted to ask: how are these discourses of healthism taken up in homonormative space? Are they the 21st century version of Muscular Christianity, which encourages a good dose of “fitness” and sportsmanship?

The LGBTQ community is not immune to discourses of ‘healthism’ of course. It is widely accepted that assumptions of heterosexuality and a specific masculinity prevail in sport (Kidd 1996, Pronger, 1990). As a result, LGBTQ persons have been historically, socially and politically marginalized (some more than others) and thus face numerous barriers that can limit their access to and participation in physical activity and sport. There are of course consequences to being excluded socially and politically from culturally significant practices, such as sport (Downs, 2006; Elling & Janssens, 2009; Fusco, 1998; Price & Parker, 2003; Zamboni, Crawford & Carrico, 2008). These consequences may affect LGBTQ communities in negative ways with respect to their social health, which may not only cause traumatic personal affects but some may believe that this produces significant costs to the population health, the medical system and nation. As far as I know this has not been studied. Current estimates place the cost of physical inactivity in Canada at $5.3 billion ($1.6 billion in direct costs and $3.7 billion in indirect costs) in health care expenditures (Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute). Some might argue that the barriers that may exist for LGBTQ communities with respect to sport and physical activity participation mean that these communities may add to that health care cost. This of course frames the queer population as a burden on society and reproduces victimization.

Moreover, physical activity throughout the lifespan has been identified as enhancing the health of participants and reducing the risk of developing chronic disease, depression and improving overall quality of life (Warburton, Nicol & Bredin, 2006). Specifically, we are told, being active may decrease a person’s risk of developing heart disease, type II diabetes, hypertension, osteoporosis and certain types of cancer. Regular activity may also increase longevity and reduce
the risk of prolonged disability in old age (Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity). Therefore, it would seem that the physical and mental health benefits to LGBTQ individuals would be significant. What this logic ignores is that the social structure of mainstream health and sport may cause more damage than good to someone who is less than the ideal normative body (Drummond, 2005; Elling & Jassens, 2009; Gay & Castano, 2010; Shakespeare, 1999). Exploring ways to reduce barriers to mainstream physical activity and sport spaces in order to encourage participation and inclusion in current leagues, yes, is vital to ensure an increased participation among LGBTQ communities, who can then reap the benefits of physical activity. But, this assumes that there are only benefits to physical activity and only one way to be active. How do the players and the league reproduce these discourses and to what effect? My interrogation of queer sport spaces in the hope of making them more ‘queer’ may in fact have the consequence of increasing participation, which normally reproduces neoliberalist discourse. Will my study have implications for LGBTQ communities or contribute to various governments’ (federal, provincial and municipal) goals for increasing participation in sport and physical activity? The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute states:

The federal, provincial, and territorial (FPT) Ministers concerned with sport, physical activity and recreation have adopted a joint goal of increasing physical activity in every jurisdiction by 10 percentage points by 2010. By 2012, the Canada Sport Policy has it as a mission to increase the proportion of “Canadians from all segments of society who are involved in quality sport activities at all levels and in all forms of participation.” To this end, Sport Canada and advisory groups involved in sport participation (that have been established under the direction of the FPT Ministers) will also be establishing similar goals focusing on increasing sport participation among the general population as well as specific target groups who have been identified in research as being less active. These groups include women, girls, low-income populations, and inactive Canadians as examples.

What does such a statement mean for queer sport? And, what implications does it have for the structure, organization and mandate of the MSL, queer sportpersonships, queer muscularity and queer nation-building? Moreover, who will be invited to ‘come in to play’ in this queer space?
Chapter 3
Research Methods and Data Analysis

3.1 Methodological Considerations

My research proposed to analyze a lesbian and gay soccer league in Toronto and the subjectivities that are mapped onto and constructed in that space. I asked myself: how can I study sexuality/sexualities in a way that does not reinforce difference and binaries or essentialize experiences? This was one of my dilemmas and I turned to many theorists, as seen in the previous section, to help me with my analysis. Halperin (2002) posed a similar question in his seminal work about “how to do the history of homosexuality?” Halperin’s work was useful in guiding me methodologically about how to illuminate a fuller picture. He employed Actor Network Theory (ANT) which enabled him to use non-literary sources (Greek jugs) to account for the past. ANT analyzes all “things” in a given network as “actors” and therefore as actors all things impact what occurs in that network (Latour, 2005). Although I did not utilize ANT method fully myself, knowing about this theory encouraged me to find a method that allowed me to use both human and non-human materials. I was able to use many “actors” or “texts” within my own work, such as game sheets, registration forms, league surveys, website narratives, etc., to provide a much more informed and fuller picture of the networks/fields in place in the league.

When exploring how and where sexuality was (re)produced it was important to consider many aspects of the league, hence the inter-textual approach of my study. In an analysis of rugby songs in men and women teams, Wheatley (1994) noted that different attitudes towards homosexuality by men’s teams (mocking) versus the women’s teams (celebration) were present. Exploring the practice of rugby songs is but one good example of a nonhuman (e.g. songs) textual approach within studies of sporting culture. There are many other examples of work that use textual approaches. Historically most were often a media studies textual analysis (MacNeill, 1994; Duncan, 1993) and this trend continues presently (Anderson & Kian, 2009; Cooky et al, 2010; Desmarais & Toni, 2010) but there has been some work that is not media focused that still used a textual approach (Fusco, 2003). The example of studying the non-literary aspect of rugby culture highlighted complexities and tensions simultaneously. In my research, I wanted to use an intertextual approach to interrogate the MSL.
Incorporating more “objects” (actors) into the analysis of social fields proved useful for my inquiry. Halperin (2002) used things like equipment, media, and paintings on jugs to inform his analysis of Greek sexualities. By broadening the kind of activities, space, and objects used in fieldwork, the possibility exists for exploring different stories and different bodies that may be missed in conventional organized sport places. Intertextual approach meant that more things – “the athlete”, “the game”, “the field”, “relationships”, etc. could be included in analysis. My study on the MSL league used an inter-textual analysis approach paying attention to the many spaces, activities and materials that may have been reproducing and affirming specific normative ideals.

I also wanted to consider whether hegemonic mainstream sport influenced the MSL LGBTQ population through ongoing hegemonic processes of normalization. For example, did some of the LGBTQ population pass or strive towards an ‘ideal’, while others remain marginalized? Methodologically, in queer sport scholarship, there has been a heavy reliance on ethnographic interviews, narratives and some post-structural analysis (King, 2008) to gain access to this kind of question. Using empirical methods (interviews, data collection, artifacts, etc.) that are informed by post-structural theories (critical studies, queer theory, post-colonial theory, etc.) was preferred for my study because it enabled the complexities of “the subject” to be discussed, and it answers King (2008) and McDonald’s (2006) call for more queer sports sociology scholarship. Specifically, my study used the theoretical and methodological studies that King (2008) recommended to focus on “microlevel practices, on the complexity of subjectivities” to demonstrate how “identity not only enables but constrains social transformation” (King, 2008, p. 434). King (2008) and McDonald (2006) also advocate using queer studies not only to focus on sexuality but on anyone or thing that is constructed as normal and natural. This was a useful approach to analyze normativity in the league. My research looked at what kind of specific “sportbody” is constructed in relation to “sportspersonship” within the league. To do this, I used a combination of methods similar to the ones used in previous investigations on queer identity and space such as ethnographic interviews and participant observation.
3.2 Research Questions

To reiterate the central question this study addressed was: **What kind(s) of sportsman(s)** through the leagues spaces? This central question also addresses the following three theoretically linked research sub questions:

1. How is sexuality spatialized in MSL?
2. What subjectivities and/or positionalities do players foreground or find that others foreground for them? And which need to be hidden?
3. What kinds of subjects and spaces are produced within the MSL?

The core of each of these questions linked to the over arching inquiry of my central question: investigating what kinds of space exists in the league and for whom? My main aim was to investigate the **players’ experiences** in the league and to inquire if and who was being constructed as the ‘ideal’ sportsperson(s) of the league. I drew methodologically from Henri Lefebvre (1991) and his concept of a spatial triad: conceived space, lived space and spatial practice when designing elements of my study. Conceived space was explored through asking and researching what space the league was conceived/imagined to be and how the league came to be. I examined the lived space of players’ everyday experiences through the semi-structured interviews with questions such as: how are players encouraged, either explicitly or implicitly, to

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26 Sportsman and sportspersonship or sports citizenship is a concept I problematized within this study.

27 This specific word use was chosen to foreground the “work” done in/through the league spaces to nurture and develop norms and ideals supplanting that they are natural and original or authentic.

28 Spatialized is meant here in terms of Lefebvre (1991) seminal work on the production of space and is discussed in the theoretical frameworks section of my literature review.

29 Subjectivity is being used here in terms of the property of being a subject and thus the effect of relations of power. Specifically “meaning human lived experience and the physical, political, and historical context of that experience” (Ellis & Flaherty, 1992, p. 1).

30 Positionality is how a subject is situated in space (social, physical, lived, abstract). Postionality “rests on the assumption that a culture is more than a monolithic entity to which one belongs or not. ‘All cultures (including subcultures) are characterized by internal variation’ (Aguilar, 1981, p.25). Positionality is thus determined by where one stands in relation to ‘the other’. More importantly, there positions can shift: ‘The loci along which we are aligned with or set apart from those whom we study are multiple and in flux. Factors such as education, gender, sexual orientation, class, race, or sheer duration of contacts may at different times outweigh the cultural identity we associate with insider or outsider status’ (Narayan, 1993, pp. 671-672). This is of course true whether one is studying one’s own or another culture” (Merriam et al., 2001).
act/behave on the pitch and is it different from other spaces – home, the gay village, etc.? Additionally, I used participant observation of spatial practices (actual physical spaces: parks, bars, etc.) to enliven my analyses of the MSL.

I critically investigated the multi- and somewhat fluid (i.e. changing) nature of subjectivities and/or positionalities and the effect time and space had on them. For example, one player found herself identifying as a lesbian in the space of the league but as a dyke elsewhere. Essentially, I explored how a player’s overlapping subjectivities (for example, each player may identify differently on several levels, such as gay, black, able-bodied, upper class, forward, etc.) and how this may change depending upon a space-time-context triad. For instance, I paid attention to how certain identities were actively marked or taken up (e.g. gay), while others were possibly excluded, underplayed, hidden or even erased (e.g. race, differently abled). Moreover, I observed how players drew on dominant and normative values of sport, whether or not they incorporated mainstream sporting values such as competition, aggression, fair play, and individualism. My main research question set out to problematize players underlying reasons (social, emotional, psychological, physical) for participating in the MSL league, as well as their perceptions of themselves in the league.

I explored issues with respect to health, class, socio-economic status, abelism, race, age, femininity and masculinity through examining what kind of subject(s) was (re)produced in the league. For example, did the league encourage subjects who are economically valuable (financially and relationship status), politically unchallenging, with “disciplined bodies” (Shogan, 2007) that hinder “sexual heterogeneities” (van Ingen, 2003)? Moreover, I wanted to investigate concepts of nationalism and even regional patriotism and how they played out in the league, specifically but not limited to, when the league hosts international tournaments and when the members of the league participated abroad in international tournaments. I examined whether discourses on health, nationalism, race, politics, economy, etc. were present and whether they were connected to productions of respectability. All these inquires linked back to my main question: what kind of normative sportpersonship ideals are produced and sustained in an LGBTQ soccer league? Simply put, what are the normative narratives in a non-normative sport space?

3.3 Methodological Tools

The methods that I used for my study I believed helped me critically investigate multiple issues and the inter-textuality of the study unpacked the MSL as a queer sport space. I conducted a
qualitative study, which included an inter-textual analysis of interviews, artifacts and the league’s publicly written documents (e.g., newsletters, minutes of meetings, recruitment flyers). This method and data collection allowed me to build a rich description of this LGBTQ sport space. I also maintained a journal of my thoughts and observations in order to help me with my data analysis. The term “intertext” is taken from English literature and in that field “intertext is one or more texts which the reader must know in order to understand a work of literature in terms of its overall significance…and the intertext can deeply problematize the text’s surface meaning” (Richardson, 1997, p. 41). Intertextuality applied to space and people examines the multiple “texts” that can be read to make meaning of the context. This attention to intertextuality was embedded in my qualitative method and ethnographic study because these methods are useful for analyzing intricate concepts such as subjectivities and space. Qualitative methods have been used in other studies on LGBTQ populations and spaces in sport sociology (Fusco, 2005, 2006, 2007; van Ingen, 2003). To reiterate King (2008) and McDonald (2006) advocate using LGBTQ studies as a means to focus not only on sexuality but also on constructions of normativity in sport. My study sought to analyze multiple spaces and bodies where constructions of normativity were contested and confirmed. Outlined below are detailed descriptions of the methods that I used to inform this multi-textual approach; textual analysis, semi-structured interviews, self-reflexivity and active participation observation.

3.3.1 Text Analysis

The first method of data collection was a text collection and analysis of all the publicly available written and visual materials that the MSL league produces such as websites, publications, registration forms, rules and regulations and constitution. As Fusco (2003) has shown, a textual analysis is an important aspect to do in a spatial inquiry. MSL texts underwent a discourse analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) to locate meaning units, followed by chunking data and finally articulation of main themes related to my four theoretical lenses. My postmodernism approach shifted away from truth seeking and instead sought answers for how truths are produced and sustained, as postmodernism contends that truth and knowledge is contextual, plural and historically produced through discourses. Therefore, postmodern researchers embark on analyzing discourses such as texts, language, policies and practices (Strega, 2005). French social theorist, Michel Foucault developed an original notion of discourse in his early work, specifically in the Archaeology of Knowledge (1972). Lessa (2006) summarizes Foucault’s definition of
discourse as “systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak.” A discourse analysis is an approach to the study of discourse that views language as a form of social practice and focuses on the ways social and political domination are reproduced by text and talk (Fairclough & Holes, 1995). For instance a discursive analysis of a quote: “I play to be fit” means showing that there is a discourse of healthism at work. Or an analysis of a registration form might look at how a member chose not to tick male or female and left the gender section blank, which may be suggesting that there is a binary gender discourse in the league that some members are resisting in moments.

3.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

3.3.2.1 Current Players in Metropolitan Soccer League

I conducted eight individual semi-structured interviews with current MSL players. A framework of interview questions was developed and used to guide discussion in the interview (see Appendix A). While this interview questionnaire was used as a guide to address perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and experiences related to inclusiveness, diversity, equity, and social inequality in MSL, interviews remained somewhat open-ended, allowing the participants and I to have the flexibility to examine other issues if they were raised. I asked interviewees to bring one MSL artifact to the interview (i.e., a registration form, a newsletter, rules and regulations) to use as a point of entry to discuss their experiences in the league and asked about the meaning that artifact had for them as LGBTQ sports participants (see Appendix C). The artifact had another desired effect: I hoped this action of thinking and bringing a physical object “primed” the interviewee to reflect on their experiences of the league prior to the interview.

With the consent of participants, all interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. The usual protocols with respect to anonymity, confidentiality and security were assured and followed. After transcription all identifying information was removed, pseudonyms31 and codes were assigned, transcribed data and interview tapes were locked in a filing box at my graduate office at the University of Toronto. All data on my computer was password protected to which only I had access.

31 I chose to use letter-numbered pseudonyms believing they were less loaded than actual names that readers may have pre-attached meanings or experiences to and with.
3.3.2.2 Past Players in Metropolitan Soccer League

I conducted four individual semi-structured interviews with past players. These players were asked mostly the same questions as current players but also asked some specific questions pertaining to their past experiences in the league and why they no longer played in the league (See Appendix A). While this interview questionnaire was used as a guide to address perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and experiences towards inclusiveness, diversity, equity, and social inequality in MSL, like with current players, interviews remained somewhat open-ended, allowing the participants and I to have the flexibility to pursue other topics, if raised. I also asked these interviewees to bring one MSL artifact to the interview (i.e., a registration form, a newsletter, rules and regulations) to use as a point of entry to discuss their experiences in the league and also asked about the meaning that artifact had for them as LGBTQ sports participants. Similarly to current players, the artifact had another desired effect: I hoped that the physical object “primed” the interviewee to reflect on their experiences of the league prior to the interview. Interviewing past players (i.e. players who do not participate in MSL anymore) was crucial, I believe, to investigating whether there were any (normative) barriers to these players' participation in the MSL. Interviewing past participants also enabled me to have an 'insider-outsider' perspective and retrospective view of the MSL. The same protocols used with current players were employed.

3.3.3 Participant Observation and Self-Reflexivity

I recorded participant observation notes of both the playing spaces and the social spaces of the MSL; detailed observations of behaviours, mannerisms, attitudes and dialogue during registration, games, practices, social events, Pride Parade participation, playoffs and international tournaments participation, as they related to what I understood as the production of a specific sportsperson and environment. In this way, I was able to immerse myself fully in MSL social and cultural spaces during the 2009 season. I attended and participated in practices (league practice, individual team practice, and traveling team practice) and a game once a week for a total average weekly period of about four hours. Approximately, a total of 70 hours of fieldwork was completed for the participant observation phase of my study.

I engaged in a self-reflexive account throughout my research (Browyn et al., 2004). This involved, for Browyn, turning one’s reflexive gaze and turning language back on itself to see the work it does in constituting the world. The subject/researcher sees simultaneously the object of her or his gaze and the means by with the object (which may include oneself as subject) is being
constituted. I recorded my thoughts and feelings about the process and the questions I had before, during and after the data collection process. I was an active participant observer because I participated as a player and co-captain of a team in the league and I wanted to record how this participation influenced the direction of my interpretation and analysis. My previous experience with the Metropolitan Soccer Toronto league as a player, coach and captain gave me an “insiders” perspective of the league. I attempted to be constantly aware of how this insider positionality may have shaped my perspectives. As Ingham & Donnelly (1997) asserted, when systems under scrutiny are being conducted by “insiders” or where the authors are not only participants but also active proponents, their own limits of self-reflexivity become tested and one's own social history and privilege must be always stated. Therefore I have included a section on my own social history of self and another on my relation to the league (see p. 5 & p. 127).

3.4 Ethics and Research Sites

Ethics approval was granted for my project, December 8th 2009 by the University of Toronto’s Health Sciences Research Ethics Board. All ethical requirements were met and maintained throughout my study.

As I mentioned above, my participant observation was conducted at the field and in the social spaces the league uses (bars, parks, parades, etc). My text collection involved; online review on the league’s website where public information is posted; collecting texts at registration; observing the field and social spaces. Executive members were approached and asked to provide anything else they thought might help my study. The participants, both current and past players, were asked where they would feel most comfortable conducting the interview, with the proviso that it was quiet enough to audio tape. Of the twelve interviews; one interview was conducted in the interviewee’s work office; three were conducted at the interviewees’ places of residence (including one conducted in a condo party room). Three interviews were conducted at my apartment and two other interviews were phone interviews. These phones interviews were necessary, as the participants, both past participants, no longer resided in Canada. Finally, three interviews were conducted in offices located at the University of Toronto.
3.5 Descriptions of Participants

I recruited eight players who had completed the Metropolitan Soccer League’s season and four players who are no longer participating in the league (i.e., players who left the league or do not plan on returning to the league). The league is a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) league therefore I anticipated that most of the participants I recruited would be LGBTQ identified. However if a player had identified as heterosexual they were not excluded from the study because the study was about the experiences of players in the league irrespective of gender, sexuality, race, class, age and ability. No interviewees identified as heterosexual although many of them discussed that heterosexuals do play in the league. The age range of participants was 22 to 43 years old, with an average age of 31. All participants spoke English. Three of the participants also spoke French, one spoke two languages other than French and English and another spoke three languages other than French and English. Eight participants were born in Canada, seven of them in Ontario and three in Toronto. Three were born outside of Canada. Half of the participants (six) identified as white/American/Canadian/Caucasian, three others identified as having European (mixed) ethic and cultural backgrounds; Scottish-Russian, Polish-Hungarian and “Caucasiany, Wasp, Ukrainian and Irish Mix”. The others identified as Asian-Caribbean, Hispanic, and South Eastern European. Ten of the participants identified as male and two of them identified as female. All participants, while playing in the league, lived in downtown areas of the city with six of the participants living in the area at Church and Wellesley known as the “gay village”.

There has been a history of exploitation of the LGBTQ communities by governments and researchers (Kinsman, 1987, 2000, 2010; Warner, 2002). As a member of the LGBTQ community myself, I am extremely cognizant of the potential for abuses in research. As such, I paid particular attention to how my study was conducted. My study sought to give a voice to LGBTQ players in an urban soccer league and to examine their experiences and participation in this league. Rather than creating a power imbalance between researcher-researched, I saw my experience with the league as an advantage. That is, being part of the league helped me with recruitment of participants because many players in the league knew of my participation. I reassured participants that their participation in the study did not jeopardize their relationship with me, their position in the league, and that the experiences that they shared would remain anonymous and confidential.
3.6 Recruitment

I posted recruitment flyers at league social events (See Appendix B). With the permission of the league, I also posted these flyers to the league’s online forum. However, in order to reach past players, it was necessary to contact them directly via email or phone as they no longer attended league events and so they did not see the recruitment flyers that I posted physically or online. This direct contact was via email or phone calls so that I did not hand out flyers directly in person minimizing undue influence. There were no direct recruitment methods (i.e., handing flyers to individual players) of players who are currently playing in the league. Players were able to refuse participation and even had the opportunity to withdraw from the study once it started without penalty.

Post-interview, I engaged in a process of member-checking. That is, participants that wished to were given copies of their transcripts to review and asked to check whether the transcript and preliminary interpretation of their data reflected our conversation.

3.7 Overview of Data Analysis

To reiterate, my study was a multi-textual approach, which took into consideration the many different “texts” that inform the production of space (Fusco, 2003; Halperin, 2002; Pronger, 2002). The data collected through these methods were also analyzed by similar methods used in current LGBTQ sport scholarship sociology. The following section will describe the analysis of the data.

3.7.1 Discourse Analysis

Data were analyzed within the theoretical framework that I advanced for my thesis. I paid close attention to discourses of power, space, health and normativity. I also drew analytically from Henri Lefebvre’s (1991) concept of a spatial triad: conceived space, lived space, and spatial practice when analyzing my data. I paid attention to narratives of conceived space (i.e., how space is imagined by the league and players) and lived space (i.e., how space is experienced by players) and the spatial practices of the league.

Discourse analysis was employed to look for meaning units and themes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). As previously discussed, for instance a discourse analysis of a piece of interview text: “I play to be fit” might suggest a link to ideals of health, sportsmanship, competition and body image. Specifically, before coding my raw data (transcriptions of interviews, collected texts and
field notes) I summarized my research concerns. That is I wrote down clearly and concisely my main concern and theoretical frameworks/lenses (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). My main concern was (queer)sportperson(s) [(q)sps] in the league (because I wanted to know who/how that is reproduced in the league). The four lenses I examined: *Sexuality*, where and how (queer)sportpersons’ sexualities are present and controlled (power); *Space*, where and when space becomes important or affects (q)sps; *Race*, where issues of white male privilege (masculinities) surface and or cause tension for (q)sps; *Health*, how and when issues of being healthy physically and holistically, (dis)connect to being a (q)sp. With these five points foregrounded, I scoured through my raw data for relevant text related to my theoretical lenses and main research concern while keeping open to other directions and anomalies. I then coded those relevant texts into “repeating chunks of data” and then into overall themes. After this was done, I thought about what theoretical constructs where impacting who and how (q)sps were in the league. This enabled me to establish a theoretical narrative to discuss the five main constructs that were enabled and constrained through the league and that were related to a more omnipotent queer nation building project. The five constructs that are aspects of queer sportspersonship, which enable the building of a queer nation building project, are discussed in the following chapters.

In summary, I looked for meaning units and then chunked meaning units together to create overall themes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Through this analysis a theoretical and conceptual snapshot of *who* does come out to play and what they do in the league is offered. My analysis and study, as King (2008) encourages future sport sociologists to do, should add to the study of queer athletes’ experiences and brings a set of questions forward that have not been asked before, especially as they relate to a politics of visibility, to bourgeois White normativity, and to political insularity (King, p. 435). Examining my own league’s social spaces questioned how and what homonormativity was (re)produced and problematizes how queer queer sport really is.
Chapter 4
Findings & Analysis

Bodybuilding/Nationbuilding – Queer Muscularity & Queer Nationhood

Queer Muscle (Muscularity): Muscular findings and musing

In this chapter, I begin with an exploration of the league and the spaces and places it uses and produces. After providing this backgrounder and setting the stage, I discuss my findings from my analysis of the data in a section term bodybuilding/nationbuilding. This section details my findings related to five areas that I have termed “sarcomeres”. I use the terminology to get at the interrelatedness of these sarcomeres and how all are present in order to have what I have labeled “queer muscularity” work. That is to say these sarcomeres are all interlocked and work either to confirm normativities or, to a lesser extend, challenge them within the league. The five I discuss separately only as a way for easier dissemination but they all work together and are of course interconnected and interdependent. The five sarcomeres are 1) gender and racialization, 2) sexual behaviour, 3) healthy liftestyles, 4) athletic skill and tension, and 5) economics. Each of these are discussed in relation to my findings, my frameworks and theory.

4.1 Background and Setting the Stage of the League

The Metropolitan Soccer League (MSL) was officially founded in 2004 with only four teams of fifteen players per team playing two games each Sunday. Over the past seven years the league has grown to ten teams of twenty-one players per team playing five games each Sunday with a long waiting list of players waiting to play. Before this formal organization of a gay and lesbian soccer league, queer athletes in Toronto interested in playing soccer would answer an advertisement in the local gay newspaper Xtra and arrange to meet at a park to play pick-up games of soccer on a ‘non-soccer field’ area with slopes and long grass. This was relatively disorganized, and players, spontaneously, made up the rules of the game to fit their own needs and desires. Now with the official structuring of the league organization that early flexibility is lost. Currently, the MSL is, in many ways, run like other soccer and sport leagues but in some very specific ways is very different. In this section, I will provide an overview of: how the league runs registration, waiting lists, team player replacement, team make-up, bonding, assessment, and the draft; what the spaces look like; where we play and, what you can see there.
Finally, I examine the rules and ways of playing that are the same and different within our league compared to the international soccer governing body.

4.1.1 Registration

Registration for the league usually begins at the end of February or mid March. Registration is opened up to members that played in the year previously before it is opened up to the general community. The league usually has about an eighty percent rate of returning members. This is an important aspect to note because it allows a greater number of the soccer players who have already played in the league to come back and continue the culture of the league. As the majority of players are past players, this possibly makes it easier for the league to keep the new twenty percent, who have never played in the league before, in check. The registration for past players usually occurs at three separate times (two weekday nights and one weekend afternoon). New player registration occurs in the weeks following past players signup but the difference is that one of the signups is a “women only” sign up. The “women only” sign up time was started because feedback from the annual player survey indicated it was necessary and it became part of an initiative carried out by the elected women’s representative and league’s ombudsman\(^\text{32}\) (ombudsperson) position on the executive, in hopes that this would encourage more women to signup for the league so the league could reach the desired goal of twenty five percent women’s representation\(^\text{33}\). This exclusive signup time has caused some controversy in the league especially among the male players and will be further discussed in the ‘gender and racialization’ portion of my analysis.

Another initiative to encourage a more community-wide registration signup was having one of the registration dates take place at a non-alcoholic serving venue. This initiative also came out of

\(^{32}\) This is another gendered term like sportsmanship that the league employs and the ironic thing is this executive position has always been held by an individual that identifies as female (IaF) player in the league and the ombudsman role and titled was added to the women’s representative role while an IaF held the position.

\(^{33}\) This is the terminology the league uses however I believe this reinforces the gender binary and is an exclusionary term that often only some “bio-women” [referring exclusively to matters concerning the chromosomes or sexual organs (Aaltio-Marjosla & Mills, 2002, p. 77)] relate to. In an effort to increase the opening up of my work on all levels and have more people be able to see themselves in the work and have access to the language I will use my phrase of “individual that identifies as female” and its short form IaF and the phrase “individual that identifies as male” and its short form IaM. These phrases follow in the tradition of person-first language followed in many communities with ability challenges. Note that the league does not have a gender representative but a women’s representative, which further validates “maleness” as the ideal and normative gender.
feedback from the survey as a desire to be more inclusive of players who may not be able to go to a bar registration for religious or addiction reasons. This initiative occurred for one year and despite how popular this signup time slot was, the executive failed to reinstate it the following year. Reasons for this omission may have to do with signups taking place in sponsor bars, hence making the league visible in those spaces and forcing players into these spaces where they are more likely to purchase alcohol, thus appeasing the sponsor. The fact that registration only takes place in sponsor bars will be further discussed later.

Once registration by returning members has been completed, registration for new players begins. Due to a twenty percent attrition rate from the previous year, on average, twenty percent of league spaces are designated for new players. With approximately 200 players in the league and approximately 160 of those spaces taken up by returning players, of the remaining 40 spots some are held for IaF players so as to ensure that the goal of twenty five percent “women’s” representation is maintained in the league. It is important to note that although the goal is twenty-five percent the league has never actually attained that percentage. It is usually closer to twenty-five percent at the beginning of the season with that often falling below twenty as the season continues. This drop is discussed later as some interviewees speculated why this occurs. Usually league membership is full and complete before all three new membership signup events occur, due to the small amount of spaces left for new players. The league is popular and with returning members and new members signing up, the league reaches its capacity quickly, which means that usually upwards of eighty people are on the waiting list. Having a large waiting list is something that the executive has been committed to maintaining, specifically the elected membership services executive position as it is this person’s responsibility to ensure a full league is maintained throughout the season. A long waiting list enables the membership services executive position to pull up new players throughout the season when teams lose players due to injuries, work responsibilities, dislike of their team/league, etc.

Some players are upset to discover that even though they want to join the league after it has started they are still required to pay the full registration fee. The executive justifies this practice by stating that by paying full fees they will be able to sign up before the general community the next year and thus they ensure a space in the league the following summer. I have observed many current players argue that it is not necessary to have players that join mid-season from the waiting list pay the full registration as the cost of the jerseys and the season have already been
covered by the previous players that have left. Another waiting list issue that has recently been resolved is that in the past when women players dropped out they would replace them with whoever was first on the waiting list regardless of gender. The policy has been recently changed to replacing the player who left with a new player that identifies as having the same gender as the player who left. This policy change may have come to fruition due to the “women’s” representation goal and its maintenance, but in practice I observed and recorded many players complaining about teams that had lost women players that had now been replaced with “star” men players and that this upset the balance of skill in the league. Not only does this feed into gender stereotypes about female and male sport performances but when a less skilled male player was replaced with a strong-skilled female player, as was the case on my team, no argument was made about this. The registration fee and team replacement gender policy will both be further discussed in the economic, and gender and racialization sections.

4.1.2 Teams

Team makeup and how that occurs is also important to note. The registration form allows for the possibility of “bonding”34 with another player. I have both observed and suggested to the executive that this system privileges couples and excludes relationships that are more than two players that may want to play together. Despite raising questions about the policy several of us have noted that, the bonding policy has stayed in place as a two person limit, with the justification from the executive that keeping the bonding potential at two is the most ‘straight’ forward way. The curtailing of alternatives legitimizes coupling in the league. This will be discussed further within the sexual behaviour section of my discussion. The teams are assigned using a draft policy that is part of the league’s constitution and ‘kicks’ off during draft night. This social event is always held at a sponsoring bar in the gay village. The process of assigning teams is anything but random. Much attention and work is put into making and balancing the teams.

The first year a player joins the league they are required to attend a mandatory assessment clinic which occurs before draft night. At assessment clinics new players begin their enculturation into the league partially because each task in the circuit is run and assessed by current players. Skills

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34 Bonding can only occur between pairs and if both players that want to bond with each other put the other player’s name on their registration form thus ensuring that they will both be placed on the same team.
such as shooting, dribbling, and running as well as a final scrimmage are all part of the assessment. The assessment enables the league to evaluate each player with a number out of ten, with ten being perfection (there are currently no tens in the league but there are a number of nines). Each team is supposed to have an equal “value” of players at each level or at the very least teams as a whole are supposed to “add up” to close to the same “total”. The belief is that this will result in the most balanced teams possible and thus prevent any team from being stacked. Returning players do not have to go to the assessment at all and some of the executive each year appear to tweak the numbers by either increasing or decreasing the returning players assessment scores as needed. Therefore this assessment system does a poor job of maintaining its promise to balance players’ skill levels year to year. The reproduction of team imbalances, this value system and its pitfalls will be discussed and reviewed in my later discussion under health and economics. During draft night players’ names are put into different pools or buckets depending on their gender, bonding and assessment status/score. Names are pulled for each of the ten teams from each pool, with the caveat that players that identify as female, bonded players, top players be distributed equally. As noted during field observations, one player said that all lesbians, IaF, disabled and non-white players get placed first, while white men get drawn last. This signaled a concern that ‘reverse discrimination’ occurred. How this process actually ensures that women receive a certain place in the league and that coupled players are placed will be discussed in the gender and racialization section of the discussion. Draft night is also where team sponsors and team uniform colours are assigned by having each executive selected captain pull a jersey out of a bag at the same time. Draft night is also where players, especially new league players, meet their teammates for the season and begin to see what it means to be part of the MSL. Team names, cheers and a team elected co-captain all occur at the field but the social culture of the league begins at the draft night.

4.1.3 Space

A central defining aspect of the league is its location. The playing fields are not located within the gay village. After using a few different parks throughout Toronto’s downtown core, the league has now found a home at Withrow Park, just south of an area called the Danforth, otherwise known as Greektown. The field’s central accessible location is something that the league is proud of and is central to its identity so much so that part of their name refers to the core of the city but lacks any LGBTQ word indicator. This may link back to visibility being a trap
as discussed in my theoretical frameworks and may be an example of a decision to name the soccer league *neutrally/ambiguously* in terms of not disclosing anything to do with sexuality. The ability to access the fields without a car, and travel there either through city transit, biking, or walking to its location is important to the league’s identity. The central location may enable more success in recruiting participants to play in the league as less time and financial investments are required for transportation to the games. The chosen field is a typical downtown city park field, an uneven surface with lots of pot holes, not very well maintained, and with lots of dirty/mud patches in high wear zones. The field at Withrow is not a “FIFA” sanctioned field in terms of its boundary requirements but the MSL constitution’s rule modifications permit usage of whichever field has been acquired by the league for the season, regardless of the field’s condition. The grass is often long and needs to be trimmed, which does affect game play as it causes increased ball drag and thus more energy or power is necessary in a kick to make the ball go as far as desired. The field is located in the most south-eastern corner of the park. Along the west side of the soccer field are uncovered wooden stands for spectators and behind the stands the park falls off into a dog only area. Close to the field is a water fountain where dog walkers often bring their dogs to drink. This creates problems sometimes for referees who have to stop play due to a leashless dog bounding onto the field. Beyond that fountain again is the top of the hill that rolls down into a few trees and beside them more to the north of the field is a rink used for street hockey in the summer. Between this rink and the field is a rolling patch of fairly flat and tree-clear land. At the most south end of the field is a very old building with public washrooms that are often locked at the beginning of the season and stay locked for the earliest and latest games each Sunday. With five games occurring each Sunday, the games start early in the morning and end in the evening. Thus the lack of public washroom facilities causes great annoyance for players who do not want to urinate outside of this building, where there is another top of a hill with some tree cover at the bottom. Many of the players, who identify as male do urinate in this area but not all players have that ability and so are forced to walk to a building to the Northeast of the park, which is quite a way from the soccer field. To the east of the field is the bottom of a little hill that goes up to the sidewalk where the park is bordered by a one-way street. There are many cars parked along this street often belonging to some of the league players, and often balls kicked out of play can hit a parked or moving car on this street. This little hill, that has a few big old trees that provide most of the shade in the summer is where the teams and most onlookers setup camp. On the top of this hill and all along its slope and at the
bottom of the little hill, players and spectators gather and watch and wait their turn to play. One interviewee described this as a special place as it is where you can really see the MSL community:

You could see, like, who was there or like, just like the people and it’s actually kinda of funny. Cause like, so like, people come and go as the games come and go. So sometimes you’ll see family members, sometimes you’ll see, like, a girlfriend, a boyfriend, or a partner or whoever. Sometimes you’ll see a trick. Like there’s just so many hilarious moments that happen during a day of soccer there that it’s… and it’s beautiful in a way. Like it is, it is like a little queer community at Withrow Park. And I love that it comes and it sets up at 9:30 and then at 6:30, it’s kinda wrapped up and put away. You can and you know there’s a spot where the refs sit and a spot where the executive people sit and people kinda like cluster into their teams and get ready together. And kinda of like hang out. And you say, “hi” to your friends and you say. “hi” to you know the person you hooked up with last night and then you go play and you come back. It just has a neat little rhythm to it.

Q6

The executive sets up their ball bags and net bags at the centre of the east side at the bottom of the hill. If you arrive early enough you can see a few of the first game team players helping the executive member setup the nets, spraying the lines, and placing the corner flag makers. In the past small Pride flags have been inserted to mark the half line and as line flags. However, currently this physical and visible queering of the space has stopped because the league wants to be seen as official and legitimate. I will return to this point later.

The league follows a modified set of official FIFA rules. Sport sociologists have critiqued international LGBTQ sporting competitions such as the Gay Games, and now the OutGames, for their reliance and use of mainstream international standards for play (Lenskyj, 2002; Waitt, 2003, 2005). Perhaps an argument could be made more for the use of internationally agreed upon rules of play at an international LGBTQ tournament but are these rules necessary in a grassroots level queer soccer league? Minimal modifications to the FIFA rules give the league more flexibility in terms of official field lengths and control of the game. Given the league’s inability to secure access to official fields this modification is necessary. The other major modification is around

35 FIFA, standing for Federation International Football Association, is the world’s self-acclaimed authority on the codified game of soccer.
safety where specific moves in soccer, namely slide tackles and bicycle kicks\textsuperscript{36} are forbidden and, hence, these are cautionable offences. The other “safety” rule in the modification section is under sending-off offenses (red card). This is the zero tolerance towards offensive or insulting or abusive language and/or gestures of any kind. Though the motivation for flagging this rule to participants is in an effort to foster and produce a safe queer-positive space for all queers in the league the reality of past and current incidents of players having to deal with sexuality motivated abuse continues demonstrates the lack of addressing such abuse. These are modifications to FIFA’s rules but what are missing are modifications that change the state of play, or how the actual game and culture around may support the status quo. The other odd aspect of having the league run in accordance with FIFA rules and licensed referees is the league is not a soccer-sanctioned league in the province of Ontario. In fact, technically, the league does not have the right to use licensed referees and must find “outlaw”\textsuperscript{37} referees to ref our games and this becomes a problem during tournaments because the league cannot find enough willing and able referees. Is establishing respectability where the league feels recognized as legitimate and intelligible a goal? And if so, how might this goal relate to overcompensation for “wounded” masculinities where much work and attention is orchestrated to “pass” as a genuine soccer league. In his quote above, participant Q6, described the league as symbolized by whom you “see on the hill”. This is how Q6 imagines or experiences the league but is the league imagined or experienced the same by all? For some, imagining themselves on the hill is more challenging. I will continue to demonstrate this challenge throughout the rest of my findings.

4.2 Introduction

In this section I outline my main findings and their relationship to my theoretical frameworks. I begin with an overall discussion of my findings followed by a detailed discussion of my five main themes.

\textsuperscript{36} A kick where the player jumps into the air and does a scissor kick over their head flipping their body in the air.

\textsuperscript{37} Outlaw referee is a term used within soccer discourse that identifies a qualified referee, level 2 or higher, who is licensed through the Ontario Soccer Association (OSA) and is to only referee OSA sanctioned games but is willing, despite knowledge of the possible disciplinary action that could be taken against them, to referee non OSA sanctioned games such as the games in the MSL.
Many interviewees seemed to be occupied or constrained by actively not wanting to meet the expectations of the panoptic straight world for themselves and the gay league or wanting to surpass those expectations or not fall victim to the stereotypes of what a queer athlete is expected to be by straight onlookers. Linking to Foucault’s idea of the panoptic, players may feel they are being watched by the outside straight world and may either conform or challenge the expectations put on them by others. I am presenting these (dis)identifications\(^{38}\) (Munoz, 1999) in relation to five modes or what I have termed sarcomeres\(^{39}\) that collectively make up a queer muscle/muscularity; they are: gender and racialization, sexual behaviour, healthy lifestyles, athletic skill; and finally, economics. I will unpack these interconnected five sarcomeres that are produced in concert for queer muscularity to articulate itself. Later in the discussion and conclusion, I argue queer muscularity’s contraction and extension of a specific normative queer sportsperson and queer league on a local level, relates to building a strong queer nation/force and queer muscularity on a global level. Motivations for some players to identify with and buy into a hegemonic normativity may circulate around fear, control, power and an internalization of stereotypes about queers that can be seen as not only often homophobic but also sexist, racist, body fascist and heteronormative (Duggan, 2002; Jakobsen, 1998). The idea about being cautious and aware of visibility and a responsibility to present an ideal of queer sportspersons that does not disturb the status quo was present in all five sarcomeres, a point I will later link to normative queer nation building. However, this was probably most evident in relation to sexual relations. I believe this corresponds to how queers are often viewed as overly and overtly sexually promiscuous. Queers are often sexualized in a negative way by the mainstream (Ross, 2004) but also by other queers. This negative sexual stereotyping is more prevalent and often more demonized as the monogamous committed couple is still, and even more so now due to gay marriage, upheld as the gold standard in homonormative queer contexts.

\(^{38}\) Jose Esteban Munoz argues for disidentifications to facilitate a move away from identity politics and static or additive representations by suggesting that “our charge as spectators and actors is to continue disidentifying with this world until we achieve new ones” (Munoz, 1999, p. 200).

\(^{39}\) Basic unit of a muscle and I chose it as a metaphor to indicate that these are interconnected pieces that make a muscle work and hence these five areas make queer muscularity work and move within and through the league.
4.2.1 Gender & Racialization

In this research I found that participants may have subscribed to certain relationships marked by space, sex, race and gender. In this section “Gender and Racialization”, I discuss the first sarcomere. I begin by describing why I have put gender and racialization together in the same sarcomere and then I discuss masculinities in the league. This is followed by a section on femininities in the league and a final section on racialization. I end this section with a discussion that integrates thinking about gender, race, sexuality and space. The league’s statement on membership in the league constitution reads:

The membership of the League comprises all persons 19 years of age and older who are registered in the League. No person registered in the League will be denied membership because of his or her sexual orientation, age, race, creed, colour, national origin, nationality, ancestry, citizenship, religion, political affiliation, sex, marital status or health status.

The first sarcomere of my analysis of the league is that of gender and racialization, which figures quite predominately in my overall findings about what is occurring in the league. The importance of gender and racialization in some ways may not be surprising given that the league is somewhat unique as it is a multi-gender and multi racialized sport space. However, as the omission of gender and gender identity in the membership statement of the league might imply, some subjectivities are in the margins, even in this league. In this section, I outline why I discuss gender and race in tandem, masculinities in the league, what space is given for IaFs 40 in the league, and the language used by the league in its policy and texts. Then, I discuss whiteness in the league’s multiple spaces and, finally, I discuss sexual behaviour and sexualizing of gender and racialization.

The way that gender and racialization is produced in the league’s spaces may reinforce a white male masculinity that in this context can be gay but gay in a very specific way. These markers (gender & racialization) are part of an interlocking form of oppression that causes a specific masculinity to be seen as the ideal, the norm and the familiar and all others masculinities and non masculinities to be seen as strange, other, and non-valued. In the league, despite an effort to include multiple genders (only male and female) and a constitution that states any race can join,

40 Individuals that identify as female.
gender and racialization in the league are still reified in a way that continues the privileging of those white men who were the founders and original participants in this league. Upholding this kind of masculinity does not mean that the league does not have bodies that do not fit this or even work against it, rather, the findings demonstrate that a specific kind of masculinity is privileged in the MSL.

4.2.2 Microcosms and Masculinities

Masculinities play out in nuanced ways in the league; however two dominant forms appear to take up the most space. First is the heteronormative, hyper masculinity slightly modified by gay men - meaning a masculinity where the IaMs\(^{41}\) that proscribe to it, dominate other IaMs and subordinate IaFs (Connell, 2005). Gay IaMs are often dominated in the mainstream but in this context some of the gay IaMs become the oppressors (becoming the top of the hierarchy and reestablishing norms), which makes these gay IaMs dominate over other gay and queer IaMs and IaFs. This of course continues to marginalize those that do not meet strict standards (norms) and this may be occurring in the league. This hegemonic masculinity may be kept in place by an acceptance (a buy in) and self-governance of players in the league. During interviews it became most apparent that all the IaMs when asked how they identify in terms of gender would very quickly and curtly reply “male”:

Ok. In terms of gender. (researcher)

I'm male! (Q5)

Another participant maybe not so ironically stated, when I asked:

Ok and in terms of gender? (R)

Gender? (Q7)

Yes (R)

I am in the highest gender class (Q7) [italics mine]

In terms of what would you say your gender identification is? (R)

Oh, oh, um male sorry (Q7)

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\(^{41}\) Individuals that identify as male.
Even the executive member interviewed who should be most familiar with the gender policies for the league was very quick to state and seemed annoyed when questioned giving off a tone of ‘obviously’:

Sure, and in terms of gender? (R)

Male! (Q9)

Many of the IaMs participants seemed shocked that I would ask or that this may be questioned. Occupying a place of privilege such as maleness in our society often does not lead to questioning it or considering why you are rewarded for it. And perhaps, because IaMs as gays or queers are already interrupting the gender myth (Pronger, 1998) the tendency is to cling to whatever amount of hegemonic masculinity is possible. Only one participant IaM articulated an enjoyment of playing, questioning and queering his gender:

Gender male, man whatever like I don’t yeah I. I guess with maybe the caveat that like I do a lot of performance work that focuses on screwing around with ah maleness and like gender identity and stuff like that. So again I guess that’s just part of the process of queering an identity just having fun with it, playing with it, questioning it.

Q6

Q6 was also the only participant that said that having IaFs in the league and on all the teams as something that threatened most of the IaMs. There seemed to be little acknowledgement that IaFs could play well and one executive member, Q9, even suggested that they (IaFs with little soccer skill prior to joining the league) play in the MSL and then choose to leave because they are on the bench for most of the games:

I think some of the better players in our league probably if they are not a good girl they just blame it on the fact that they are a girl. You know they like the girls that are good players but if they are not a good player they just blame it on the fact that they are female as opposed to they are just not a good player. I think they would still, some people probably, still prefer an inexperienced male over an inexperienced female.

Q9

Q9 as well as others reported that inexperienced IaMs are chosen to play over inexperienced IaFs:
I mean I suppose there are sometimes the girls like the girls who aren’t as good don’t get as much play as regular guys you know I can see a little bit of that

Q2

These narratives suggest normative hegemonic power relations and status quo are (re)formed within the league. The league and its players are part of, and have been socialized by, mainstream society (and mainstream sports representations) and are by no means immune to society’s unfair/inequitable allocations of power and privilege. Beyond the influence of and assumptions made by mainstream society, I will argue that (over)compensation occurs in the league (Connell, 1992; Halkitis, 2007). Some players are trying to prove to themselves and to others that they and/or the league are just as good as any other soccer league, can play at the same intense level, and can become part of that hard masculinity of building a strong nation/group. Interestingly, all these sentiments were expressed by IaMs.

Just having a space that is sort of more LGBTQ friendly makes a world of difference. As well it's not necessarily that it's a different kind of soccer or something, it's just that it is a place where LGBTQ people don't have to feel afraid or ashamed or closeted or whatever.

Q6

I don't see it as a substitute for mainstream. I just see gay leagues as, or queer leagues as marketing to a different niche in society. We've had straight people play in MSL. There are still some MSL players that are straight so we're not limiting who can play. We’re LGBTQ open, straight friendly. Although I don't know how many of the mainstream leagues would be open to a gay team.

Q3

Both of these participants recognize a difference to MSL but appear to ‘downplay’ any difference to the mainstream. The following interviewee longs for what the mainstream provides:

In terms of straight leagues I and more so because those guys seem a little bit masculine and more committed to their league and stuff that sort of thing. But in terms of straight leagues I love them. I enjoy them. I know that personally I don't get, you know shit on because I am gay and I'm not one of these people who is in the closet about their sexuality. I actually and I don't like, you know, right at orientation, I don't say “oh I'm gay”? But you know, I kinda let my passion and dedication and my commitment to not only the people um I'm with
but the people I'm playing with, the sportsmanship aspect I let that show what I am and not my sexuality especially in the straight leagues.

Q7

Q7 ironically suggests that he does not have to be closeted to play in a straight league but that he would not talk about his sexuality but allow his way of playing sport speak for him and not his sexuality. He goes on to give an outing experience he had while playing on a mainstream team:

Like I know that one of the guys in my league didn't realize until he facebooked me and he was like, “you're gay”. And I was like, “yeah”. And he's like, “ok that's cool”. Like I would have totally expected him to not wanna talk to me at all and just be like, “ok just leave it to yourself” like. But he seemed pretty ok with it because he saw that I wasn't just ‘loligagglng’ around on the field or just there to check out the guys butts! I was actually there to play the sport.

Q7

So, Q7 demonstrated hegemonic (male) sport qualities and was accepted. Turning to MSL, these players’ narratives illustrate tension in playing sport in different sport spaces, being gay and desiring a place to play that still ‘passes’ as legitimate. This struggle requires the control of feelings of illegitimately and using self-governance and panoptic governance to enforce an ideal of hard and strong masculinity. IaFs may threaten this goal. IaFs remind those striving for the ideal hyper masculinity that not everyone can attain that status or space in sport and that sport is structured in a way that rewards particular bodies. Only some have the ability, privilege and desire to change their bodies to move towards this (im)possible goal. IaFs, visibly, do not meet the hard constructs of the ideal sportsMAN simply on the basis of not being able to, and in some cases despite a desire and will to, pass as a man or manly:

Yeah, yeah I find that guys are more likely to give me a little bit more respect; even the gay ones, if I kinda of look like a guy. It's very easy to do but the thing is once they know your name their like, “ok you're a girl so”. Laughs.

Q11

IaFs’ visible differences and names may threaten the masculinity of these IaM players because they may fall short of this (im)possible goal due to their own sexuality. In essence, I am saying the gay men are always already constructed as less masculine due to their sexuality and hence the need for overcompensation when this construction is internalized. Self-hating and self-pushing is related to internalized and externalized homophobia (Connell, 1992) and how it pushes parts of
the community (men) towards different ends, “fitting in” or resisting normalization. This tension of working towards and against normative constructs is present in MSL and is especially related to how gender is invoked. What does all this mean and why is this persisting in a supposedly more inclusive league?

4.2.3 Good Girls

This section discusses gender presentation and performance in the league and the boundaries of such for specific genders. Language and texts used in the league are also described and theoretical links are made to what this does to these bodies and space.

In order to play and be a successful player in the league IaFs have to be good. Not only do IaFs have to be good in terms of skill level (but not too good to show up the best of the IaMs) they also have to present a certain way and identify a certain way. The league wants their twenty five percent of female representation of IaFs to be female, meaning biologically female. Until recently, the registration form included a ‘sex’ identification area of male only and female only. Recently ‘sex’ was changed to ‘gender’, “other” was added and only this year did “trans” replace the “other” box. This is the interesting paradox: the league claims to be queer and inclusive yet in other ways normative designations continue to uphold the status quo. IaFs players are implicitly encouraged to have a certain gender presentation. IaFs who present as more femme, meaning behave in, and look like, stereotypically feminine ways, in terms of attitude and gender performance, receive more attention. This is an observation I made during my participant observation: there are no league text or narratives that explicitly support this observation.

Expanding upon Butler (1990), gender performance on the field manifests itself stereotypical in feminine sport performance being thought of as unskilled however something interesting happens in this league. These stereotypically feminine ways are jettisoned off the field as in MSL contexts, IaFs have to be able to demonstrate their superiority as athletes, especially over inexperienced IaMs players, as the executive member noted:

42 Present here means how IaFs are read e.g. not too manly or masculine or butch or too queer but somewhat femme. More generally though present is how a subject/body presents themselves whether that be through how they dress and style their hair, how they carry themselves to how they speak and specifically in this context how they are able to use their body while playing soccer.
I think they would still, some people probably still prefer an inexperienced male over an inexperienced female...to me

Q9

Have you heard that in the league then?

R

No I have seen it

Q9

You've seen it?

R

Yeah from my captains or people when they [debate] position[ing] some of the inexperienced females over an inexperienced male always they'll pick an inexperienced male over the female...

Q9

Therefore a tension may exist for IaFs in the league around their gender performance on and off the field. Furthermore, some forms of butchness\textsuperscript{43} are implicitly discouraged or even unrecognized as legitimate and ignored. Again this is an observation from my participant observation and there were no league texts or narratives to support this observation however the fact of its explicit absence in both text and talk may demonstrate how normative and systemic gendering is in the league. In terms of gender presentation, IaFs hyper femme, femme, and androgynous seems to be tolerated in the league with the former more encouraged than the latter. Any presentation too close to butchness (sport prowess for example) may threaten the gender myth (Pronger, 1998) (see next quote). In some ways the league challenges this and in other ways it can reinforce gender types. The gender myth, which in this context places women as less skilled at sport than men, is “tested” in the league. And, this evokes fear in players especially about how it threatens masculinity, specifically gay masculinity:

\textsuperscript{43} Butchness is when a person either consciously or not, comes across by the way they dress, talk and act more tough, rigid and hyper masculine. Examples of what butchness might look like on IaFs are a really short hair cut, wearing baggy lose clothes, binding their breast, etc.
I think maybe one of the reasons some of the men, for instance in this league, are saying things like that, is because they’re threatened by like how strong women players actually are. Um and then like sort of disen…like devaluing that by saying: “oh I can’t, like you know, you check a girl and she like goes down you get a card like, that kinda of stuff. I think, I think that’s just a way of sort of rationalizing getting your ass kicked by someone that you think is weaker than you.

Q6

Reasons for this fear may be due to the feeling that gay men are always already judged as non-sporty as one interviewee from the executive astutely pointed out:

I think I probably feel uncomfortable going to a different league. One more because of my skill level but then I don't want, I would question if people would think that I am just not good because I am gay not because I'm new to the sport. That is what I would think if I went to like a straight league.

Q9

The homoerotic paradox 44, as Pronger (1998) calls it, has the potential to enable gay men to see the power they are given and perhaps change that inequity (e.g., demonstrating it is a ruse that men are better than women at sport) but the league continues to setup IaFs as inferior; because they are currently split up into small numbers on each team reinforcing the fact that a team with more IaFs would “naturally” be at a disadvantage. The idea of gender as biological determinant as opposed to a performance and a myth links into Butler’s (1999) work which I will return to in the discussion section. Furthermore if the assessment clinic actually does what it sets out to do, rate skill level, it should not matter what the breakdown is of IaFs or IaMs on any team. Due to masculinity’s fragility, great lengths are often taken to ensure the fine veneer does not crack (Butler, 1999; Pronger, 1990). As Pronger (1990), states: “the violation of masculinity is fearful because it exposes the frailty of masculine power” (p. 76), and the gender paradox brings attention to the falseness of men’s power. To return to the league, its binary setup also impacts the IaMs specifically the ones who are not that skilled at soccer. IaMs are affected by

44 “Paradoxical masculinity is not a total rejection of the power given men in the [gender] myth – it constitutes a paradoxical relationship with that power. As men, homosexual men are accorded and may, in fact, take advantage of the power and prestige of patriarchy. But being paradoxical men, at a deep psychic level their desire for masculinity is also a desire to undermine masculine power. (Their sense of the paradox may or may not lead them to a more thorough reflection of patriarchy in their lives.)” (Pronger, 1990, p. 75)
permissible gender expressions/performances too. Specifically, how and for who (IaFs and IaMs) butchness and manliness is (de)valued? Many players (IaMs) discuss a shoring up of their masculinity at the field more so than any of the other spaces in the league:

I totally felt more straight in that league than I ever had before….I [am] immediately hyper masculine, like I became hyper masculine, or I, over masculinized, if that’s even a word um myself. Like being there.

Q7

This quote demonstrates that hyper-masculinity is reproduced in the league so players in this space ask the question: “what can I be in this space?” instead of being able to express “who am I” (Butler, 1999), which always already forecloses many possibilities of expression and resistance to the norm. When challenges are made to the norm and a blurring of gender occurs there is often consequences for that challenge(r). One interviewee discusses how she enjoys playing with her “masculinity” but finds this hard to do in the league:

I, woman. I'm a woman completely! I just like to mess with gender bindaries, boundaries…

Q11

However, she speaks of being political and outspoken but also worries about the reactions she may face from others in the league socially:

Like in a social setting then, I'm kinda like, “ok did they take it offensive? Do they like me? Do they not like me? I don't know?” I gave them my number but they didn't text me to say, “hey let's go for coffee.”

Q11

Our conversation continues and she reflects on how it is easier for some genders to take up this kind of space with less or no consequences:

Oh definitely easier for a man to do! It's always been difficult for me even at work cause I come across as a super feminist at work and they're all like: “whoa where are you coming from?” But like even in like the world like I find that men can sit there, out there and talk about things that are going on in the political world without any forethought of the ramifications of saying that. And where as I'm always like a little bit: “should I be saying this, shouldn't I be saying this?” And I'm more likely actually to say it to a bunch of gay boys then I am to a bunch of straight boys cause I find that straight boys would be a lot
more taken aback by a woman speaking their mind and it's interesting cause we have left the 1950s.

Q11

This quote reveals a perception that gay IaMs are easier to confront in regards to patriarchy, which may connect to viewing gay IaMs as less masculine. Also the quote relates to the production of masculine space in the league because in this predominantly gay IaMs space this patriarchy is not challenged in text or talk, as I discuss further along in my analysis.

Another IaM interviewee also enjoys playing with gender but has found it difficult and challenging to do in the league. He is perceived as odd, strange and weird and some IaMs ostracize him for it as I have noted in my field notes a few times. Again why is this happening in a supposed more inclusive space? A reason for this might be what Bulte (1999) calls, the ‘policing of gender’ which is linked to the need to know who is which gender in order to ensure that eroticism is occurring towards the ‘right’ gender. Returning to Pronger’s (1990) concept of the homoerotic paradox, he suggests that the need to know or the possibility of mistaken gender only serves to highlight gender as a performance act (Butler, 1999). As an LGBTQ league, where a multi-gendered space exists, the importance of being able to know who is who may be heightened in this space. Being attracted towards the ‘wrong’ gender would highlight that “we” are attracted to a performance. This is illustrated in one of my field observations. I heard an IaF turn to another IaF and pointing to another player say: “who is that really hot dyke watching the game”? Upon learning that the “really hot dyke” is an IaM, whose gender expression is very much androgynous and on the periphery of what is tolerated for men in the league, the IaF laments: “I wish gay boys wouldn’t dress like that”. The androgynous player has some other capital that I suggest allows him more flexibility to play with his gender. He is well skilled, a goalie, is from a European country and has been in a relationship with his partner who is much older than him for a long time. I will return to this idea of capital in the economic section. Some players have less capital to use. I witnessed a player, who I am not sure how they identified but probably did not identify as male anymore but many assumed this player to be an IaM, this player wore make-up and femme clothes and spoke lightly and was very unskilled at soccer. This player was so ostracized by a few of the butch IaMs that the player left and never came back to the league. The harassment of this player was verbally abusive including them being called a fag, a tranny and a girl - all meant as gendered insults.
The language that is invoked by the league is exclusionary even though, again, paradoxically it sets out to encourage a broader group of players to play in the league. The use of female players specifically is perhaps causing “trans” and some non-male identified but also non-female identified people to not play. Even though “trans” is now included in the registration form, the language used around the participation goals is always ‘women’. One interviewee stated:

Umm, the feminine is still undervalued and it's like a surprise when a girl is good at soccer and that kind of stuff. I can't really think of anyone who has trans identified that plays and yeah, so there's a lot of, yeah there's a lot of inequality or inequity or whatever that, is present in the league, so.

Q6

The way language is used in text by the league and by league players in conversations is contributing to the continuation of undervaluing the feminine. As I mentioned in the introduction, language and semantics are very important: they can either open up or close space for people to see themselves existing in that place. Kapur (2005) discusses using language to make space for the subaltern however as discussed in my theoretical frameworks section making space by naming and giving visibility can have negative consequences. Having a goal of 25% of players that are non-male in the league may be a way of opening up more space for more marginalized bodies in the league. However, as this section has outlined the desire to affirm and encourage these non-normative bodies in the league may currently not be a priority because of the dominance of the ideal of hyper and sporty masculinity.

4.2.4 See Race Run

The league has established a priority to be diverse in some respects. The league also markets itself to potential sponsors as diverse in many forms sexually, genders, age, incomes but not multi-culturally or ethnically. Soccer is a sport that many people, cultures and nations play all over the world. It is also a rather inexpensive sport to play making it accessible to a great deal of economically disadvantaged ethnoracialized communities. The league takes place in the downtown core of one of the most multicultural cities in the world but the league itself has not taken measures to recruit racialized players. Many interviewees talk with great pride about how diverse the league is and some noted how racially diverse it is but only one noted that they
thought the league could have more direct influence on non-white ethnic participants and could increase numbers from those communities intentionally:

Ok. Um, well I’m very, I find the league, maybe it could have a lot more influence on, on other races. I found them [the league], you know it’s mostly white, um, white girls, um. Which is surprising because most soccer players that I grew up watching on TV were like Italian or um, black. So surprised that we [the league] didn’t have more turn out of that [other races] than we do. But you know, I am certainly not a racist by any chance. And I don’t think…Toronto, and Toronto is lucky enough to be, certainly be more open and welcome to races and is a good mix [Toronto].

Q8

In this section I will discuss three areas in the league that are related to whiteness and how some bodies are racialized. The three areas are the field, the social spaces/activities and the executive. I then link what is occurring in these spaces back to post-colonial theories.

Although the league claims to be diverse there are many instances that reproduce whiteness. The soccer field is the first area where there are problematic patterns that happen for racialized bodies. In sport sociology the theory of stacking (Maguire, 1988) explains how positions are distributed in sports. Stacking theory suggests that white players are given sport roles on the field that are perceived as the leadership, intellectual, strategy minded positions, where as positions that require speed, power, and strength are ascribed to racialized bodies usually black bodies. In the MSL there are people of colour and in fact some of the more skilled players are non-white. From my own field observations, I noticed that almost all of these players are in positions such as strikers or wingers, soccer positions that require speed. Moreover, there is a perception from interviewees who identified as white and non-white that other players in the league have stereotypical ideas about non-white players:

I have some middle eastern queer friends in the league who, I know, other people, in their lesser moments probably view them as like your stereotypical, like hot tempered Muslim male releasing his aggression on the field in a way that is not acceptable by our, you know, western democratic sort of soccer playing standards right.

Q2
The players in the league may have stereotypical assumptions about non-white bodies and ethnicities and through the league’s spaces these stereotypes are reinforced and (re)produced as expected cultural norms. Furthermore race and gender are often seen as additive in this space:

I mean when your gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered it's about being diverse and that diverseness...having different races and sexes just enhances that notion.

Q8

The idea of “additive diversity” ignores the way interlocking oppression works towards marginalizing gender, racialization, sexuality, etc. (Razack, 1998; Stoler, 1995). The above quote highlights the assumption often made that LGBTQ individuals simply by being LGBTQ are aware and inclusive towards all kinds of diversity, a point that I will return to in the discussion. When one participant is asked to describe league norms he states:

…other social norms, I don't know it's a pretty like, it's a very gay league, white gay league, ah white gay league with people that have pretty good jobs in business and industry.

Q6

This quote identifies explicitly the links between white, gay, and middle class that operate in the league. Other participants also commented on the whiteness of the league. They were aware of non-white players but that the league appeared to function in many ways as a white space. The same participant when asked if he would make any changes in the league returns to the notion of whiteness but also noted generational gaps and sexist behaviour still exists in the league:

Ah, I would say there's still a bit of work to do. I think there's a lot of older white gay men who sort of bring this weird misogynist vibe from their like previous sporting [life]. Like when you were four and playing, or like eight and playing hockey and it was like: “come on you sissy!” Like that kind of stuff still shows up a lot.

Q6

I too noticed sexist/misogynistic aspects to the league even with some of my participants in how they described the league especially towards the multi-gendered aspect of the league. I will further explore the concept in the athletic tension section. All of these stereotypes that have been discussed in relation to playing also extend to beyond the field and into social spaces. As
previously mentioned, most of the league’s socials take place in a sponsor’s bar and, of course, some cultural and religious practices make the bar a non-ideal setting to socialize. Aside from this obvious exclusion, the cultural norms, such as whiteness, middle class, cosmopolitan, sport, Christianity, etc. that work in the league also operate in the bars. For example, the executive members have their own cultural norms and often tend to organize the social events around these norms. One of my participants calls these socials, and the members of the league that frequent them, the “chicken wings” crowd:

Cause they always eat chicken wings and drink beer….like for an ethnic gay looking at the way Anglo gays spend their time going to the bar for beer and chicken wings….

Q2

When I asked this participant what might be an alternative to a “chicken wings” night, he responded:

I don't know. I guess cause I am ethnic, I mean, I always think it's kinda, I don't wanna say funny but I just think it is kinda very Anglo. The way, like, all these Anglos, they like to go to the bar for a pint of beer and like snack food like chicken wings or nachos. It is in my mind a very sort of Anglo North American thing to do to socialize. So I guess if an ethnic person did it it's different. They might go have coffee on a patio or something like that. You know what I mean? It's just a different vibe.

Q2

The league’s whiteness then dominates even in the socializing practices and the “vibe” given off is that of a white, Anglo, culture and tradition.

The executive, which is the governing body of the league, reproduces whiteness\(^45\). The majority of executive members are white. Most of their meetings are in bars or pubs which are traditionally white spaces. Whiteness is so normalized in society that within the league no interviewees questioned the make up of the executive. Moreover, the co-captains are for the most part white and are selected by the executive. From my own observation this appears to be naturalized. It may even make sense to some people because we have a majority of white people

\(^{45}\) Besides a commissioner for two years who was a person of colour all other executive members have been white.
in the league. Therefore an assumption might be that the executive will be white too. Even though the executive has a women’s representative, she is a white women. It is interesting to note that IaFs account for less than 25% of the league, yet they have a member on the executive where as there are the same if not more racialized bodies in the league however there are no official executive representatives or community outreach done to make the league more inclusive for these racialized bodies. Perhaps this lack of representation and recognition relates to the broader aspect of gay communities who often have “token women” representation on committees but systemically appear to still marginalize queer people of colour (Munoz, 1999; Nast, 2002; Puar, 2002).

4.2.5 Gendered & Raced Sexuality

Slutty, Eroticized and Exoticized oh my!

This final subsection of the gender and racialization sarcomere discusses how both gender and race are marginalized but also eroticized and exoticized in the league. The subheading makes reference to a line from the Wizard of Oz, which is a movie that is a part of gay popular culture. This subsection outlines how white lesbians are (de)sexualized and people of colour are (hyper)sexualized. Links to post-colonial and feminist theories are made.

As one of my participants states there is much “Lesbian drama” that occurs in the league that the IaMs do not pay much attention to. This is in contrast with the “Gay drama,” not that it is usually characterized as such, which many IaMs make a conscious effort to be aware of and supportive of and be involved in. As I already mentioned at the beginning of this first sarcomere section many of the IaMs question the league’s goal of IaFs representation and feel IaFs are not as committed as IaMs players.

I just find it funny that we're you know, like we recruit and recruit and recruit lesbians that don't want to be there! So why are we recruiting? I know so we get some money to have so many but if they don't wanna be there then we don't get the grant! Instead of putting them on teams, I gotta be honest with you, I think every time I've have, I've had women on the team, they usually quit and that's not all of them.

Q6
Others not only point to the fact that the Pink Turf (an all-lesbian) soccer league exists but some question its legitimacy or need for such a space and more specifically that this ‘other’ league is too exclusive. Again, this speaks to IaMs questioning of IaFs’ spaces and their commitment to MSL.

I think it's good yeah, especially some of the girls are tough in the league and competitive and you know better than some of the guys right, it's good. There's also pink ladies league or pink turf or whatever it's called. So it's kinda funny they also, I guess I don't know, maybe some women who don't wanna play with men, they'd rather have a feminine option fine sure.

Q2

I think having a generally inclusive atmosphere is good and I'm not saying that Pink Turf is bad but you know they're an all lesbian league. They're at least, as far as I know, there are no straight women in the league. There are certainly no men in the league.

Q1

Q1 later commented again in the interview about Pink Turf:  

That is one concern in some ways I have with Pink Turf, like I understand maybe wanting to have a positive women's space, but like I've said, I think it's all too easy to fall into a mindset that may not be as actually positive and affirming as they might, as you might think if you're within the group.

Q1

He was not alone in his critique of Pink Turf’s ‘homogenous space’. The exclusionary nature of Pink Turf was also questioned by one of my IaF participants:

Yeah. I haven't played on Pink Turf, but I have witnessed a few of the games and practices. And it's not mixed and it's not as widely inclusive as [MSL].

Q12

IaFs are for the most part essentialized. Their experiences, looks, desires and sexualities are understood by the majority of gay men in the league as stereotypically lesbian. There are not many IaFs who “do” bisexuality or heterosexuality in the league or, more likely, not many who at least feel comfortable enough to disclose this in the league. The few IaFs that have confidently disclosed to me that they do not “do” lesbianism exclusively say that they are always already
assumed to be lesbian by both IaMs and IaFs in the league. IaFs stereotypically, are also viewed as less sexually active and having less opportunity to be sexually active in the league:

I think it’s much more possible for the boys to pick up in the league than the girls. Maybe it’s not more possible but it does happen more. The league is a meat market for some people yes...of the gay male community and the gay male scene. I think the hook ups are much more frequent in the male community. I think that’s just representative of the two communities even outside in the bigger world.

Q12

This quote shows that the perception of what occurs on a macro scale (the queer communities) also occurs on a micro scale (the league). More specifically, the same stereotypes about IaFs exist outside the league and are, of course, brought into the league. I believe that this importing of stereotypes is also occurring towards racialized bodies and how sexually active these racialized bodies are perceived to be. I did not have any interviews that indicate that racialized bodies are viewed as more sexually active but my field observations did note that racialized bodies in the league including racialized IaFs are often viewed and upheld as (hyper)sexually active and in a different way than their white counterparts. This occurs through being eroticized and exoticized in certain ways. Furthermore, the lack of discussion about how racialized bodies are sexualized in the league is a noteworthy point in of itself. I observed and heard comments about how specific ethnic groups have larger penises, are viewed as exclusive dominant tops46 or power bottoms47, and that they have a large amount of sex with many partners. I even noted some players specifically attempting to hook up with non-white players specifically because of these stereotypical racist beliefs. Interestingly enough, I noted fewer comments about women, although there was some talk of non-white women having more sex too. Finally, there was also a connection being made between non-white bodies and higher incidences of HIV/AIDS. These

46 Top is used to describe roles for the duration of a sexual act, or maybe be used generally as a psychological, social, and sexual identity, as well as indicating one’s usual preference as the penetrator (Underwood, 2003). Dominant top refers to great stamina and or special topping skill as well as exclusively, i.e. they are ‘never’ penetrated. There are connotations of strength and masculinity associated with tops.

47 Bottom is used to describe roles for the duration of a sexual act, or maybe be used generally as a psychological, social, and sexual identity, as well as indicating one’s usual preference as the penetrating (Underwood, 2003). Power bottom refers to aggressively enjoys being the receptive partner as well as exclusively. There are connotations of weakness and femininity associated with bottoms.
racializations deposit racialized bodies as slutty dirty bodies in the league without the access to “slut pride”\(^{48}\), that the white IaMs access more readily. “Slut shame”\(^{49}\) and “slut pride”, will be further problematized in the next section on sexual behaviour, but it pertains to who is slutty in the league, how it is manifested and how some “slutty” individuals can still garner respectability as good sport citizens. I will discuss this more in the following sarcomere on sexual behavior. I conclude this gender and racilaization sarcomere and reiterate that shoring up of gender and the (in)visibility of racialized bodies occurs in the league. The two following quotes from one participant sums up both points. First, he reflects on the lack of gender fluidity in the league:

> And I'm not equating transgender and drag, but most people, in fact to my knowledge self identify as male or female. Whether they are lesbian or gay or bi or whatever, in terms of that continuum I think there are a lot of answers, but in terms of being male or female I don't even think that there are that many people that play around the borders. I mean there are some people, some of the men. I think that there are some women who are deliberately butch and I mean deliberately by personality and choice. Just like we have flamboyantly, stereotypically gay. The word that comes to mind is “Nelly” but, femme gay guys in the league. So I mean in some ways those are the two extremes. I don't think there is anyone who’s transgendered. Whether there's someone that is and is choosing to not talk about it or bring it up in the league, I don't know. But there's no one that I know that falls outside of the strictly male or strictly female.

Q1

Despite the lack of perceived transgendered bodies, this participant states that the league is diverse however in the end even he acknowledges the league’s homogeneity.

> I think it's very positive. Like I said, I think it is very easy for a majority, any type of majority, to start thinking that everything in the world runs the way that they have the correct, best outlook on something. Their opinion is correct, all of that. And so having more diversity in the league, be it, having a league that is predominantly gay men, having more diversity in terms of having women, in terms of having heterosexuals, in terms of having families, in terms of having 19 year olds and 55 year olds. In terms of having

\[^{48}\text{Slut pride is when an individual is arrogant about the sexual actions they have had with multiple partners, whether the actions be factual or not, or when others are arrogant for the individual about their sexual endeavours. Sex pride can also be part of sex positivity and being sex positive with yourself and others.}\]

\[^{49}\text{Slut shame is when an individual, or group is discredited by themselves or by others, for their multiple partners sexual actions, whether the actions be factual or not.}\]
a predominantly Canadian born, but a lot of people aren't, and you know the ones that aren't may have been here a day, or may have been here 15 years, but came from somewhere else. In terms of ethnic, well, I mean ethnic and cultural diversity, I think that's something that, ok I would say that most of [ML] is gay, white Canadian male, but there is a lot that isn't. And, I think that that's really good.

Q1

The above quote exemplifies the desire to have some diversity in terms of gendered and racialized bodies but in reality the players in the league are seen as very gay and white. Even with some diversity, the perception that dominates is that gay, white, IaMs are most present. The next section will continue to problematize the notions of ‘inclusiveness’ and of ‘diversity’ in relation to sexual behavior.

4.3 Sexual Behaviour

*Promiscuous Pansies?*

The manifestation of sexual behaviour in the league produces tensions and is both discreet and visible at the same time. I have wondered whether bringing this to the reader’s attention in this thesis will perpetuate the sexualization of this queer community? Personally, I am caught between the tension of wanting to discuss the sexual energy and the self-censorship in the league and worrying about reinforcing stereotypes. But sexual behaviour is central to the league. I also find myself wondering why I need to justify my discussion about sexual behaviour in the MSL when all sport is sexualized but more often than not, it is just downplayed because of the league’s (hetero)normative practices. To discuss the homosocial and homoerotic aspects of an all male team is taboo (Connell, 1987, p. 186; Lenskyj, 1991, p. 291) and yet to do this for MSL league also seems taboo or cliché but in a very different way. It might be what people are expecting to find in a thesis on LGBTQ sport. Despite the awkwardness and tension that I feel, I am convinced that sexual behaviour is a very important aspect of the league. Given the conclusion of the last section on gender and racialization both impacting upon who and how sexual behaviour operates in the league, it is important to discuss, who gets to be sexy, sexual, and slutty or who gets to fuck or be fucked. There is also a strong correlation between sexual behaviour and safer sex practices, specifically relating to HIV/AIDS status, which I will discuss briefly in this section but
will do so in more depth in the “healthy lifestyles” and “economic” sections. In this section, I outline the government\(^{50}\) of sexual actions in the league and the separations players make between “church” and “state.” I consider who gets the room to be slutty or have sexual opportunities and how language is employed in gendered ways when players talk about “fucking”. I will show that there is a tendency to verbally deny sexual behaviour and yet an underlying yearning for more sexual opportunities and cruising spaces. Finally I will discuss how players imagine cruising spaces with more sexual opportunities and how these imaginations are justified for some players through health.

Sexual behaviour, especially for the LGBTQ community is tied intimately with identity. Without being reductionist, LGBTQ people usually identify (or are somewhat forced to identify) on the basis of whom they are attracted to and sleep with. LGBTQ communities are sexualized from within and outside their communities. This history of “hyper sexualization” is something that enables them to define themselves (and other to define them) as “other” and in some way it keeps them from identifying as part of the norm. However, gaining acceptance from the norm and meeting normative ideals may be motivated by a desire to ‘pass’ in the heteronormative mainstream. Since sexual behaviours are taboo subjects in many heteronormative contexts, players in the league may feel the need to downplay sexual behaviours in this context. This may be particularly the case for some bodies (IaF's) because of their increased pressure on them to replicate a normative femininity (which sees women as non-sexual agents). The league is very visible, it is in a public park. The space impacts on player’s sexual behaviours. For example, I observed the following:

Player A approaches player B, player B has just substituted off the field and Player A has arrived early as his team plays the following game. Player A lets Player B know: “he is going to the washroom”. Player C who is also waiting to substitute back on the field quips to player B: “that was Player A inviting Player B to go along with Player A to the washroom”. Player B responds: “that he probably would go if it was a bar or something but cannot here on the field, separation of church and state you know”.

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\(^{50}\) Government here is meant in a Foucaultian sense of governmentality meaning the organized practices (mentali­ties, rationalities, and techniques) through which subjects are governed (Mayhew, 2004). In this context how the players are governed in terms of their sexual behaviour in league spaces.
A double entendre operates in this conversation: the gay village in Toronto is on Church Street and is often referred to in shorthand as “Church”. The park is the purview of the municipal government (the state). The players know that they must separate “Church” (and the sexual activities that are possible there) from state (the park washrooms). This self policing demonstrates a Foucauldian panoptic of self-governing (Foucault, 1975). The panoptic mechanisms operating at this moment are; the league, the public at large using the park, and more importantly, the individual players govern themselves and others in the league. To be seen as good state (nation) citizens, the players must not be caught or viewed as perverts, overtly sexual. Sexuality belongs in the village\textsuperscript{51} bedrooms. I will return to a discussion on good citizenship later but I would like to remain focused here on the sexual whitewashing that is occurring in the league. Mostly all interviewees talked about their anxieties related to sexual behaviour in the league. One participant describes his own anxieties:

That's kinda of what happen in [MSL] with me. I just became very introverted and just thought why can't we just play a game? Why does everyone have to sleep with each other? Why do people want to sleep with me right now? I look like a mess you know! But you know it was a very uncharacteristic time for me.

Q7

He continued by discussing what others perceptions of gay league’s are, one that he had evidently internalized:

(Laughs) I mean they stereotype them in a way that, you know, mmm…they're there, they're obviously: “there to play”. And I say this in quotes “like to play the sport” but also to see what's on the market. So there is like a duality to it. There's two, you know, they're there and it's not so much a hidden alternative, no it's not a hidden alternative motive…there is just two motives. In the beginning for most people, in straight leagues I mean, especially the ones I play on, obviously, I'm not there to sleep with people! I'm there to play the sport and I feel like that's the way people are…when they are on a straight league. I mean obviously [there are] latent homosexual tendencies on straight leagues that I'm very well aware of. Um but you know the more matter of factly, it's more heterosexual. We're just here to play the game.

\textsuperscript{51} Village refers to “Church” or the gay village that exists along Church St in the city of Toronto.
This participant then stereotypes his own community as hypersexual. Another participant cautions me that sex and sexual orientation is not what should be focused on when playing sports or in life in general.

"I don't think it's bad but it's just I mean I don't feel like you know sexual orientation is how you should define yourself. I think and we as people are so much more interesting and complex you know. Who you choose to go to bed with is certainly not...ah...shouldn't be a defining factor. You should focus on, I don't think it should be something that you want to or need to have...I think there is just more to it."

Finally, an IaF participant stated:

"Yeah, this is interesting for me, the league is a very non-sexual space and I, but you know part of it is that I was always in a relationship with someone outside the league while I was playing. So I was never single and looking which might have changed my perspective. I just didn't think about it."

For the most part then players try to downplay the eroticness of the league. Sexual behaviour in the league is approached differently by players that identify as female than those who identify as male and by non-white and older players. However all players regardless of how they approached the topic of sexual behaviour within the league seemed to acknowledge its existence, if even only by acknowledging its lack of existence in general or for them specifically. Sexual behaviour was a topic that I was interested in examining because the MSL is a space where bodies assumed to be LGBTQ, are being physical, they are moving with other bodies. There was an assumption that some players used this space as an opportunity to cruise and pick up. It was noted that this was more evident or possible for players that identified as male:

"I think it’s much more possible for the boys to pick up in the league than the girls. Maybe it’s not more possible but it does happen more. The league is a meat market for some people yes...of the gay male community and the gay male scene. I think the hook ups are much more frequent in the male community."
This perceived increased opportunity for men to pick up other men may be because the league has more IaMs than IaFs and the perception that proportionally more of the IaFs are partnered. There are probably expectations both intra the IaMs and IaFs groups, between the IaMs and IaFs groups and outside these communities that IaMs have more opportunity and do have more sex than IaFs. Moreover, women in LGBTQ communities are also subjected to gendered stereotypes. That is, to not be sexually aggressive. Along these lines, Razack (1998) argues that a white man can sleep with multiple people, and remain ‘unscathed’ by his actions whereas women and non-white males are ‘marked’ when they do the same. IaMs often tried to downplay the “lesbian drama” that goes on in the league and assured me that the women in the league are all partnered and monogamous. Comments involving U-Haul\(^{52}\) and moving in together can be heard by IaMs towards IaFs on the sidelines. Women, who identify as lesbian and queer are perceived as sexually passive and to be content with monogamous relationships. Contrastingly, non-white bodies are perceived as hyper promiscuous and thought of as having a higher chance of being poz\(^{53}\) (Hall et al., 2007). I concluded after hearing whispers on the sidelines pertaining to “Latin lovers”\(^{52}\) and “hotheaded Muslim Men” who were great in bed that stereotypes about non-white sexuality exist in the league. These stereotypical perceptions about the sexual aspects of people of colour in the league can be linked to theory that suggests that people of colour or people of non-white ethnicities in general are eroticized and exoticized in specific ways that keep the white heteronormative (and I suggest in this context homonormative) power in place (Razack, 1998; Stoler, 1995). One of the interviewees tearfully told me that he was called a “troll”\(^{54}\) in a social situation because of his age and his presumed cultural sexual identity as “Latin lover”. These perceptions (regardless of how false they may be) may be utilized to shore up the masculinity of the white males (Razack, 1998; Stoler, 1995), and gay (my extension). Young, white, boys, and I am suggesting gay boys in this specific context, are able to be licentious and do not get as much stereotyping about their sexual behaviour or the stereotyping may be in a positive light thus leaving them unscathed (Razack, 1998). Even the perception of the interviewee’s narrative, who

\(^{52}\) U-haul is a rentable moving truck that is often associated stereotypically with lesbians insinuating that they move in together quickly (Denizet, 2008).

\(^{53}\) Poz is a slang term used to mean HIV positive.

\(^{54}\) Troll is often used to demarcate an older and therefore often perceived as unattractive man who is searching for sex.
identifies as female and a person of colour, reinforces the notion of more opportunity for men and less for women. But more opportunity for what? The opportunity or opportunities being searched for may be different for different players in the league but often the perception is that the league provides an opportunity for casual sex with the possibility for a relationship but more often for sexual activity, and often for ‘fucking’. Hyper–masculinity in the gay community involves perpetuating the idea that you are having a lot of sex (Connell, 1992; Wilkerson, Brooks & Ross, 2010). The “manlier” thing to “do” here is to be read as “a top” that is out “fucking a lot of holes”. Who is perceived, as a “top” will be further discussed in the next paragraph. I noted a tension that exists in the interplay between wanting this knowledge to be known (“I’m a top and I fuck a lot”) and keeping it quiet. Is this tension related to wanting to pass as a respectable citizen who is or can be in a monogamous relationship, does not cheat and thus can pass or be more palatable to normative (sports) society. However, validating and normalizing only this kind of gay relationship (monogamous) devalues any other kind of relationship structure, which is a point that will be further developed in the discussion and conclusion sections of the thesis.

Sexual behaviour is also denigrated through language on the field. The league’s constitution attends to language under “fouls” and “misconduct” as “sending-off offenses” (red card):

Particular attention is brought to point 6: “uses offensive or insulting or abusive language and/or gestures”. MSL is a co-ed, queer-positive amateur sporting league that fosters an environment free from harassment. MSL takes a zero-tolerance position with regards to offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures.

I have never witnessed this rule being enforced when a player has broken this rule. I have witnessed and been informed of instances where “excitable speech” (Butler, 1997), specifically speech that can be thought of as hate speech that has a ‘chain of oppression’ attached to it has been used. A ‘chain of oppression’ attached to a word can be thought of as all the meanings or the multiple meanings that word or the weight that word or phrase may have invested and attached to it. For example the word ‘president’ may have a negative meaning for some people in some contexts (Butler, 1997) such as a person from a country where the USA has exploited their people/resources may have negative associations with the word president or an anti-capitalist. The instance of excitable speech that I observed also relates to gender and sexualities and what aspects of gender and sexualities are seen as submissive and inferior. One of my interviewees
recounted an incident where a player was sent off the field for a yellow card\textsuperscript{55} by the league’s only IaF referee, who is also assumed to be a lesbian. My interviewee stated:

I’m 99% sure that he is gay. Yet when he was storming off the field, after getting the yellow card, um [he] said: “that fucking dyke”. About the one, you know, um gay lesbian, you know, LGBTQ um ref that we have. And first of all [he] shouldn’t have said [that, that is] number one. Number two, well you shouldn’t have said that in general number one, [but] number two, you’re in a fucking queer league or predominantly queer league, this is especially not the space to be saying that sort of thing.

Q1

The interviewee lamented that he did not do anything to challenge this player’s comment and that he was unsure if others heard what the player had said. The interviewee also noted how shocked he was that the player would dare to say something like that in this league in this space. He had an expectation that this would not occur in such a space. The interviewee said that this player was very skilled at soccer. Did the IaF referee’s caution and sending off bruise his masculinity?

In the sports world, defamatory comments are often gendered and sexed, they demean women and are often lesbophobic (Griffin, 1998). Heckling women is nothing new in the world of sport. In fact lesbophobia works precisely so that any women who threatens or challenges a man’s prowess is labeled a lesbian or a dyke. It is a shame and fear tactic used by men (and women) to keep women in place (Griffin, 1998). Why does this take place in the MSL, a so-called inclusive space?

The language used to oppress women in sport is also sometimes used to oppress some groups of subordinate men. Another language incident is related to sexual behaviour and which sex role is feminized and hence viewed as inferior and negative. One of my interviewees, born outside Canada, told me the story of how being a “fag or a maricon” meant you were “no good at soccer” and also meant you were “passivo,” a ‘Latin’ term for the one penetrated in anal intercourse. To be a man is to be on top. You enter and penetrate. When you are on the receiving end of anal sex, your supposed masculinity is revoked and questioned (Pronger, 1990, p. 137; Robertson, 2002, p. 103). This was something my interviewee grew up with when playing soccer and hated

\textsuperscript{55} In MSL another modification of the rules is when given a yellow card the player must exit the field for five minutes.
it but he was even more shocked upon playing here in Canada in MSL to discover this occurred here too:

Well I think there's, um, I thought I would have completely left that when I left Mexico. When I would come to the first world of gay society and people would not stigmatize one another in the same community by being a top or a bottom. “Bottoms are effeminate”, “bottoms don't play well soccer”, “you hit the ball like a bottom” or “you kick the ball like a bottom” “ah let's not have a bottom as a keeper”. Expressions that are a joke right? Quote, unquote.

Q3

These views may be so systemically internalized in the LGBTQ community that they can be used as weapons against each other. Moreover, when gay men use “the bottom discourse” in this way, they are saying that this person is in the effeminate role and therefore is not as strong as tops. This perpetuates violence against women and effeminate men in sport. This illustrates the sexism that exists in the league and in gay male culture in general. Frye (1983, p. 175, 1996) argues that sexism is rampant within gay male culture and that it is due to how masculinity (hetero and homo) is established and (re)produced, and that male heterosexual (and homosexual) culture is fundamentally homoerotic and misogynistic. I will discuss the sexism that exists in the league in other sections. This sexism almost seems to be invisible to the gay men that use it and there is rarely resistance to its use. The word ‘cunty’ was used in phrases, such as “the ‘cunty’ side of gay politics” by one interviewee (Q2) multiple times with no reflection upon what that means or (re)produces. This slang word was used to describe the negative side of gay politics. Such associations with a derogatory term for one of women’s sex organs demonstrate that sexism is (re)produced in the league. This blatant use and ignorance of sexism was not lost on one of my IaF interviewees.

There was some guys talking about something and I think they said something to me and I was like, “I'd prefer if you don't say that”. And they're like “why?” And I'm like, “because it's sexist and I'm a woman”. And they're like, “but you're a lesbian”. And I'm like, “that doesn't mean I'm not a woman”. Like it's just kinda, like they don't, like I find that I like gay guys. I love them but they really don't get feminism! It's actually kinda of shocking! Um but like so I kinda of explained and I don't even know what it was about. I feel like it was about, like what woman can do or something stupid like that. Or like something about something like that was happening in the world at the time and they were agreeing that it wasn't that big of a deal. And I was like, “no it is”…um or a political correctness anyways. So in the end it is just like, “ok well I like, I understand your point of view”. But I find that once
you can get it across to them they start to understand, “wait a minute you're right”. Like and then like they're like, “well feminism is this”. And I'm like, “no feminism is about equality that means equality for you too”. Like it's about everybody getting equality and any feminist that tells you that it's not isn't a feminist like in the true sense of the word. So I find coming with that perspective into a world that's very masculine in it's views. Not saying not liberal, just masculine um that it brings a new perspective that they might not have gotten well growing up or even well in this community that they're in now. So even [names another player that is her close male friend in the league] has gotten a lot of education on that kind of stuff from me and [names her girlfriend] because, um yeah, because it bugs us. (laughs)

Q11

Returning to a discussion of bottoms and tops and how they are invoked in this and in sporting contexts and in general, there is a fear of being penetrated. It is a point that Pronger (1999) makes about how competitive sport is structured in general and how sport is set up with the fear of keeping ‘others out of your endzone’. More specifically, that sport fosters a logic of an ever-expanding phallus (violating phallus with the desire to win) and territorially enclosing anus (closed anus with the desire not to lose, be penetrated) that work in tandem in sport in the desire to conquer the space of the other and protectively enclose the space of self (Pronger, 1999). Therefore, to hear Q3 reiterate the ‘joking’ concerns of having a bottom as a keeper in MSL clearly illuminates the irony in the MSL which relates to Pronger’s argument i.e., having a player play the role of impenetrable on the field (goal keeper) when the player plays the role of penetrated in the bedroom. Pronger argues that sport plays a vital role in the (re)production of phallically aggressive and anally closed cultures of desire (heteronormative). The greater irony in the context of the league, is that this same logic is occurring but it is a homonormative space where presumable some IaMs allow and want to be penetrated. Moreover, there is a further irony in that this bullying of bottoms in the league may cause IaMs to alter their behaviour, with many players wanting to be read as “tops,” even if this is not their exclusive desired sexual role. Therefore, a perceived need to hide or not disclose or even be shameful about bottoming and assumptions about other players perpetuates distance between gay IaMs and who they want to be/do and knowing who and what they want “to do” (El Menyawi, 2010).

Many interviewees were surprised, embarrassed and even caught off guard when I asked about the sexual/erotic culture of the league. Only one interviewee was very open and candid with me
about his sexual intentions and disappointments. Most of the interviewees were hesitant to discuss sexual behaviour. One of my IaF interviewees, when asked why she did not think I would ask about sexual behaviour, stated:

I know you asked a few questions that I didn't think you'd ask. The question of sexual capital, it's interesting no?

Why didn't you think I wouldn't ask that question? Just because it's kind of taboo? (R)

Maybe yeah, but it's a good one because you get a whole different kind of answer.

That's interesting. Is there anything that you thought that I would ask you that I didn't? (R)

No, that's slightly [somewhat]. The sexual capital stuff is the opposite, I didn't think you would ask it and you did.

Q12

Other interviewees would not discuss this topic with me. Another wanted to make it explicitly clear that sex was not an important part of the league for him. He did not want the league to be reduced to ideas about sexual behaviour when it was so much more than that for him.

I don't think it's an important part of it. I think the interaction with between people, just because, you know, a group of big gay people playing sport…it's not like everyone wants to leap on everyone. Like it's the sort of gay stereotype of us just having a lot of sex.

Q10

Playing down sexual behaviour and actively resisting stereotypes may feed into queers patrolling their sexual behaviour because they are aware of who is watching. As the above quote and the field note on “church and state” suggest, players are aware of the stereotypes about gays and aware of the expectations in this sporting space. Thus a kind of panoptic governing occurs (Foucault, 1975).

Many players noted that the prospect of being able to have a dating pool from the league was something interesting or exciting to them and a few even mentioned that this was fully or part of their motivation for joining:
I was looking for an activity that was…a good place to meet guys.

Q3

I thought soccer would be a good way of meeting people. You know just for friends as well, let’s be honest, for dating and such.

Q1

Q10, cited above however reveals that he is conflicted, noting that sex was a possibility but that he really wanted to make it clear that the league was not all about having sex with each other as he said earlier.

No, I'm just kinda trying to work it out in my head and I just try to figure out what the difference is. I suppose that there is a little bit different. I mean...just I guess...your interactions with people are slightly different. No one on my dodgeball team is like a potential for me to date for example. So there is a bit of tension in that respect…

Q10

Finally some participants felt strongly about the fact that players must be cautious about being too overtly sexual especially in sport as others may pass judgment on “us”. The disconnect between not wanting to admit to the sexual side of the league and the obvious underlying desire for a sexual current in the league was evident in multiple interviews. It was usually raised when participants’ motivations of hoping to find love, a boyfriend, sex, a trick or a dating pool in the league were discussed. These contradictions may illustrate the internalized fears and moral self-regulation that players engage in. This kind of moral self-cleansing, actively downplaying a sexual underbelly, is directly related to panoptic governance in the league around sexual activity (Foucault, 1975). Recalling, my discussion of separation of church and state, it appears that some spaces are overtly sexualized and others not. Clearly, the league is demarcated by participants as a space where players need to be cautious in terms of overt sexual behaviour. The league is perceived then as a relatively desexualized space where, despite the underlying sexual and erotic culture, sex is hidden for the best optics of the league. But not all players live by this ‘code’. One interviewee discussed how he was perceived when abroad with his soccer team:

I, for instance, when I did play in an international tournament, I got a little bit of a reputation for being a party animal to put that politely and I mean I don't really think that affected my reputation at home because everybody knows that I like to
drink, I like to party, I like to be a bit of a whore, whatever like I'm not, you know.

Q6

He later continued:

Representing Canada, like, I don't think it was, like, a big deal but, like, you're not gonna go. Like I mean...I think people, like, ok so on the record, I got drunken and hooked up with some guy in London on like my second day there.

Q6

How Canadian queers are regarded globally, specifically in relation to gay marriage, is beyond the scope of my thesis. However, I want to suggest that panoptic self-governing spans the local (at home in his community in Toronto) and the global (abroad at an international soccer tournament) in order to keep queers’ “dirtiness” (sexual activity, specifically promiscuous sexual activity that is often regarded as morally bad and dirty) in the closet/hidden.

There is a sexual space at the field that a few participants discussed, which was perceived as a permissible cruising space or at least a space where cruising was happening: the sidelines. As I noted earlier, there are no change rooms available at the field and this means that players who feel comfortable enough to disrobe at the side of the field are visible at times. Interviewees discussed how this was not the most ideal situation.

Like it doesn’t really bother me much anymore but the fact, you know, at Withrow that the street is right there and there’s no there’s not really any place to change. So, you know, I don’t necessarily mind, you know, standing in my underwear for a bit but not everyone feels that way. And yet it can be too hot in July to wear, you know, sweat pants or, you know, jogging pants or something like that over your shorts before you go so.

Q2

Another interviewee, Q5, discussed how they would wear their “Sunday’s best” when it came to undergarments because they knew people were watching and they wanted to look good.

56 Queer nation building is a concern in this thesis and links to a global consciousness of how a ‘Canadian’ “should queer”. It is a point I will further develop regarding modifying behaviours, bodies and spaces and theories on homonationalism.
Interviewees were aware of who did and did not change at the side of the field and some acknowledged, as Q5 did, that they were conscious of what they were wearing and how they looked. I am also aware of what I wear while on the sidelines and of both changing and watching others. I overhead comments such as: “so and so fills out their briefs really well”, and have at times been the one saying or at least thinking this. Having no change rooms means no showers. The absence of showers bothers many players and this is summed up by one interviewee.

I would say that’s one thing that I think is a bit of an issue is the lacking of changing rooms. You know locker rooms, shower, you know, all that sort of stuff at the fields…that we have that. It does detract a bit from the, you know, after game sociability. Um, you know, I’m not saying I want cruisy showers necessarily but um, you know, just being able to clean up at least or at least rinse off um, before you get back in your street clothes…would be nice.

Q2

This interviewee is both very conscious of how his desire for showers might be read and how his post-sport body might be perceived.

I also do think that if there were some way of cleaning up after the game before going out…so that you don’t have to, you know, think I’m hot and sweaty and smelly and, you know, dirty from the game.

Q2

Perhaps the moral messiness or “dirtiness” is not only related to sexual activity but the lingering physical dirtiness of sweat and dirt from the game may serve as a reminder of sexual immorality (Valverde, 1991). This physical and sexual ‘dirtiness’ will be discussed in the next section on healthy lifestyles. In this section on sexual behaviour, I have outlined how sexual behaviour in the league has become self governed and forced to go “underground” and how specific bodies are privileged with permission to be sexual while others are demonized. The way sexual behaviour is done in the league (re)inforces white young masculinity (Kapur, 2005; Razack, 1998; Stoler, 1995).

4.4 Healthy Lifestyles

Cleanliness is Godliness

In this section, I discuss healthy lifestyles and the perception that LGBTQ communities are consumers of health lifestyles. This is connected to the visibility of queers and specifically who,
how and where they “fuck”. Health is something we are all (Rose, 1999), as well as queers specifically (Duggan, McCreary, & Donald, 2004; Epstein, 2003), encouraged to consume. I begin this section outlining how that has come to be with recent shifts in neo-liberal free market states. I discuss why the LGBTQ communities may feel the need to overcompensate in order to stave off any perceptions that they might be perceived as weak or ill. I then theorize the connection between Muscular Jewry and LGBTQ communities (marginalization). I then articulate how this desire towards healthy lifestyles has become so normalized in LGBTQ communities that awareness of its existence is decreasing. Using specific examples from the league to illustrate desires to be clean, both physically and morally, and to hide or to minimize signs of weakness or illness, including injuries that would suggest ill health or weakness, I examine desires for cleansing, order and efficiency. Finally, I discuss what this “healthy” and muscular movement is accomplishing and the repercussions for LGBTQ communities.

Healthism is one of my theoretical frameworks informing my analysis throughout this work. However, it has specific relationships to the Healthy Lifestyle sarcomere and thus I believe it is useful to reiterate my understanding of healthism here. If sociology is about linking the “personal trouble” of the individual to the “public issues” of society (Mills, 1959) then healthism can be thought of as working in an opposite and more insidious direction where the public troubles of society/state (governing) are linked to the personal issues of the individual (being healthy). Healthism links the “public objectives for good health and good order of the social body with the desire of individuals for health and well-being” (Rose, 1999, p. 74). Healthy bodies are still a goal of the state but this goal is no longer sought by the state through discipline, instruction, moralization or threatening the governed into compliance. Rather “individuals are addressed on the assumption that they want to be healthy and enjoined to freely seek out the ways of living most likely to promote their own health” (Rose, 1999, pp. 86-87), such as playing in a soccer league. There is also an important economical aspect to healthism that will be discussed in the last sarcomere on economics. My findings show that healthism is being reproduced in the league.

The visibility of being perceived as healthy and clean seems to be very important to both project externally to an outside audience and also internally between insiders of the league (e.g. “the church and state” discourse). The need to pass as healthy is not something unique to the league or the gay community but may be heightened due to historical stigma attached to the perceived
unhealthiness of queer communities (Bunzl, 2004; Gilman, 1988; Kinsman, 1987). Current political sensibilities and the shift away from a welfare state to a free market state, which includes a conscious intention of downloading of responsibility to individual citizens, is interlocked with the need to buy into a healthy lifestyle (Rose, 1999). This *pull yourself up by your own bootstraps* mentality where an individual is solely responsible for their own health (Ingham, 1985) neglects socio-cultural factors that impact health and may further marginalize stigmatized populations such as the LGBTQ communities that are always already perceived as unhealthy. Historically, LGBTQ people have been considered mentally ill or sick since the end of the nineteenth beginning of the twentieth century (Gilman, 1988; Kinsman, 1987) due to their “same sex desire”. Additionally, probably a stigma that holds greater weight today than the American Psychological Association (APA) mental illness demarcation\(^\text{57}\) is the HIV/AIDS crisis of the 1980s and 1990s that resulted in the deaths of thousands of men (gay, bisexual, straight and trans). HIV/AIDS was known as the “gay disease”. The stigma that gay men are diseased and specifically with HIV/AIDS was part of the motivation behind the gym craze in the 1980s, where the goal was to build muscular, beefy, non-effeminate bodies (Pronger, 1990), bodies that would not be recognized as sick, or gay for that matter. By building stronger bodies, gay men could defy the myth that they were weak, fragile and sick. This body building of queer muscularity reflects other historical developments regarding hard muscularities. Moral panics fueled both Christian Muscularity and Muscular Jewry, igniting movements that encouraged hard body making. However, the Jewish context of muscularity was different in that there is an interlocking nature between Jews and Queers. Specifically, the Jewish body (male) in the early twentieth century is always already a queer and mad body (Bunzl, 2004; Gilman, 1991). “Queer muscularity,” a term that I am exploring in this thesis, is closely linked to Muscular Jewry because Jews were not only seen as queer and mad but also perceived and stereotyped as weak and sickly, feeble and ‘all mind-no body’ (Presner, 2003, 2007). This perception was initiated by a purposeful move by the Jews historically during Hellenistic times when Jews wanted to disidentify with the Greeks and later the Romans, who focused on the body and the flesh. This body/flesh focus was viewed as immoral by the Jews (Presner, 2003, 2007). Their

\(^{57}\) Homosexuality was listed as a diagnostic category in the APA’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manuel of Mental Disorders (DSM) but has since been removed as a diagnostic category. Diagnostic categories are list of disorders thought to be distinct types of mental illness.
disidentification with the Hellenistic culture led the Jews to pursue a sort of ‘mind muscularity’ as opposed to body muscularity not dissimilar to gay men historically, who wanted to disidentify with the roles of normalized masculinity. This disidentification led to “dandies” in the 1800s and the “effeminate man” in the 1950s-1970s (e.g., Oscar Wilde, David Bowie). The emphasis was on building a sort of ‘social and artistic muscularity’ in gay male communities. The Jews as part of the campaign to have their own nation and physical space (The modern state of Israel, 1948), began to encourage body building activities and Muscular Jewry was born to establish a visible hard and strong Jewish population perceived to be worthy of a nation of their own (Presner, 2003, 2007). Moreover, restoring ‘sick’ bodies to health through a muscularity was an attempt to whiten Jews and mimic European nationalism. Queer muscularity may have began in the 1980s with the gym craze; (Pronger, 1998) the gym may not be perceived as enough anymore for queers to pass as healthy good citizens of the state. Perhaps queers need to be more visible by the community at large if the gym is no longer good enough. In order to demonstrate a hard queer nation, similar to Muscular Jewry, where an important element was visibility of this new body and lifestyle (Presner, 2007), queers may now also need to be ‘out’ in the community or on the soccer field displaying physical activity. Perhaps this is even more necessary as stereotypically activities linked to LGBTQ communities are perceived as unhealthy, even by many within LGBTQ communities.

I was looking for an activity that was LGBT, well that was gay…that was outside of bars, outside of the “common gay”—quote, unquote activities- bars, clubs, dancing, drugs and alcohol. And more into something, sport, healthier a good place to meet guys.

Q3

What is evident here is that the soccer space is perceived to contain bodies that are perceived as healthy and thus the kind of bodies you want to meet to fuck, date or start a relationship with. But more so this quote really exemplifies the player’s commitment to healthism which he feels can save him (Rose, 1999) from gay culture. Moreover, his narrative about stereotypical gay activities and the possible judgment for those activities, clearly positions him as a gay man interested in health. He moralizes about sport as healthy and drugs and alcohol as not (not mentioning their co-existence in MSL). Keeping with this ‘healthy’ space as being a substitute for stereotypical gay activities, participants said it offers an alternative rush and balance to drugs and alcohol. One participant shared:
I just find exercise really levels me out and calms me down and makes me feel happy it’s like a natural high when you run or workout.

Q2

When something is “naturalized” it usually is, especially within this healthy lifestyle context, made an ideal and normalizes the pursuit of it. The conflation of exercise with a drug high is an important aspect of this quote, as crystal meth (Tina) along with an alphabet soup of other drugs were at one time (1990s) in ‘style’. Drug use is still very much part of LGBTQ communities but the focus on healthy lifestyles trumps this image, presenting the new ‘gay’ soccer player as a healthy citizen.

While going to these healthy spaces to improve one’s body capital and meeting like-minded bodies may be the motivation for joining the league, players seem to underplay that the motivation to join the MSL league had much to do with their health or physical activity. When prompted, they talked about this but no one claimed it was the primary reason for signing up. Most cited community as the primary reason for joining. The downplaying of a desire to be more healthy and physically active was reflected in the fact that all but one participant talked about going to the gym on a regular basis as part of their weekly routine. When asked directly about how the MSL impacts their own and others health and physical activity in general, only one participant spoke about broadly defined notions of health, whereas other participants focused solely on the physical benefits.

Yeah, I think I was sort of answering that more on like a, like a holistic health sort of way. Like um, like I wasn't measuring my biceps or my body fat or anything while I was playing soccer. So I don't, I can't really speak to it on that way but I just know, like, I love, like waking, like even if it was like a 10 o’clock game. Like I loved waking up at 8. Getting like ready to go. Getting on my bike and biking from [named a major intersection in Toronto] over to like Pape and Danforth. Cause it's like, it's so sunny. Like you go across this beautiful bridge. Like it was…the whole thing was like, had this…aesthetic of like just like healthy living and I, I just really dug it! And I was like, “yeah this is totally what I want to be doing right now”.

Q6

Um for me personally, you know I, I count the soccer game as one of my workouts for the week. Um I try to go to practices um so that can also count (laughs) um..um.
Moreover, many stated that they really enjoyed the league partly because it was fun even though it was hard work. Many suggested that they could go to the gym less in the summer because they were playing soccer. The “get out of the gym card” demonstrated that many were past the gym craze although all of them dutifully went to the gym on a weekly basis, even though they disliked it.

It’s [soccer] one of my activities for the summer. I hate going to the gym.

The shared resentment of feeling obligated to go to the gym yet feeling committed to and an awareness of, the need to go, was relayed to me by many. One interviewee told me:

I workout, to be healthy and let’s be honest too, for appearance. But if I could get the same effect by sitting on my couch and watch TV and drinking beer and eating pizza, I would be doing that rather than going to the gym. Again, I consider it more of a necessary evil. By now after this many years, I’ve, it is something that I’m accustomed and is part of my routine. And I am very much a creature of routine.

Interestingly not only did the players downplay the physical activity and exercise aspect, but they noted that the league hides or downplays this in league marketing too:

They're really big on focusing on community

I think in all of the promotions of [MSL] or the way [MSL] markets itself...It's not about, “hey come do a sport, come play”. The whole exercise part, it's kinda of under.

This marketing or downplaying may be done as it may enable greater buy in at first to the league. The league may be seen as less intimidating and more accessible therefore causing a greater amount of people to sign up but then ends up dropping out if they cannot keep up.

Yeah, I guess the rules and regulations are open to everybody and it's a recreational league but the culture of the league is more about
playing to win. It's a competitive league and whoever is not up to the skills that the best players of the team play, then they're seated out.

Q3

I think quite a few people take that same approach as I do that it's, you know, a workout for them. Um and I think a lot of people are active in other ways. I don't think there are a lot of people who come play soccer and don't do anything else active because I don't think they would survive. It's a demanding activity right. So I think you have to be in fairly good shape to begin with.

Q10

However, like the gym activities that are continued even though they are disliked, body fascism (Pronger, 2004) plays out in the league too as players continually push themselves to keep up. If you cannot do what is expected on the field (which may depend on which team you are on and other teammates skill levels) you are either benched or receive much less playing time. This is a point that one participant, who although he had mixed feelings about this practice, understood.

Ok, so and you know it's sort of a very competitive thing to say but honestly I don't have a problem, in principle, that the better people get a little bit more play time than the shitter people because it is a game. It is something you are trying to win and therefore they should probably get to play a little more than the shittier people, right?

Q2

Well, I never actually read the constitution but from what I understand it is a recreational gay positive league, right? Again...and again this isn't just endemic to gay people, I think this would even be worse in a straight league, the good people always get more play time than the shit people, right? I think that's in any sport right. I'm not just hating on gays for that, it's everyone it's competition, right? That's what it means to be competitive, right?

Q2

The relationship between LGBT people and sport has been a tenuous one (Pronger, 1990), specifically around the competitive aspects of most sporting activities. Childhood memories of being picked last for teams are quite common. The pushing and accepting of the status quo may be about overcompensating and trying to heal a wounded gay masculinity (Connell, 2005) that will always be cut open in this context because of sports association with hyper masculinity. Being good at sport and health activities is also linked to aligning personal goals with political
agendas (Rose, 1999). One interviewee goes on to indicate that there are a few players who resist this health compensation:

That's an interesting issue, right? Like for some, it is a physical thing and it's a sport and it's good but others it's just a way to socialize. For some people who are unhealthy and nasty like and everything else right and eat too much drink too much smoke too much. So I think it depends, for some it's sport, for some it's community, for some it's just something to do.

Q2

This quote sums up how players are perceived if they do not tow the healthy line and engage in behaviour that is othered and abjected by the new gay sport citizen. The league is perceived as a healthy space but using the league without participating in other visible ways for health may cause expulsion or at the very least one will be looked down upon by their (morally) healthy peers. Health is also often linked to cleanliness. Many academics have discussed the links between health and cleanliness and have linked that with gender, race and sexuality (Fusco, 2006 & 2007; McClintock, 1995; Stoler, 1995; Valverde, 1991). The links between health and being clean in gendered, racailized and sexualized ways needed to be examined in the league.

4.5 Desire for Clean Space

*We want to glisten*

One participant who admits to sweating heavily remarked:

This most recent summer and [another player] played hard. You know, like most of us, dud, but he’s like me, both of us sweat. You know, we don’t, you know, perspire, we don’t glisten, we like, we full on sweat. And at both the half and the end game he took off his jersey and literally rung it out and it looked like something from a cartoon because streams of water, not just drops, but entire full steams from his jersey, in his hand, to the ground, unbroken, was coming out of his jersey and he did that twice.

Q2

He lamented about not having access to showers before going out because he needs to be clean for the social spaces.
I’m not necessarily saying I’m wanting to perv on my teammates but at the same time like it would just get nice it would be nice to get the grass stains and the dirt and the sweat and everything off and then get back into the street clothes.

Q2

His characterization of being sweaty and the field as being dirty and how this affects him and does not affect some players (the good looking boys that glisten instead of sweat) further reinforces the notion that players can be in this space, getting dirty and sweaty but they must clean themselves and be healthy afterwards. Does the players’ desires for a shower space also have to do with a desire for a healthier sexual cruising space? The same participant stated:

Yeah, I mean don’t get me wrong. There is some really good looking guys in the league and I wouldn’t you know (pauses)...I’m not saying that, you know, I want it to become, you know, a bathhouse but at the same time, you know, seeing what he looks like underneath his, you know, shorts, so be it.

Q2

The quote links ideas of health, cleanliness and eroticism and how much of that eroticism can exist with health and cleanliness. This demonstrates that sarcomeres are interconnected as they are all part of queer muscularity that functions in the league. The act of visually examining another’s body to know if the body is “sick” or healthy and thus suitable for sleeping with is a commonly held belief, I have observed, by gay men, among other groups. The possibility of doing this exam “pre hook-up” with cleansed naked bodies may be seen as very enticing, useful and healthy. A space such as this would dispel and avoid the awkwardness of getting naked later and realizing you do not want to be sexual with this person. Cleanliness then is panoptic: enabling visibility and transparency.

Soccer bodies need to be healthy to perform certain athletic skills. There may be a move away from just needing bodies that look healthy and muscular, characteristic of the gym craze. The league and possibly the modern (queer) nation desires citizens to move and use their bodies: real muscularity is required (Rose, 1999). These bodies may not only need to perform well in soccer but it may also be essential that these bodies are perceived as, and perform as healthy in order to be deemed as suitable ([re]productive) bodies. A healthy nation means ensuring and maintaining the right to such institutions as gay marriage and adoption both of which exist in the league (some players who are married ‘same-sex couples’ and players with children – single and
multiple guardians, and players who are married ‘opposite-sex couples’ with children also with single and multiple guardians). These bodies are perceived as productive. The different ways of being productive bodies, through health and labour, may be then used as collateral to access these reproductive institution systems (marriage and adoption) (Kinsman, 2010). There is a tension and vulnerability between building and maintaining this production for the (queer) state. The next section looks at athletic skill, which may be another mode of production and queer muscularity normative body building in greater detail.

4.6 Athletic Skill & Tension

Athletic Skill especially in soccer is really about having a relationship with/to your body (Konter, 2010). In soccer there is no other equipment to hide behind - no stick, racquet, bat or club. All that exists in the moment, apart from a field, players, nets, flags and sidelines, is a body with a ball. Many queers have hated their bodies (McCreary et al., 2007; Pronger, 1990). They are what gave “us” away in sport as gay (weren’t skilled) or lesbian (were too skilled for a women) or queer (just an awkward uncoordinated and messy body). And due to this body betrayal many queers have betrayed their own bodies. Bodies were neglected and focus and effort went elsewhere. Then, the opposite occurred, bodies were focused upon in order to reinvent and discipline these ‘bad’ bodies (Pronger, 1990). This is not the experience of all queers that come to sport but many of my participants did experience similar relationships to sport and to their bodies. They disidentified with sport and with their bodies and this presents a very real palatable tension for many queers in spaces such as MSL: some players hoped that MSL would be this “new world” (Munoz, 1999). Skill level is merely one aspect that brings this underlying tension to the fore. In this section, I discuss this skill and the “tension of bodies”. Are LGBTQ communities using sport to legitimate and compensate for past violence and past stolen rememberings of their bodies? Moving away from the physical skill, I also examine why the political skills or activist expertise that so often is associated with LGBTQ communities is absent

58 All items that have an ominous past for queers as they have been used during hate crimes or “gay” bashings a point not to be ignored and perhaps an overarching thought that due to sport’s inherent violence, there is a real tension with playing and violence for communities that have experienced and continue to experience sustained systemic violence. Sports have often been the site or backdrop to this violence (Hemphill & Symons, 2009).

59 I am using disidentified in line with Jose Esteban Munoz (1999) concept where he argues for disidentifications by suggesting that “our charge as spectators and actors is to continue to disidentifying with this world until we achieve new ones”. (p.200)
in MSL spaces. There appears to be tension and apathy towards using those skills in this space. Finally I discuss the “silence of the normative” and to what end all of this (in)visible work is towards.

4.7 Body Tension:

In the league there are many tensions around bodies, individual bodies and groups “as bodies”. I am conscious that discussing these tensions in the league begins to set up a binary or a dualism (e.g. competitive/recreational) and in some cases this is true and in others it is not the case. I will explain these tensions and make mention of scale in order to give a contextualized account of the divisiveness of the league on areas of skill, competition, body size and queerness. The MSL website (2009 & 2010) defines itself as “a co-ed, queer-positive amateur sporting league that fosters an environment free from harassment”. The league also markets itself as a recreational league where “no experience is necessary,” and where “beginners are welcome”. In the league’s infancy, there was less of a divide between skilled and unskilled players or maybe it felt that way because there were less people in general. Currently in the league, there is a strong but small core of quite skilled players, more medium level players and some beginners or low skilled players. This division of skill often causes tensions in the league. The lower skilled players are looking to gain more skill and do not want to be embarrassed on the field, and the higher skilled players often do not want to play with their lower skilled teammates. There is a strain between the marketing and policy of the league and what actually happens in practice.

I was really bad. I mean I was, like, I had never played soccer before except in grade 8 gym. Ah, and that was indoor. Um so I had no skill what so ever. Like, I didn't know how to kick the ball. I mean the first day was a disaster. I was like all over the field. You look back now and you're like, my god, they must have been just looking at me going what is he doing? Why is he, like, up there now when he's mid-field? And yah, I had no clue. And the other thing was nobody explained the rules to you before we started. There was no mock game. There was no, so nobody, they always encouraged people, “you don't have to have skill”, but then there was no education.

Q6

As well, the executive hopes, but does not promote explicitly, that the more skilled players will mentor less skilled players. As the one current executive member I interviewed stated:
That would probably be the ideal person. That also comes from the executive position of, you know, were looking for people to kinda build, umm like, nurture the league. Yeah as opposed to just a player.

Ok, so the ideal person, actually there is somebody that we thought of this year that's a pretty good ideal person but it's somebody that has the soccer skill, that also understands the social aspect of the league. Where it's a recreational...social...get the team to bond and then with the skill, have the skill, but also be self aware and know it's still just a rec league. And that it's kinda, “use your knowlegde to help the other people on the team”.

Q9

Often mentorship does not occur. This “unshared” resource of skill will be discussed in further depth in the next section on economics but there is an imbalance that causes tensions and frustrations in the league. Another aspect of the disproportionate (im)balance of skill is the range of the physicality of bodies in the league. Some bodies are bigger and stronger and of course these bodies are always read in a sports environment with preconceived notions about how they should be and perform. Many of my participants discussed the subject of bodies in the league. One stated that he felt his body, a bigger body, had different constraints put on it in the league, with respect to the gay politics operating in the league:

Ah yeah, one thing I find very interesting is, you know, it's soccer. Soccer is a physical game. There's all these people complaining about, “oh aggression on the field, aggression on the field”. Well shit, it's not basket weaving, it's a physical game, right? And what I find kinda hypocritical, is like, I don't ever go out of my way to be overly aggressive to anyone but when people are aggressive towards me and I give it back, I get in shit because I'm a bigger, gregarious person. I just think it's a bit hypocritical. Um, so I don't know. I think it also shows you this sort of cunty side of gay identity politics. Like, “you don't hurt me, you don't touch me, you let me do what I want but I can do whatever I want to you”. You know, what I mean. I don't like this, laughs... Right so the more svelte, twinkish, gay guy who's a really good player it's just ok if he smashes into you or he pushes you because he's a svelte cool gay guy but if I smash into him then he'll start having a hissy fit on me, you know. I just think it's such a double standard. And I mean in a straight league, I'm sure that there's this problem too but I don't think. Like, I think in a straight league it you were aggressive with someone and someone's aggressive back to you then, “fuck off”, you were aggressive he was aggressive get on with it but in the gay league I think you'll be more “ninaninani”. You'll get more finger pointing and stuff like that.

Q2
This quote illustrates sexism in gay culture (Frye, 1996) and a level of internalized homophobia or at least a disdain for feminized gay men. He sees himself as more in line with straight politics and uses gay stereotypes of the “twink” and “having a hissy” to reinforce his feelings of injustice as a large man in gay culture (i.e. some bodies get away with more precarious behaviour due to being read as the right body). Others have experienced privilege in other sporting contexts but in this multi-gendered space they have experienced a loss of power.

Um......it's different than I'm used to I guess is the best way to say it. Again, I always played sports with women so it was very even, the straight women, it was less competitive. Um however, um I do really like, um I like guys there fine. I don't know, like it's fine, it's just different. I find that guys are usually bigger than us, even gay guys so they can over power me a lot easier. And I like, I'm and I guess that actually plays with that line of why I feel like a lesbian. I don't like being overpowered. I like, like I'm always usually one of the bigger people when it comes to women and stuff like that so being one of the smaller people on the field kinda throws my for a loop. At least like weight wise maybe not height wise but definitely weight wise.

Q11

Again, this player imagines non-MSL space as more fair or equal but really this player had more power over women in other sport places because she was the bigger, stronger body in that space. But in the MSL, her lesbianism means less power because of the presence of gay male bodies and maybe a feeling of powerlessness. A perceived hierarchy of bodies exists then in the MSL. This is confirmed in the following quote. Where a double standard is obvious.

Its kinda weirded me out at first cause obviously I thought you know oh my gosh I can't go um ...like I can't go side check a girl but obviously you can't check in soccer. But um I thought you know, at the time like, you know, this isn't good, “what if I run into her?” And it did happen on a few occasions and I like bolted though girls or women, “excuse me, women”. And um you know, I felt bad and they were like, “don't feel bad, this is the league”. Like I know one of them said that to me once during when I bolted through. I was like, “oh my god I am so sorry”. She's like, “you wouldn't have said that to a man would you?” And I was like, “no I would have left him on the ground”. And she was like, “yeah just leave me on the ground, it's totally cool”. And I was like, “um ok”. So it was, I mean it's interesting so cause like obviously if you're a girl if you're a women, if you’re like a lesbian or a transgendered or whatever, you’re obviously gonna expect to be with gay men especially in that league where it's 98% gay men. And you might get hurt a little but obviously they're there and they wanna play the sport. And so I say, “that's really good and that's awesome”. But it, trust me, for me I had never been on a sports team or a sports league that was co-ed before that.
This participant both celebrated women being there but wanted to be superior, which again illustrates the sexist culture of gay males (Frye, 1996). For some IaMs, soccer increased their awareness of their own bodies in the context of the gay cultural space of the MSL.

I don't know if you could see my fat. If you could see my butt or something. Like I really didn't think about that kinda of stuff when I was playing lacrosse tonight or like whenever I do play other sports. But I only thought about shit when I was actually playing in [MSL]. And I think it really was because I was playing with other gay people and ... I have this general notion that all gay people wanna sleep with each other which is kinda true but kinda not.

I guess my one, if you wanna call it like a disability, is sort of more psychological focused around body image. And like I'm not, I'm not thin, and I'm not like (pause) fat or whatever but I'm like sort of, I'm not like muscular. And I mean with, I guess with, reflecting on the gay thing there's a lot of sort of body consciousness and body fascism like to fit into a certain look. And I think, I think that um, that colours a lot of what I think about the world and how I see myself within it.

The body image issues that are often heightened for gay IaMs (McCreary et al., 2007) are an obvious concern to IaMs. Body fascism (Pronger, 2002) and discontent and disconnection with bodies means people will search for salvation from/through bodies in health and sport (Rose, 1999). Part of this body fascism is what the ideal body looks like and almost all participants talked about the desired or ideal soccer body in the league being “white, young, male, fit, skilled and attractive.

I mean, I suppose if we were just gonna talk about straight ideal, it's the person whose good and is also cool and beautiful right. That's the ideal right. The gay soccer adonis that would be the sort of, you know, way I would imagine it...Like a competitive player who’s talented, who is a talented soccer player and has the handsome sort of boyish good looks to go with that right yeah. That's what I would suspect...I mean again this is gonna sound terribly like hating but I think it usually would be like a white, a pretty sort of white, gay boy in his mid twenties whose kinda of midly jockish. I think that's what would be the ideal face. I mean the league is multicultural, which is delightful. There's black people, there's Arabic people, there's brown people. I think it's amazing don't get me wrong but I still think the mainstream standard of ideal of very
much, like you know what it is like? What you see on the fucking cover of fab magazine every second week, that!

Q2

I would say that most of [MSL] is gay, white Canadian male, but there is a lot that isn't.

Q1

I think the expected ideal player is younger than 32, older than 22 um physically athletic young and good looking, part of the clique, [Names a player who is young and white] (laughs).

Q3

The above three quotes demonstrate the perceived desired ideal bodies in the league. There also seems to be a probable link between these desired bodies and their more competitive style of play. I found there were groups 1) those working towards a normative ideal of what MSL should be; 2) those who either could not fit into normative ideals but were trying to work towards them 3) those who could fit in but actively resist the league's normalization; and, 4) those who could not and actively resist. These different skill levels and the perceived bodies they are connected to have affected the game and caused tensions in a league that asserts itself on paper as recreational.

The most often and very openly discussed tension in the league was the difference between recreational play and competitive play. The tension between the two is something I have observed on the sidelines, on the field and in the bars.

I think it was, was making comments of, “oh there were some inexperienced people on the field”, and it was towards the end of the game and he was complaining, “why are some of the better people sitting off on the sidelines?” And so, I remember making a comment like, “this is a rec league. From what I understand it has nothing to do with, you know, whether you win or not, it's equal play time. I paid the same amount blah, blah, blah”.

Q9

The league is not evenly divided on this issue as one participant observes:

I think the over competitive camp is fairly small and I think it's more gradient than sort of two stances on it. But I think you kind either largely fall on to one side or the other.

Q10
The executive member has noted that:

(Laughs) Yeah I just, there's the notion that there should be a competitive stream and I think there are some people that are purposely trying to do things to force that issue and make it more apparent, which annoys me because I'm like, “there are plenty of other competitive leagues”. Competitive league, go ahead and find them, right? Where I am, kinda, like, “this is a rec league, let it be”, kinda. So it's those really aggressive, kinda, diehard people that forget that it's just a rec league and when they HAVE to win a game and I'm like, “what are you gonna get when you win the game? NOTHING! What are you gonna get when you lose the game NOTHING”! Right? “Just play the stupid game”. So I think that annoys me, yeah.

Q9

This narrative from an executive member shows the league’s sincere support for the recreational ideal, however, players perceive the league another way and thus contradict the league’s concept.

Another interviewee argued the reason the league is setup recreationally is because:

Yeah, um, I think that the only way that the league can grow or have members is by calling it recreational. And that's the only way that the group of competitive people would have a league because the number of really competitive people in the league is less than eleven. That's less than a team. So the only way they can have a league is by bringing in new people and the only way of bringing new people is by calling it recreational because of that whole hockey/soccer thing.

Q3

This tension is mirrored by the tensions between gay and queer politics in the league. The competitive/recreational tension in the league runs parallel with another larger tension, that between gay and queer sensibilities in general. As one participant indicated:

Yeah I, I think that's what I just said is pretty much how I do that. Like I, I, I think when I came out, I was definitely gay and then...started to realize, I don't know, like gay is not necessarily the be all and end. Like or something, like gay is definitely a, like a, habitus if you will. It's a like a social bubble and that social bubble is really not that interesting to me all the time. So I think queer allows you to um talk about a lot more things like whether it's politics or race or gender or art. And allows you to talk about um like deconstructing those things. Like using, like reflecting on being critical of it, reclaiming it as queer is sort of a reclaimed term from ages past. And ah I think that's, I think there's a more subversive um explorative element...as my interest in life and as academics follow like I think that's why I go with that there. But also because, as we know, like identity is kinda fluid and the process of self identifying is forever. So I think being a queer allows for a lot
more space to play, I guess, and that's not to say that there aren't things that like, you know...I've never had sex with a woman. Which I'm sure relates to soccer some how but ah and I'm pretty sure that's never gonna change. But I mean there's, I mean my identity is so much more than who I sleep with so by being queer I can (makes sound tongue click).....not have to kinda of have everything solid like there's just gap room for flexibility.

Q6

The narrative demonstrates the participants view that “gay” represents an awareness of difference and making conscious efforts to compensate for that difference by pursing ‘excellence’ which clashes with queerness, which values difference, encourages cooperative play and collective decision-making (Alexander, 1999; Slagle, 1995). This divide is often not that clear and may be more of a spectrum, but the tension was noted multiple times in all of my interviews. One participant discussed how gay spaces are:

Yeah, yeah something, like that um yeah, so the fields are shitty. Um sometimes that cunty gay energy just that…you know. Again people who have been marginalized when they get some mainstream power, you know, the oppressed becomes the oppressor. I just find there is a bit of that in the league that's all.

Q2

Noting aspects of MSL that he disliked, the participant first decries the poor aspect of the physical space (the shitty fields). Then he, again uses sexist derogatory language to critique the space of the league. He is disparaging of players who seize power to regulate each other. I think that individualism, difference and diversity are often encouraged traits in the queer world but with soccer, a sport that thrives on team mentality, this does not fit well together. Many participants relayed their discomfort and unrest with putting their own interests before the team’s interests. This unrest may be connected to a longing for, and belonging to queer space that resists giving into the pressures of what is best for the normalized “silent majority” at the cost of marginalized minorities’ needs. The group/individual tension was most adroitly summed up by one participant who discussed his “one foot in and one foot out” philosophy:

Like some of my better friends in the league are like, like, people who again are sort of unique or kinked or just different in their own way right. And so I think, like me, value in the league. It's kinda like one foot in. And one foot in that's actually I think the best metaphor. I like to have one foot in the mainstream and one foot out of the mainstream. And I think that I actually wouldn't wanna have like, you know, there's like these MSL people, like yeah, “I'm MSL ” and they go
there at ten am on Sun and stay until six pm. Then they go to the bar after it. Like yeah, it's like they almost have no fucking identity from themselves and if there not doing that all the time…you know I don't like that. Like I like people who have a sense of, “fuck”, you know, who they are and what the fucking deal is you know so.

Q2

This tension I believe is important in the league as it highlights that in this queer space multiple conflicting movements persist. Another question to ask is: how this tension came to be in the league?

The tension between gay and queer politics in the league is about legitimating and (over)compensation (Wellard, 2002; Zamboni et al., 2008). There is a camp in the league that wants the league to function more like a straight league and this may be connected to a desire to identify and gain outside recognition that they are as good as straight athletes and can play the game as well if not better. There is a history here with gay athletes desiring to prove and show that they can play sports just as well as straight people, which was part of the motivation for establishing the Gay Games (Waddell, 1996) - an international sporting event that many of the players in this camp participate in. Much work goes into achieving a certain level of play for some players such as playing in multiple leagues, training, buying specific gear, etc. I observed one player who was telling another that he plays in a “straight league” to actually have a high level of intensity in the game. The other league is a competitive all-male league, which speaks to the players lack of faith in multi-gender teams. Other players who only play in MSL have to work hard just to reach a base line or a passability60:

No. (laughs) I am what I am. I'm not gonna get any better at this point. Last year before the league, before the season started, I did pay somebody from the league though to start doing skill training with me.

Q5

This interviewee throughout the interview suggested he had to improve himself. Why so much hard work to become masters at a game that excludes LGBTQ communities (Pronger, 1990)?

60 Passability is the ability to be read as non-queer or more normative. In this context, I am suggesting being able to play soccer well is read as normative. Being able to play well is leveraged, depending on the body, to be read as less queer.
answer may lie in wanting to be seen as respectable in greater society and to have the same privileges as other *normalized* sport citizens both within the sport and outside it. The problem is some are always left out of this race towards respectability (Razack, 1998). Much self-governance in the league and pressure to make it a harder and more competitive space is occurring. Thus far the league has managed to stave off these pressures but as tensions mount and injuries increase and discontent abounds, a fracture seems inevitable. This desire to fit in, to legitimatize, to over compensate has deep roots in LGBTQ communities (Downs, 2005, pp. 11-12). Perhaps this ‘subcutaneous’ internalized homophobia and lesbophobia, festers, produces discontentment which is manifested in tension over the body and the hierarchizing of bodies in the league.

Queers’ relationships to their bodies continued to come up in the interviews in very interesting and perhaps surprising ways. Most participants discussed how they found the league too competitive and aggressive, as I have mentioned. Many of these same participants also stated that they really enjoyed the intense physical aspect of the game and the league. These participants did not talk about any internal tensions they may have had due to both their dislike of competition and aggression versus their enjoyment of intense physicality. This particularly came up when asking participants how or if they had a favourite way to move their bodies. The answer almost always had to do with being fast, kicking hard, and often physical contact. In the part of the interview, which involved asking interviewees about an artefact that represented or symbolized their participation in the league, some of the participants brought artefacts such as photographs displaying them being physical in the sport. One participant went as far to state that she really loves aggression or violence in this controlled environment:

I would say I'm more of a lesbian in the league. Now if you asked me about boxing I would say I was more of a dyke um because um in the league I, I, I like being physically, kinda of and it sounds bad but violent. But not really violent. I don't want to hurt somebody or anything I just like being violent in controlled situations. So like hockey, I played it as a kid. I liked getting into fights or at least having the most penalty minutes. Um, um boxing I liked beating people up. It was nice because I had a long reach and they never could hit me um and, and I liked getting bruises and stuff like that in a controlled setting. I don't want to go on the street and get mugged by any means but I like controlled physical...contact. I wouldn't call it violence cause it's not...it's contact. And you don't really get that in soccer except on shins um.
Hypermasculinity is threatened if women enjoy and do well at controlled violence (Wellard, 2002). Perhaps that is why in the league this IaF feels she must down play this part of herself and why she feels like a lesbian in the league but does not in other spaces? Overall the tension between recreation and competition, something I have struggled with myself as a player, is very interesting because it suggests that the queers in this league are aware of the negative aspects that competition and aggression can have and has had on them but it can also point to the enjoyment and a physical power an individual feels when using their body in a very acute embodied ways. Queers, specifically gay men, are often depicted in mainstream media as effeminate, soft, mincing, funny, entertaining and asexual (Dean, 2007; Lang 2007). This is the stereotype that is the least threatening to the status quo or the hegemony that exists not only in sport but in society. Women have been depicted and socialized about their bodies in similar ways causing estrangement from them and a fear about using them too much (Cahn, 1994, p.13). When these ideas about how queers should or should not be physical are challenged: It opens up the possibility of threatening the status quo because such a perceived “weak population” now demonstrates that they have the ability to be physically powerful and really use their bodies in the same way mainstream hegemonic bodies have been socialized to do (Bryson, 1987). There is also some sport literature that states that when women have an opportunity or space to be aggressive and reconnect physically with their bodies and others, this is empowering for them (Donnelly, 2006). In a similar way, this reconnection may be happening for queers and their bodies, through playing the league. IaFs in the league may have had to deal with conflicting messages about femininity, weak/soft versus stereotypical perceptions of the butch lesbian demonstrating prowess on the field (Caudwell, 2007). Queer bodies are envisioned to be good or not at sport (lesbian or gay) and when bodies that are assumed to be either weak or strong are misread and perform differently than expected, false assumptions, that may change the game on many levels, are exposed. Considering bodies in this more inclusive space means thinking about the “sissy boy” that is not good at sports, the “butch lesbian” that is good at sports, the “sissy boy” that is good at sports, and the “butch lesbian” that is not good at sports. How much space is available for these bodies? As one participant states, there should be spaces for these bodies, but how much is given?

I mean, again because I'm not that experienced with sports, I would say it's proper, like I think they are certainly doing a better job than straight people do in terms of making that sense of community, making that sense of fair play, you
know. Like, you know, this will sound terrible but like some, some, I don't know, some lesbian, who is kinda butch and not very sporty, I think it's great that she has a community to come and play sports in. Do you know what I mean? I think that's good. I'm not judging it. I just mean like I'm not saying all fat lesbians are uncoordinated but I mean clearly they deserve a place to play sports just as well as the adonis twink boy deserves a place to play.

Q2

Q2’s narrative illustrates how sexism and bodyism are interlocked. Clearly, the stereotype of ‘the unfit lesbian’ exists and is perpetuated by ideas like these, which means exclusionary discourses are prevalent. I want to suggest that what may be happening in the league is a self-confrontation about physicality, due to internalized homophobia and discrimination towards queerness. One participant was told by his psychologist that the reason he was practicing martial arts was to assault his queerness:

Oh, ok so then in like early 2000, I'm still having issues with like my gayness and so my therapist is like, you know, “you’re going to [Martial Arts] to beat up on yourself for being gay on a unconscious level”. And at the time she was partially right so I stopped doing it. And then I got much more comfortable with my sexuality and then I went back to it because that wasn't the demon anymore. I just really like intense physical activity so I like martial arts and soccer. How I happened upon soccer was um my dad made me do it as a kid cause, you know, southern eastern Europeans like football or soccer.

Q2

In the league, certain bodies can act as a mirror perhaps reflecting otherness, weakness, effeminacy, unskilledness, racializedness, and disabledness, all which threaten masculinity. Maybe the interaction with these bodies makes some players want to become “more normalized” and produces more definitive lines between who can pass and who cannot. The discomfort with queer bodies may relate to a lack of athletic skills and/or an unwillingness to share skills with these queer bodies, or only selectively. I further discuss this (un)sharing in the next section.

4.8 Body Political

In an LGBTQ league, people come from many different backgrounds, some are activists and political. Some individuals work within anti-oppressive frameworks and are very familiar with working collectively and working towards inclusion. However, even these individuals set these priorities aside to play or sometimes they actually ignore politics. Many participants stated that
they did not care what others thought about them and lived their life on their own terms, ignoring internal politics:

I don't really care to be quite honest. I am who I am you know. I gave up a long time ago worrying about what other people think of me cause that's just a fast way to get no where or the best way to get no where fast.

Q2

I guess I would see myself as very unique. I think they do exist in the league but I find that people are less likely to be so vocal about it because I know [her girlfriend] is like that too but she's a little bit more mousey in the league which is also very unique because she's not like that in real life.

Q11

These narratives show that there are tensions between politics and sexuality in the league. Some players are not political in this space, which is why they find themselves unique for being political in the league. Others stated a concern in a way that they were too old and tired to care anymore:

You were assumed, exactly, not to be gay if you played soccer. Um and so yeah, I guess I sometimes looked to be that ideal player. Now the ideal player here at MSL? No. I'm over it. I started in the league when I was over 30 so I couldn't be younger than 30.

Q3

The political “fatigue” in the league is interesting because it reflects the adage: “sport and politics do not mix”. Is it something about sport, about this space, and about this league that silences those who are overtly political in most other contexts? One participant talked at length about why she feels that she is one of the very few that take a political stance in the league:

I think I'm funny. So I contribute the social aspect…I also think I contribute, I don't know, I think I am one of the only few that's really political so I kinda…well I find that sometimes the league loses itself and it's a little bit self absorbed. And I feel bad for saying that. But um so I feel that like I, I remind people of the political message of the reasons why we have these leagues and why these spaces need to exist. And that like, I don't know, like letting other people of. Like I have no problem with it but there's a reason why they have their own leagues and we do not. It’s because we need that space, cause it's our own.

Q11
Could this self-absorption be related to forgetting that the league is a recreational league for many bodies and skill levels, and a queer space, above all? This interviewee astutely states that we need these spaces because they do not exist currently in mainstream sport. This is a space seen as apart from other sporting spaces and one where queer ownership is involved. Q11’s conceived space of MSL does not always match her lived space experience and this is an issue for her. This participant also noted that she has observed others that she knows would say something political in other contexts but not in this space.

Historically, soccer reproduced the master’s (sport) house. Soccer is a game that historically was made for white middle class heterosexual men by white middle class heterosexual men, so it is important to note the queer apathy that occurs in this space. The hegemonic sport system reinforces itself as legitimate by making itself almost hidden, which reflects Foucault’s (1975) concept of how juro-discursive power maintains its authority. Normalizing in the league may be unspoken but there appears to be much work and labour that occurs to (re)produce it: it exists and thrives. Some participants talked about how they thought ‘power’ worked in the league.

I think being ethnic to a certain extent…I mean there are ethnic people in the cool kid club but by and large it's more like…I think it's just like that for anything in society. The more sort of mainstream white you are the more you get to be a part of this kinda of elite thing right. This is how society is right? I don't know if that is conscious or unconscious but that's what I think...and I don't even think that like the people I'm thinking of even wouldn't wanna be part of the cool kids. Even if they were given the chance, see what I mean? So I think the feeling is kinda of mutual. It's weird, power is a very strange and elusive concept, right? Um, but I think those who have power always wanna keep it. That's just the bottom line.

Q2

Yeah I’ve found that a lot of how we propogate the league is unspoken. It’s just, it’s in the behaviours that we kinda of set out and then set in motion and I don’t if they’re specifically written into the rules.

Q12

Even though some are aware of this propagation (how the league’s culture is continued), through their own involvement and complicitness, normalization continues to be perpetuated in the league. The HIV/AIDS activist group of New York in the 1990s Act Up had the equation Silence = Death. Is that operating here? Does the league see some bodies as too queer? There seems to be
no shattering of the silence of normalization. The silence of the normative is almost deafening. Political queers seem less vocal in this space, yet resistance and power always exist together (Foucault, 1975). There may be some resistance to the drive towards normalization, however, the league makes productive docile bodies and building a queer nation means normalizing even what is queer. In next discussion section, I will discuss this production of bodies and the nation that is being built through queer muscularity.

4.9 Economics:

Does this make cents?

The links between economy and the league continued to be raised by participants in many interesting and surprising ways. In this section, I will discuss what “economy” is being built both financially and in other terms of capital (socially, physically, politically) and how these “capitals” are used to produce other forms of capital (acceptance, visibility and power). Also I will examine the concepts of the pink pound61 and the creative class and how they relate to what/who is being cultivated in the league. I am making an argument that the value of sportsmanship ensures that sportsmanship’s relationship to productive and valuable citizenry continues and that this is linked to league economy. The lack of soccer skills and imbalance between teams due to cultural precedents and biases against age, gender, race and sexuality is also problematized. Who is valuable in this league? Value is being built through a type of queer muscularity, which, I am suggesting, links to a wounded gay masculinity and perhaps conversely to a lesbian masculinity. This two masculinities are imbued with desires to be visibly good at the game. This drive for muscularity moves people towards or away from a “queer nation citizenship” and determines who may be valuable and who may be not, who is in and who is out.

Building a brand, vis-à-vis redefining a specific lifestyle that is communicated as, not only as healthy and productive but as economically viable, sustainable and profitable (Rose, 1999) could be understood as a neoliberal objective of the league. Links between economics and queer

61 The pink pound refers to purchasing power of the gay community. I use “gay” here because men still make more money than women and traditionally have less children in same-sex relationships causing their actual and perceived disposable income to be higher. The “pink pound” then is an exclusionary concept because it usually only refers to gay men (sometimes women) with middle to upper class incomes. Of this demographic “dinks” (double income no kids) have the most disposable income.
muscularity’s cultivation is not dissimilar to the cultivation that take place through discourse of whiteness, gender, and ‘healthification’ (Fusco, 2006 & 2007): I suggest these other sarcomeres interlock with economy. It became very clear to me how important it may be for the league, and some of the communities that are part of the league, to sustain these links. The league may desire and produce bodies that are economically valuable (Shogan, 2007). The league’s economies play out in many ways, from financial aspects to bodies that are productive with respect to agency, assertiveness on the field, and a race to normativity. All these enable visibility and ensure that the new normalized have a place in society. Bodies that deviate too much from the accepted economically healthy, queer sportsbody are further marginalized by the normative drive to be seen as “just the same as everybody else”, same soccer players we just like the ‘same-sex’.

Recall what some players said about players who were not perceived as healthy?

That's an interesting issue, right? Like for some it is a physical thing and it's a sport and it's good but others it's just a way to socialize. For some people who are unhealthy and nasty like and everything else, right? And eat too much, drink too much, smoke too much. So I think it depends. For some it's sport, for some it's community, for some it's just something to do.

Q2

Considering whose bodies are viewed as productive and whose bodies can be used as models for the greater community to accept and affirm ‘queer’, it seems that ‘queer’ bodies were being made palatable to the mainstream: they are not to be too different from the norm.

The league is quite concerned with, and reproduces, normative economics. For example they present power point presentations to potential sponsors, which show the league’s ‘healthy’ demographics, a demographic primed with pink pounds for marketers. They continually hold FUNdraisers, where two teams host a social/fundraising event usually in a sponsor’s bar to make more money for the “non-profit” league. Finally, the structure of membership and even the international tournament that the league hosts, has financial implications for the league. All this work can prove to mainstream communities to the league’s players, and maybe, more importantly to ourselves that this queer league is just as ‘healthy’ and ‘profitable’ in terms of players, funds and image so ‘come and play’. Interestingly, some players are resistant to the idea of economics and production. However participating requires complicity.
I don't think they should be looking to make a profit every year. I don't think we should have that…I just was like, “what do you mean the league has fifteen thousand dollars? Why, why what are you saving it for? We're not a business”.
It's a, it's a…were not a business. I just find it very funny. I was just like, “oh”.

Q5

What is this profit for? Some players cannot financially or conceptually, buy into this production of wealthy and healthy homos (i.e. pay the fees and spend money at all the fundraisers). For some it is not a choice because they cannot buy in or pass as well off professionals, with disposable income. Participants also confirmed that it is a very middle class white male league. For a few, who have economic privilege, they actively resist this image but these views are marginalized. Most players buy in to what is happening, and this is not surprising given the (re)enculturation that the league produces through its recruitment and membership.

Well, I always, I always wonder how they keep it up so successfully. It must have been the core group that started and then getting a wider base of people who bought into that and then who became kinda leaders within the league. So yeah, it’s, it’s…I marvel at how it works but I think they did start with this good idea and then got like minded people to kinda of join.

Q12

This exclusive means of structuring the league perpetuates the imagined and desired specific type of queer sportsperson (e.g., the young, white, good looking and male player). There are tensions that occur between the league’s desired productive economies and the realities for many bodies in the league and these have profound implications for queer sportspersonship and queer muscularity.

The league begins its muscularizing process by its annual assessment of new players. A numerical value signifying worth is assigned to new players and these players are instantly converted to “a value” related to their skill. This value is established through a process that is supposed to be neutral and unbiased but the very fact that the adjudicators are current players from the league means that both human error and human biases underlie the perceived objective measurements. If adjudicators are marking players on skill visually, might they also mark them on how they “read” – too queer, not queer enough, white, male, cute, etc.? This assessment provides the opportunity to rank (Foucault, 1977) players on all kinds of hierarchies. One of the past executive members that I interviewed indicated that assessments are “messy”:
How teams are assessed. It's inconsistent, it's messy. Something needs to be done, because I think there's lots of concern about that coming from the league about the teams being balanced and I think something else can be done about it.

Q4

Most of the adjudicators are the more skilled players in the league who, not surprisingly, are mostly young males and white. This then becomes a process of reification and may be about more than skills alone. It may be about the reproduction of many kinds of capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Skill however is valuable and unlike other ‘capitals’ it is more transferable and has a greater potential to be a shared by and with the collective. For those who do not have skill, they desire to attain it and covet it and often revere those players that are skilled. The league executive desires, that skilled players mentor new players:

And then playing on the field, everything is supposed to be equal. You kinda hope that the veteran members and new people kinda merge and blend a little bit. There tends to be a little bit of an issue with some of the really strong males and some of the women there...butting of heads.

Q9

This process ensures the league’s ‘inclusion’ mandate but it can reproduce the league’s normative ideals. Mentorship is not something that LGBTQ communities do well (Kimmel, 2004), as much skepticism exists. This may come from the fear that older LGBTQ people (over) sexualize (perv ing on/cruising) young LGBTQ people (Kimmel, 2004). These fears are deeply connected to internalized homophobia and views about normal sexuality, which determine who can have sex with whom, how old an individual should be to have sex, how young someone should be before they are sexual, and fears of being labeled a pedophile. The history of sexuality and how it has been normalized certainly affects queers and causes them to self-govern (Foucault, 1975, 1978) their actions and perceptions of cultural stereotypes. Do these cultural fears of older queers and the unfamiliarity with passing on knowledge, coupled with the current “everyone for themselves” mentality of our individualistic competitive culture, impede the sharing of skill in the league?

One participant who does come from a culture of mentorship and “passing on” skills became fed
up with being perceived as a troll\textsuperscript{62} in the league. He got this reputation possibly because he was trying to reach out to younger players.

But my experience...I think I'm quite an extrovert and helpful into mentoring or helping the younger guys, well, yeah the guys. (laughs) That, mmmh yeah, they see me in the league and maybe my whole idea of mentoring and all that is really is just a, an ego buster. And you know, I stopped doing that. Fuck em!

Q3

He continues:

Yeah I was called troll...it made me really mad because if nothing I've been good to everybody in the league. If I don't know somebody, ok I don't know them, they don't know me, that's fine but to the people that know me I'm definitely a good, good person. Um, so, that was quite surprising and it's not surprising from what group it came about, it's not the over 35. Taah, um but it was from someone that I had thought we were good friends with yeah..yeah that was quite, quite a shocker.

Q3

As well as the beliefs about age and mentorship, other players suggested that skilled players do not share their knowledge with less skilled players because it would allow unskilled players access to some of the power the skilled players hold in/on this field:

As I said, the other side of the realm is like, well, “why would I show somebody else my skill I'm better than them?” Um, “I can kick this ball wherever I wanna kick it and I can carry it half way down the field”. And just walk all over them and make them feel really bad (so sad).

They wanna win and they don't see helping somebody else improve is gonna [help them] win.

Q11

The way that skill is kept intact by “the elites” in the league furthers marginalization and reproduces specific capitals in the league. Despite great efforts from individual players to

\textsuperscript{62} Troll is often used to demarcate an older and therefore often perceived as unattractive man who is searching for sex.
improve skill on their own, skill alone is not the only capital or “capacity” being developed and desired by both the league and other players in the league.

Oh, ok I just do the games now. When I use…when I started I used to do the practices plus I used to practice on my own. Plus I used to, well, there was one practice a week then I would usually practice one night a week on my own. Then if they had a Saturday scrimmage sometimes, I’d tried to make it to that and…then it was the Sunday games…I just found it really odd and I found it really demanding. So the second year, I kinda cut back. And I just and, I mean cliques formed within the league that were, were established well before I started, I'm all, you know, when I kinda get into to something, I kinda really get into it hard. Um, and I just found that no matter what you did you still weren't part of the clique. So it was just kinda like, “ick who cares”.

Q5

It appears as if a specific “clique” (demographic) is being cultivated in the league, which is one that excludes based on age, gender, ability, bodies, beauty, and possibly sexuality. All of these aforementioned subjectivities determine who can be cultivated as a healthy and skilled subject in order to be part of the “queer nation”.

The cultivation of a queer sportsperson, which interlocks with queer nation, is connected deeply to notions of economy. When I asked players’ personal and league concepts of “sportsmanship”, most relayed initially its connection to “fair play”. Three players thought it was a sexist construct. None of them had thought about “sportspersonship”. Many linked “sportsmanship” to what I conceptualize as productive citizenship on and off the field, which included being a gentlemen, chivalrous and playing hard.

I guess it's just someone who...ah...um...it's sort of...I think it's the same sort of behaviour that applies to someone being sort of a good citizen or good person but kinda focused on the sport part of it. So just being gracious, you know, and abiding by the rules and ah um.....I guess and just sort of being...yeah a good person on, you know, on and off the field. Yeah kinda makes sense…Well yeah, it's just like, you know, like I said obeying the rules and just kinda being gracious and being polite and um...those I guess those are the main things I can think of. Those are the, you know, just treating, respect is another big part of it. Just to kinda of, and I think it's very interesting sort of with MSL when you have such a wide variety of skill levels, respecting each person for the effort more so than the actual skill. I think that has a lot to do with it, especially in this case but in general.

Q10
This narrative suggests sportspersonship is regarded as a good thing but in practice the players that follow this code are not viewed as the ideal or the better players, I have observed. Q10’s ideas of sportspersonship link to that of respectable citizenship that other theorists have linked to a colonial, racialized, gendered system (McClintock, 1995; Rose, 1999). Many interviewees felt that “sportsmanship” was not promoted per se but remembered that the opposite of “sportsmanship” was punished and that perhaps was problematic.

Yeah, we do. This question made me think. There’s definitely what we do in an unspoken way but then I guess what we do is punish negative behaviour. You know there’s aggressive behaviour on the field, or talking back to the referee, or dissent, like any league we punish those. But this got me thinking that we really should reward sportsmanship, which I don’t think we do. We reward performance, and we reward spirit, which maybe has some overlap, but I don’t know if we actually have a sportsmanship award, and maybe we should. So I think in playing you get the feeling that everyone wants you to be sportsman-like but I don’t know that it’s stated anywhere.

Q12

Here again sportspersonship is valued. However this concept has an element of meritocracy attached to it and while it appears as if anyone can be a good sportsperson, in reality it is an exclusionary construct, and only some can be a ‘sportsman’. Most of the participants thought that the ideal player was not always a “sportsman” but was skilled enough to win for their team. The ironic idea that one person can win a game in a team sport was not lost on the IaFs interviewees.

Like one of the norms that they do at MSL that I don't really like is the MPV thing for each game and then we like vote for it. Like I understand why we do but I also feel it's pointing out one person that's been responsible for a team sport and I don't think you can have an MVP that's...like it's a team sport like everybody works together on the field. So it's a collective and yeah. So I feel if you're gonna do one person, you almost have to do something for everybody.

Q11

I love the fact that you need to make a lot of people play together in order to get anywhere.

Q12
These beliefs about what the norm and ideal player is in the league and its links to “sportsmanship” could be the ‘legs’ that allow queer muscularity to move the bodies it builds into a queer nation.

Is who can be part of the Queer nation integrally linked to the process of queer muscularity? If so many are excluded (i.e., gender, racialization, sexual and health behaviour and athletic skill and ability can all confirm or constrain access to queer muscularity). The obsession with building visible strong hard bodies for a nation is not only about being deemed worthy to have a space of your own but being perceived as able to defend it and keep it as your own. The league does this in multiple ways through how it markets itself, how it applies for grants and hosts international tournaments. I have observed the league take and make space for itself at the loss of another queer soccer group (Pink Turf) to ensure that the league receives ample field time, the right city permits and the “right” players. What is deemed as strong now is both physicality, strength and muscular embodiment and a robust economy, which means reproducing conditions for the use of the pink pound. This holding and acquiring more land (e.g. parks, permits, sponsor bars) strategy also means incorporating into the artillery concepts such as the Creative Class (Florida, 2002). This concept highlights that some gay and lesbian populations are part of the core of people who have been responsible for economic success in cities that have flourishing post-industrial economies. Florida (2002) claims that diversity and acceptance and not just tolerance lead to economic success through work, leisure (such as physical recreation like a soccer league), community and everyday life. This acceptance, of course, only extends to some of the queer community (i.e., those whose bodies are deemed creatively productive). This creative class can queer the norm but appear to do so only to a small extent, while leaving many marginalized or invisible. The queer muscularity that is at work in the league (and may be also in the queer community) can also be linked to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the community mantra to build bodies that are seen as healthy and strong instead of weak and ill (Halkitis, 2007; Pronger, 1999). Muscularity may also be linked to a recovery from a wounded or shamed gay masculinity-effeminacy. On participant noted while commenting on politics in the league:

63 I use the word artillery as a multiple entendre that suggests the art or creative and cunning skill, work and artistry involved in nation building processes and the art that sport can be. Finally I use it to convey the history queers have with art and the redeployment of some queers, in a neo-liberal market, to advance normalization.
I don't know, I just, I mean you know I just, you can't control human nature and there's always gonna be cliques. I have cliques at my work and we're supposed to be professionals who work together but you know, it's funny because here we are in, you know, I'm in a management meeting and they're talking about cliques around a management table. It makes it very difficult for working together. And I'm like, “oh my god like what is wrong with us as a human race that we cannot fucking get along?” Like, why is it that we, we, and it's all based on insecurity and needing to have you know power in numbers and all that stuff and needing to have yourself validated and all that crap. And all those, you know, theories and social and sociology stuff and Maslow’s hierarchy of needs all that crap. Like it all goes back to it. Like I get that but I, I just sometimes, you get frustrated with the fact that you're a, you're around adults and you're like, “my god can we not just all play nice in the sandbox?” Like, “stop slinging sand, stop throwing things, stop talking behind people's back and just let's get along”. And I mean we can't change it. It's not gonna. I don't think there is one thing that we can do because it developed naturally and when things develop naturally it's very hard to, very hard to dissect that and change that and why should we? There, you can't tell people who they can be friends with or who they trust. I don't think we should. I just think it's sad that it's gotten to a point where for some reason, um, the clique is the dominant enforcer of some things and their opinions seem to be, um, majority rules and, and it's just kinda of like, “uh!”

Q5

This quote highlights the tension and challenge faced in the league’s spaces. The ‘sandbox’ is a space where the ideal bodies rule and hence queer muscularity and nationhood can be reproduced. I have tried to show that many of the leaders or at least those perceived as leaders in the league related to their age (youth) races (white), beauty, ability and skill, reproduce a normalized, competitive and exclusive space, ignoring or permitting stereotypes and discrimination that characterize mainstream sports. Q2 retorts that the “oppressed is becoming the oppressor” in the league. In other words, gay IaMs that were once harassed in mainstream sport are dominanting this ‘queer’ space for their own ends.

4.10 Queer Nation

*Onward queer soldier marching on for (hardcore) war…*

This final section of my findings and analysis links the five sarcomeses (gender and racialization, sexual behaviour, healthy lifestyles, athletic skills and tension, and economies) that make up queer muscularity and discusses what kind of queer nation space is enabled through the league. I
have examined queer sport as a space to explore how queer muscularity may linked to, and (re)produce aspects of, muscularity movements of the past, specifically muscular Jewry. These muscular movements need boosters and the league may employ a type of queer jingoism. This extreme form of boosterism (in the league these may be sponsors and/or the executive) comes at a cost of greater losses of queer subjects who cannot fuel the very selective (re)productive market driven pink pounds and class of a queer nationhood. This nationhood is connected to homonormativity and homonationalism, which are the result of queer normalization. But it is not all normalization, new forms of resistance by abjected queer subjects are developing in the league. Finally, I make connections between queer nationhood and global spaces.

Sport appears to be one of the tools utilized in the artillery of the queer nation building machine to produce and cultivate queer bodies that can represent a new normalized nation as strong and washed of difference, diversity and queerness except for the gay, young, white, male monogamous sexual subject (who it idealizes, desires and values). Links can be made between this local level multi-gender queer soccer league to global spaces where western, normalized notions of queer nationality prevail. Queer muscularity is intricately related to this project as it is necessary to develop and produce a population that is hard, strong and visible. Producing a muscularity to ensure a place as a nation on a global level has occurred before. As I briefly mentioned in the healthy lifestyles sarcomere section, moral panics have incited groups, who either feared a loss of power or desired more, to action. Historically, Muscular Christianity occurred during the industrial revolution because there were fears that young boys were losing male role models because they were spending more time in school with presumed female teachers and then at home with their mothers (Hall, 1994). A belief arose about how increased structure and management of young boys through sport would “guard their masculinity” and keep it well intact, as well as be a good training ground for war. Protecting hegemonic fears of a wounded masculinity underlies “hard masculinity building projects”. Specifically, I believe that queer muscularity has a closer link to “Muscular Jewry”. There was a Jewish movement towards

64 Jingoism is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary (2006, p.546) as "extreme patriotism in the form of aggressive foreign policy". In practice, it refers to the advocacy of the use of threats or actual force against other countries in order to safeguard what they perceive as their country's national interests, and colloquially to excessive bias in judging one's own country as superior to others – an extreme type of nationalism. A queer jingoism I am stating also use force against populations within its own populations to cultivate a specific queer(sport)persons to ready the queer nation.
nation building within the context of Zionism in the early 1900s: they wanted a distinctive geographical space of their own. Prevailing stereotypes of Jews at this time were that they were weak, “all brains and not physical”. More specifically this movement wanted to challenge anti-Semitic tropes of Jewish sickness/queerness. In their imitation of European national movements, a strategy to challenge and change these prevailing thoughts of Jewish man (specifically) was to encourage young Jewish men to become physical, to workout, to do sports, to build hard and strong bodies (Presner, 2007). The goal was to use these new strong bodies to symbolize the “new Jew” and their ‘right’ of a nation of their own. Hard bodies, literally representing and symbolizing strong nations, were built through muscularity processes. Nation building however comes with many costs. One of those costs is finding funds to boost the cause. Those funds may have strings attached to them and specific political agendas (like the nation of Israel) (Presner, 2007). Queer boosters that support queer nation building projects such as Pride have money, power, and often have conservative perspectives as seen this year in Toronto’s Pride Parade and issues of censorship around Israel Palestinian relations and the group “Queers against Israeli Apartheid” (Canadian university press newswire; Queer Ontario proposes censorship by Pride Toronto at 2010 Pride Queer Ontario). These sponsors impact who is in and who is out of the nation and anything too queer or too racialized is removed or considered outside the nation. This boosterism is aided by the branding and reality of some queers as part of the “creative class” and their access to “pink pounds”. Both this class and the disposable income that goes along with the social ranking is only accessible and possible for a very limited specific portion of queer subjects (white, male, gay) but garnering this class and income these queers maintain a ‘toehold on respectability’ which is perceived as useful to developing other nations and nationhoods such as Canada, USA and a western capitalistic notion of a queer nation. The league may represents a microcosm of what is going on at a global level, and in fact interacts with this global level by the league members who participate in international tournaments and the tournament the league hosts in Toronto. Our sponsors and league and idealized players play a role in who is part or desired for the nation.

I argue that a specific queer jingoism and queer nationhood operate together which ‘deposits’ the western white gay male queer as the always already superior queer subject and measures any other queerness globally and racially against it. The idealizing and normalizing of young, gay,
good looking males in MSL may be an example of this kind of queer jingoism. Queer jingoism builds on homonationalism (Puar, 2007). Puar’s concept of homonationlism can be extended to explain how queers in sport might take up nation building projects through sport because of the internalized homophobia that pervades (queer) sporting communities (Griffin, 1998; Pronger, 1990). I also suggest that nationhood normalizes queer (but it can queer nationalism in limited ways) such as inciting resistance in new ways from abject, queer bodies. An example of this, is the league marketing itself as a recreational inclusive league but in practice many participants found it to be competitive and exclusive where the white young gay men was still the most privileged. MSL queers soccer by its very existence but then in practice much queerness is normalized. This is not to say that resistance does not occur in MSL. This resistance was less apparent because few players spoke about rejecting league values and vision. Some did but in minor ways and more often the resistance was voiced as a giving up or not caring anymore, a kind of complicity. Often this space seemed to constrain players more than other spaces in their life, which speaks to the normalizing characteristics of sport. For the most part players in this study accepted the league’s values and vision and this is because sport is still such a strong bastion and institution for hegemonic masculinity. I hope future studies may be able to examine the moments of nuanced resistance within queer masculinity.
Chapter 5
Self Reflection

Baring it all: Beyond the Pitch

My involvement with the league thus far has been somewhat conspicuous in that I have been very, if not overly, involved yet somehow always evading an executive position. I started off playing before the league was even a league. I answered an advertisement in the back of Xtra by dialing the number leaving my contact information. My first attempt at meeting up with this pickup style group, mostly guys kicking around the ball, was not without some challenges. I had left other physical activities in my youth due to the homophobia I experienced in some contexts, but nowhere was this homophobic tension felt more than in my involvement with soccer. Perhaps that strong pull was what kept me in soccer for so long until eventually I had said: “enough is enough; I don’t need this anymore; I am done with soccer”. Somewhere along the way, I missed the game that I had retired my cleats from at the tender age of 16. Somewhere after playing in the “uber competitive” and “normative masculinity” factory of the Central Soccer League, a première boys league of clubs mostly located within the Greater Toronto Area, which my (small town minded) boys’ representative soccer league decided to join, to five years, when I was in the second year of my university undergraduate degree, the “beautiful game” began its call to me again. And it might have had something to do with the fact that I missed that group experience, that feeling of belonging, or that physicality and prowess of being able to move my body and “run like the dickens”. My longing to return to play might have also had something to do with the fact that I had recently lost much control over my body because of my convalescence post transplant. Finally, after regaining some of that strength I was taking it less for granted. The book “The Arena of Masculinity” (Pronger, 1990) that I read during this post-transplant semi-prone part of my life may have also triggered some reminiscing and longing for the “beautiful game”. The longing might have also had to do with having a chip on my shoulder about being in Physical and Health Education (PHE) at University of Toronto and living in two university

65 The local gay newspaper that had a listing of all the gay sports clubs in Toronto

66 Perhaps religion was another context but at that time in my life while still living at home I was not able to opt out of Christianity.
residences, where “gays” were regarded as nonathletic. Being the challenger and resistor that I tend to be, I wanted to prove to them and, maybe more importantly, to my own internalized homophobia that we/I was wrong! And, so I pushed myself outside of my comfort zone and got to Riverdale East Park to meet “the boys” in the park. I, being a keener, arrived early but was not sure where exactly in the park or where specifically we were meeting. I started to warm up solo and then came upon a group of individuals, I was unsure whether they could be the group I was looking for: were they queer like me? I was at first shy. After I got the courage to approach one of them to ask if this was the motley crew I was to meet. To quite clearly paint the picture, this was a group of mostly (racialized as) black men. I recall their dreadlocks. At first I doubted that this could be them but then scolded myself for being so exclusionary, presuming that gay men in a soccer league could not be all black, could they? After reasoning with myself: “this is Toronto, this must be what the urban queer sportsbody looks like”, I asked if they were part of the league I was looking for. I was feeling very scared with my heart racing because I was frightened of being beaten up. I said the downtown league as if it was some code that they would know. He said it was and to grab a ball and start practicing with them. The workout put us through our paces. However, after 45 minutes, I spied another group of men, appearing less organized and less skilled looking, playing on a sparse space of dying grass in front of the park lavatories. Upon seeing me look at this new group, I told the group I was meant to be with this other group. The leader motioned the same and that was that. I remember feeling weird: “like did that really just happen?” “I am lucky to still have my head!” I was annoyed that a practice starting late could have almost got into such trouble. Who comes 45 minutes late? I guess this is to be expected. But back then I did not know that. After my initial encounter with the first group of men, breaking the ice with the queer group was a slice of cake. I remember still being nervous and sweaty but soon enough I was running around playing a game of scrimmage and it did not matter anymore: it was just the game and us. Actually perhaps that is too much of a romanticized version because I was probably watching the others quite closely and monitoring my own actions to see what was ok and what was not. I continued that summer coming out to a couple of practices before it disbanded for the season. I had a fun time and met some interesting people. I only remember meeting men that first summer. It was later on that year that I received a call asking if I wanted to help legitimize or make this pickup group more official. I responded that I was not able to help with the setup but had a desire to play in the league if it happened. And so I did. The following year the league was “authentic”, with official jerseys and all. That seems like
forever ago now. I played that year with my fruit fly in tow and we were a dynamo duo. Our team was named *Hot Lips* and my “fly” came up with a great cheer. We had a lot of heart in those days. The head of the league was on our team. Due to the large responsibility he had already, he had tried being our team’s coach/captain, but asked if I could do the coaching part. I agreed and soon enough I was using my PHE skill set to “whip” everyone into shape. I met some of my closest friends in the league that year and met some of my longest running nemeses. Unbeknownst to me, there was a fellow teammate that year who would become a great mentor and friend in my life, who then died after a long hard struggle with HIV/AIDS. I miss him still to this day. That inaugural year, I also had my first problems with straight people in the league. I was challenged and it provoked me to use physical and verbal abuse, which is not characteristic behaviour for me. One specific player that I had a shoving and yelling match with was later playing in the same game. I made a great run down the field dribbling past three opposing players with him being the final one of the three. I scored and we won the game. That goal tasted so sweet. I remember asking myself why he was playing in the league if he was straight? Can he not go somewhere else? This was my space, my turf. I have struggled with having and playing with *allies*, particularly straight men, in the league as I always question their alliances and motives for playing.

Thus, I have some social locations/positionalities (biases?) in doing this study. I believe because of my background that I do have an agenda to make space and change sport to be more inclusive not only for myself but also for others that I have seen unacknowledged, forgotten and ignored. This personal agenda to challenge, change and make space in sport might not even be a possible goal. Sport was created and galvanized for a certain kind of men (historically for middle class, white and presumed straight men) by a certain kind of men (again historically middle class, white and straight). Trying to create something within this sports framework might always already be normative, this resistance is futile: sport reproduces and maintains the status quo. I was also socialized into the normative ideals of sport through my undergraduate degree in Physical Education and Health at the University of Toronto. I learned there that people, all people, should

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67 Fruit fly is a women who is friends and hangs out with gay men as gay men have been called fruits.

68 Allies are straight individuals who play in the league and are assumed to affirm LGBTQ people.
be physically active. The discourse of becoming active and maintaining activity, and being healthy was pervasive, of course. Although, I may have been much more critical of this (un)hidden healthism (Rose, 1999) agenda than my student contemporaries while in school, and continue to be, I admit that at some level I believe this too. I struggle with when to critique and when to help develop this goal and with whom. Whose ends are we really serving by promoting such body breaks in the queer community? Might we be breaking bodies in new ways and not only on a physical level, but also on deeper psychic levels? And if so, how is sport really helping everyone in the queer community? This is a tension I have found in myself. I believe that physical activity participation is healthy for everyone, but I do not believe the spaces or contexts exist within mainstream sport and physical activity for all bodies to practice in a safe, holistically, healthy and nurturing space/way. Part of my project here was to explore if such an “alternative space” existed and to determine whether it reproduced hegemonic values. I have never really located a safe space, yet, and to this day in sport have found it only in moments. Smooth space (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) does exist but they are not always apparent in expected spaces like the MSL. Here, I found striated locations (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), which appear to be reproducing hegemonic values, ideals and norms.

So is all lost in this analysis of Queer sports Nationhood? How do we reconcile being content with only moments of queering? How do we open up these spaces to possibilities beyond our imagination? I do believe you need to work both within and outside the system as activist and writer Larry Kramer has to enable changes of space (Lawrence, 1997). Studying queer bodies and what happens to them and through them within a queer sports context that is specifically set up for them and by them, is a way to interrogate what and when LGBTQ communities are producing ‘smooth space’. The interesting thing for me is that in some ways this space is an in-between space, neither one nor the other. Perhaps this middle space is what fascinates me the most? Corporeally feeling in an in-between space, not the mainstream and not completely a queer space, may be why queering feels safer.

This study both challenges my beliefs and has been difficult for me. I have had to critically think about one of my own social spaces and outlets. I can relate to the queer apathy that occurs in this space. Feeling like a rainbow flag bearer all of the time is draining yet I continue to try and find ways to mediate this and continue the “good fight” of queering, with self-balance and
contentment. This project has been part of that process for me and I believe as well for some of my co-participants. I will continue to queer on.
Chapter 6
Final Discussions, Limitations & Conclusions

‘Straight’ Talk and final words….more boundaries and borders?

Returning to the concept of nation building and specifically queer nation building and its link to the MSL, I am left with some questions and reflections. I begin the end by returning to my theorists and frameworks. First back to language and Butler (1997) and the solidification of boundaries and borders in the league. Could it be that out of fear, certain subjectivities may be discouraged within the league in order to “prove” that gays are not nonathletic or overtly effeminate (for gay males) or overtly butch (for lesbian women) in an attempt to ward off oppressive language from others but maybe more importantly ourselves? Oppressive language, Butler (1997) states, enacts its own kind of violence and is violent (p.9). Furthermore, Butler argues that speaking itself is a bodily act (p.10). However, language does not necessarily immediately cause violent acts. Sometimes there is a gap or no violent act that follows. Would a speech act still be violent without the following act? Butler would answer with a resounding, “yes” but if the language is always violent how do you change it? To this question, Butler argues for a redirecting of the language and a reappropriation of terms such as queer (p.14). By using queer in a reversal effect it suggests that it has changeable power that marks a kind of discursive performativity that is a chain of ritual resignifications whose origin and end remain unfixed and unfixable (p.14). Along these lines of change, Butler argues that if the text acts once, it can act again, and possibly against its prior act (p. 69). Conceptually this re-acting of texts can work towards both denormalizing and normalizing e.g., the potential normalizing of queer and queer soccer. Furthermore, the possibility of resignification as an alternative reading of performativity and of politics could have a useful and empowering outcome, especially in relation to the language used in the league. But has the use of the word queer been so resignified in the league that it has become normalized? Furthermore, Butler argues against censorship of hate speech because the language will be used again regardless (p.102). She advocates for state or public discourse to take up the practice of re-enactment until the speech is no longer hateful. This is when the linguistic occasion for change is possible. An important point Butler argues is that “no one has ever worked through an injury without repeating it” (p.102) but the question is how will the repetition occur, where and with what injury and what reprieve? This question is important to
take into consideration because repetition may be where healing can take place and resistance enabled. However, repetition may also be where words change their meaning and become normalized and appropriated.

Butler (1997) argues that agency begins where sovereignty wanes (p.16). It is important to consider agency with respect to the league and its players in relation to the league’s sovereignty and how that is positioned in relation to other sport organizations or sport governing bodies (like Ontario Soccer Association or International Gay and Lesbian Football Association). Here there might be more of a plurality of subjectivities that could be entitled to agency and not just one sovereign representation (a very white male dominated executive). Butler also argues that one of the important “tasks of a critical production of alternative sexualities will be to disjoin homosexuality from the figures by which it is conveyed in dominant discourse” (1997, p.125). I have demonstrated that the league and its players may be complicit in this critical production of (dis)continuing to join homosexuality with figures constructed through dominant discourse (such as the ideal, muscular sportsperson). Butler asks: “are we not paralyzed by fear of the unknown future of words that keep us from interrogating the terms that we need to live, and of taking the risk of living in the terms that we keep in question?” (p.163). She calls for a redeployment, which would mean speaking words without prior authorization (although this redeployment may certainly only be possible for those that have voice and visibility). Moreover, she argues that “the resignification of speech requires opening new contexts, speaking in ways that have never yet been legitimated, and therefore by using them making them legitimate” (p.41). New words or using words in different ways opens up new possibilities. For example, what this might look like for the league is using more inclusive language such as multi-gender teams, players that identify as female, having a gender and equity representative, and an equitable representation on the executive. The relationship between language and the league is important and I have demonstrated that it may currently be a site of (re)production for normative queer nationhood but language has the potential to be resistant too. The league was described as a “gay and lesbian soccer league” and is presently described as a “LGBTQ” league in policy but not always in practice. What would happen if the league was to be described as a queer league and (re)queered itself? Might it open up space for different subjectivities to be visible and therefore an existing part in the league, which might aid in the denormalization of queer nationhood?
6.1 Limitations: Making a Mossy Mess

Methodological Challenges and Future Research Directions

I discuss the limitations associated with this work before I conclude and give possible future directions for research. Although I believe my present study yields important and valuable insights and contributes towards the development of queer sport sociology, limitations remain. Most apparent, is what findings were foregrounded due to my chosen theoretical frameworks, which informed the kind of questions I asked my participants. This study was aimed at finding out personal experiences of players in a queer sport league and given the frameworks used and questions regarding current experience in the league foreclose some other possible discussions. Future work may seek to investigate how to make these kinds of spaces more inclusive. Here, I was focused on exploring what was happening in these spaces (how inclusive they may be) before I could consider the work that needs to be done to change such spaces.

Language is also a limitation in this study not only because language is linear and causes us to present items as linear despite the messiness of language in lived spaces but in the use of questions. I reflect now on the language I used in some of my questions that yielded short answers and often very noticeable bodily reactions. I am thinking specifically, as I noted in my discussion section on gender and race roles, the questions I asked about self-identity in relation to gender and race. My interviewees were often surprised and agitated that I would ask questions about this. These were aspects for/of them that they might consider more static than fluid and may speak to the homonormativity of players. In future research, it may be interesting to query the ways in which people think about transitions with identity. For example, asking ‘do you ever play with your gender’ or ‘do you ever experience yourself being identified as raced or an ethnicity that is different than how you understand your race and ethnicity’? These might be useful in unpacking multiple subjectivities in the league. Also, in the research I was made very aware that socially prescribed gender and race expectations and norms regarding sport participation, both mainstream and queer (some of which reinforced each other and others that had major tensions between them), operate in a complex way in this (queer) sport space. It was not my specific scope to address this complexity, therefore future research might focus on how gender and race expectations and norms both from the mainstream and queer societies impact on queer players in queer sport spaces. A cross comparison might be undertaken between queer
sport spaces that are multi-gendered and single gendered, as well as sites where players come mainly from a specific racialized background and a very diverse site.

Methodologically, institutional ethnography\(^6\) could be used in future studies because it would have allowed me to take into consideration how mainstream and LGBTQ discourses circulate in the league, and the relationships and power struggles between the two and intra groups (referees, players, executive, different cliques within players). An institutional ethnography could be performed in queer soccer spaces in order to have a more nuanced understanding of social environments and social relationships on multiple scales. My project focused on the players in the league. Both current and past players, and current and past executive members (one who still plays in the league and one who has left) were interviewed. Two groups that many interviewees discussed as having a large perceived impact on their experiences were referees and the executive. From the latter group, the executive, one individual was interviewed and all of the made available league’s materials were collected and analyzed. Interviewing more of the executive and past executive members specifically would be useful because of the power they exercise. Similarly, the former group, referees, would be very interesting to examine as the legal authority figures on the field, doing their job in this league, sometimes illegally. As I discussed in the ‘league backgrounder’ these are all outlaw referees. Many of them are not queer or have ambiguous sexuality, and they spend much of their time in mainstream sporting environments. Would an examination of these referees who spend time in this queer sport space on Sundays yield a broader perspective? I believe that this would be an important group to hear from especially about their impressions and insights (and hesitations) in queer sport spaces.

Past players were a group I chose to interview because, from a methodological stance, I thought they would be able to provide more distance and an insider/outsider account of their own league experiences. Some of the limitations with this group was locating them. As they were no longer part of the league, I was often at the mercy of hoping league members would pass on the research information flyer to friends they had who used to play in the league and other sport organizations to pass along my call for past participants. I did contact Pink Turf, the all-lesbian soccer league,  

\(^6\) Institutional ethnography (IE) is a sociological method of inquiry that was first developed by Dorothy E. Smith (2005) created to explore the social relations that structure people’s everyday lives where ordinary daily activity becomes the site for an investigation of social organization.
and never received a response. In future research, if possible, it would be advantageous to know who did not come back and to interview them about why they decided to leave. This temporal aspect with interviewing past participants is important to note as it may have made a different kind of remembering of the league possible. The range from when past players had left the league spanned from 4.5 years to 8 months. Did this time period mean all the past players remembered the league with a very positive memory? I made field observations of some of these past players (the players that were within the time period of my project) and they spoke more critically of the league during the season versus remembering what it was like to play. There is methodological research to support the timing of interviews affects the responses given (Foddy, 1994, pp. 90-100). The temporal aspect of when interviews occurred in relation to the season is not a limitation in my study given its post-structuralist approach and I will discuss this in more detail with regards to the current players, but first I would like to continue with some of the limitations of interviewing past players. Past players are another group of queer sports bodies that I believe need to be a focus for future research. Are these spaces not queer enough for these players that leave or are they too queer? It is often complicated to access former participants of queer sporting spaces. Current research so often only addresses who is current in sport. For the bodies that are gone, new methodological ways to address these bodies is needed. I hope I have started to address this in some way because their stories are important.

Methodological errors that were unforeseen or uncontrollable did materialize in my project. Specifically, when the current players interviews were done they were not at the most ideal time. The season finished in September 2009 with the Annual banquet in mid-October. I received ethics approval in mid December 2009. I was able to interview two participants in January and February but accessing participants during off-season proved very challenging especially as the league executive would not send out a call to the league list serve but only to the league forum which is an “opt in system” and this garnered only one of my interviews. It was not until the annual general meeting at the end of March that I was able to poster and get the word out again. Most of the interviews were conducted in April, seven months after the season officially ended. Research studies show that when interviews are done can impact the answers respondents give (Foddy, 1994, pp. 90-100) but the post-structuralist framework that is advanced in my study acknowledges that any account given in an interview situation is only ever partial, contextually bound and socially constructed. Future research on these kinds of leagues could interview pre-
season, during the season, and post season to account for this temporal aspect, bearing in mind that a post-structural approach will regard any claims to a true or authentic experience as problematic. I had originally designed my study with the intent of interviewing directly after 2009 season’s end but unforeseen personal circumstances prevented the submission of my ethics application until mid October. In an effort to account for this time lag, I asked interviewees at the beginning of the interviews to think about the last season in summer when they were playing and to answer with that in mind. I also asked participants to bring an artefact with them that symbolized or represented their participation in the league, hoping this would act as a pre-interview primer and help the interviewee reflect upon their experiences. Of course acquiring a relationship with a sports governing body, specifically a queer sport governing body, will ease the dissemination of a call for participants.

Despite these challenges and working with the MSL governing body and their desire to be seen as unbiased in supporting this project in order that players not feel obligated to participate in the study (the reason I was given for why a group list-serve message could not be sent out), I was able to garner a fairly diverse sample of league participants for interviews. This group made me aware of another limitation with regards to dealing with such a diverse group. Where league participation ranged from one year to six (since the inception of the league) and the age range of the participants range from 21 to 42, important (historical) changes and institutional changes have occurred in the league and in society in general for LGBTQ populations. Some participants experienced times when many human rights were not granted to LGBTQ people and others did not know the history of gay rights because of their age. Some participants have an institutional history with the league and others have only their current experiences to reflect upon. Moreover, geographically, where interviewees where raised (urban or rural environment during upbringing) and whether or not they were religious (either were raised with religious influence and or currently prescribing to a religion) may have impacted their experiences and perceptions of the league. These differences were often visible. For example, when involvement in queer sport space by IaFs and/or individuals that identify as transgender (IaTs) was discussed with some IaMs interviewees, they often felt IaFs and/or IaTs outreach was not needed nor should it be a priority for the league. Evidently, some of these historical climates, geographical locations and faith-based involvement encouraged more progressive, inclusive and open mindedness towards marginalized groups and others did not. Moreover, why geography and or religion might
influence perceptions of transgender and women’s participation is directly linked to normativity and normative sporting muscularities such as Christian Muscularity and, by extension what I have called, Queer Muscularity. Finally, where participants were on their own journey of coming in to their own around their sexuality, this inevitably impacted on their responses and these differences are very difficult to account for, mostly because they are rarely articulated. Future research should interrogate these complexities. I suggest in-depth interviews with fewer participants in order to acquire a life-history of the interviewees might get at these complexities. Specifically, I mean a history of their experiences with sport. As one interviewee told me, they expected to talk more about their past experiences with sport. Past experience does effect current lived experience therefore it would beneficial for future research to consider participants past experiences with sport. Beyond work of this study means taking the above suggestions into consideration in future research to continue the queering, revitalizing and extending the scope of queer bodies and experiences in sport literature as Jamieson (2009), King (2008), and MacDonald (2006) have called for in sports sociology.

This project was designed to provide a snapshot of the league and player’s experiences of this queer sport space and did not to go more in depth on specific aspects of the league. However spaces are fluid and dynamic and during the write up stage of this project, I was still immersed in the field and noticed some changes and some interesting areas that this project was not able to look at more fully. The relationship between queer leagues and economics, specifically sponsorships and marketing, was an area that became very important. This season the league decided to fundraise money for itself by making a league calendar and stated that the goal was to try to document visibly what the league was about and who was part of the league. Some queer sport bodies were left out and this is often the case when spaces are marketed. For example, even though IaFs were included in the calendar of the twelve shots for each month IaFs appeared in only three and of the shots only one shot that included one IaF in the background was a “sexy” shot where players were scantily clad. The majority of the calendar was filled with white men, myself included. A more in-depth look at the connection(s) between economics and queer sports leagues may prove fruitful especially if interrogating the visual (images) that are used in this process. Finally, as this was a World Cup year, the league utilized and appropriated the FIFA World Cup in interesting ways. Players became more verbal about FIFA rules as the only legitimate way to play. Socials and even the league’s Pride involvement cashed in with World
Cup fever by using images, sounds, and clothing associated the league to link with the elite level of soccer. While this queers the World Cup, using the World Cup “straightens” the league. Future research should pay close attention to how both large international mainstream-sporting events (World Cup, Olympics and Commonwealth Games) and queer international sporting events (GayGames, OutGames) impact grassroots level queer sport. Moments of queering happened at a social. Players watched a game and the issue of communist North Korea being permitted to play in the World Cup was discussed. For example, they asked if a communist country should be allowed to compete, if politics belonged in sport and what influence China had played in supporting North Korea were discussed. This discussion was a moment of queering as questioning nations’ interests in sport linked politics to sport and questioned what the World Cup’s intentions were in general. But, conclusions often focused on normative framing: “it’s just a game”, and “sports are not political”. These conclusions contribute to queers complicitness: ignoring sport as political both globally, locally and personally, by and through, one’s membership in the MSL.

6.2 Conclusions

If queer can be seen to challenge successfully gender hegemony, then it can make both theoretical and political space for more substantive notions of multiplicity and intersectionality” (Danuta Walters, 2005 p.11)

Queer sport in Toronto and in the western world has and continues to grow. Populations of queer sports bodies are increasing in number, and are using presence and visibility in sport as a means to gain a profile and legitimacy, the kind that comes from being sporting bodies. I was concerned that a “queer sportspersonship” might be more exclusive and marginalizing than queering sportsmanship and, throughout this study, I have found that a hardening and stratifying of queer sport space is evident. Another concern at the onset of this project was how and if space could be made for queer sports bodies. I believe my work has tried to make space for examining the multiplicity and intersectionality of queer sport bodies. Although my analysis of the league foregrounds some critical and problematic practices, I also want to acknowledge that many players who participate in this league have positive experiences. Players participate, my interviewees included, because they receive or want to receive some enjoyment from playing soccer. There are many other reasons why participants find aspects of the MSL fun and enjoyable. These reasons are varied; a sense of community, social aspects, healthy living, cruising, relationships, exercise, being outside and in parks, etc. Some obviously find some of
what they desire or enough of what they desire to stay and play season after season. Alternatively, some do not and move on to other experiences. Regardless, the popularity of the league is a sign of individuals’ desires for such as space and all that comes with participating in this LGBTQ soccer league. Despite their critiques of the league for example, the players in this study (specifically the returning players) did discuss how they also enjoyed aspects of their participation. Despite finding some ways that queer bodies were resisting normative notions of sports participation and sportspersonship, my main findings point to queer sport in this league being used as a normalizing project towards a specific queer league and nationhood.

The bodybuilding and body fascist pursuit towards queer nationalism operated in five different ways, (which I termed sarcomeres as they are the interconnected pieces that make up queer muscle and muscularity and enable this muscle to flex and extend) in ways that benefit queer nationalism. Interviews, field observations, textual analysis and my self-reflexivity as an active participant researcher yielded five interlocking aspects (sarcomeres) of queer muscularity: 1) Gender and Racialization were connected to the wounded masculinity of gay IaMs “butching it up” in these spaces. While at the same time to be a good girl in the league meant having to tow a line of a respectable amount of femininity and be relatively strong at the sport without stepping on any of the “boys” toes in order to avoid IaM rewounding. The league has reproduced a particularly whitened space and both women and individuals raced as non white appear to have to curtail their sexualities, while the white male can be slutty and remain untainted sexually; 2) Sexual Behaviour was self-governed with a “separation of church and state” mentality to ensure that a respectable space of the league was maintained; 3) Health Lifestyles are adopted to maintain the perceived cleanliness and health of the league even with regards to sex. This ensures bodies, teams, and the league are organized and “mess free”. Building a healthy body that has capital is worth these goals; 4) Athletic Skills use this healthy body to acquire skills but there are tensions between a recreational cooperative and competitive styles of play and the relationship of these styles to a queer and gay sensibility. Queer sensibility became marginalized and was often apathetic or complicit with the mainstream in this space, which appeared to be linked to a need to legitimate and compensate for queerness through using queer muscularity in ways to solidify normative bodybuilding; 5) Economics combined with queer muscularity develops productive bodies converting their worth into other means; financial, political, skills, etc. Skills, one of the few aspects of worth that can be transferred in this system (beauty, gender,
and race as perceived as not being easily transferrable), operated in a closed system, where little mentorship is encouraged between queers, selfishness abounds. These five points/sarcomeres are all aspects that can either reproduce or resist the building of hard productive bodies and queer muscularity. Queer muscularity is a conception that I believe can contribute to the field of research in queer contexts and populations. Queer muscularity, vanIngen (2003) might suggest, continues to open up a call to look at how bodies are made productive or unproductive in space. Queer nationhood and queer nation building are concepts which interlock with queer muscularity and demonstrate the links between local muscle and global contexts. My work continues the call from scholars such as Jameson (2009), King (2008), and Macdonald (2006) to queer sport sociology and make the familiar strange. The study shows how local queer sport can reproduce imperial and colonizing projects of empire, gay nation building and normative stratifications. Queers are often always already perceived as second rate athletes. The master’s sport system believes this to be true. But, by using queer tools of disindentification (Munoz, 1999), performativity (performative speech specifically) (Butler, 1990), and queering the rules, perhaps we can create an even queerer sporting space (field) of our own. My research question asked: what kind of sportsperson(s) are being cultivated in the league? I intentionally use the word cultivated to suggest that there is much work that has to go in to developing bodies. Cultivation can reproduce normative or hybrid bodies. As I outlined, the league cultivates normativity in many ways, it is a normalizing space for queer bodies where moments of resistance do occur, but as the league continues to be formalized, stratification continues. However, another definition of stratification links to the storage of seeds in chilled moist environments for later growth. Perhaps those queer seeds are being sown in the league right now, they are “on hold,” but not lost and forgotten. I call on other sport sociologists and queers to find ways that utilizes research in order to continue to plant and cultivate queer seeds for rhizomatic moss growth in queer sports spaces.

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70 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987) us the term “rhizome” to describe theory and research that allows for multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points in data representation and interpretation. They oppose this concept to an arborescent concept of knowledge as a rhizome works with horizontal and trans-species connections, while an arborescent model works with vertical and linear connections.
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Appendices

Appendix A  Interview Questionnaire

**Research Project:** Straight Kits f/or Queer Bodies: An Inter-textual Study of Spatialization and Normalization of a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) soccer league sport space

**Investigator:** Matthew Strang, Faculty of Physical Education and Health, University of Toronto, Tel: 416-706-6288 Email: matthew.strang@utoronto.ca

**Faculty Supervisor:** Dr. Caroline Fusco, Faculty of Physical Education and Health, University of Toronto, Tel: 416-946-7717, Email: c.fusco@utoronto.ca

**Interview Questions**

**Demographic Information:**

a) Name:

b) Age:

c) Language spoken:

d) Place of birth:

f) People living in Canada come from many different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Which cultural group or ethnic background would you identify yourself with?

g) In what area of the city do you live?

h) How many times do you participate in the Metropolitan Soccer League in a week?

j) What is your favourite sport or physical activity?

1. How long have you played or been an executive member in the Metropolitan Soccer League?

2. Why did you decide to play or participate in the organization of the league?
3. What kinds of things do you think you contribute to in the league?

4. Do you know whether the league has any rules, regulations norms or ideals about participation?

   (Probe: Concerning ways to behave in games or competition or at social events.)

5. Do you know whether there is an ideal player in the league? (in terms of skill, behaviour etc.)


7.a) I want to ask you about the concept of sportsmanship or sportspersonship. Can you tell me how you understand the notion of sportsmanship or sportspersonship?

7.b) Do you think the league and players value or promote sportsmanship or sportspersonship in any way? How? How do you feel about this?

8. How do you think about your participation in the league and how do you see yourself in the league? Do you ever think about how others see you? Does this change depending on the different spaces that league members occupy (playing pitch, social events, tournaments, etc.)?

9. Is there anything that you think is unique about this league and your participation in it?

10. What do you like about the league? Why?

11. Is there anything that you dislike about the league? Why?

12. What changes would you make? Why?

13. Do you identify as lgbtq? Can you tell me how you self-identify? (Probe: In terms of class, gender, race, ableness, sexuality, etc.) And how do you self-identify within the context of the league?

14. Do you think that you emphasize different parts of your identity in different spaces of the league (playing pitch, social events, tournaments, etc.)? Why/Why not?
(Only ask current players and current executive members)

15. Will you play or be a part of the organization next season, why or why not?

(Only ask past-players)

15. Why did you leave the league? Will you ever return to play? Do you think anything needs to change about the league?

(All players)

16. What role does (or did) the Metropolitan Soccer League play in your health and physical activity participation or the health and physical activity participation of LGBTQ individuals?

17. Can you tell me about the artifact that you brought to share today and its significance to you and your participation in the league?

18. What do you think about mainstream sport leagues?

19. Do you think of “LGBTQ” sports leagues, MSL included, to be alternative spaces to mainstream sport leagues?

20. What do you think of the “co-ed” aspect of MSL? Do you think it reinforces and/or challenges notions of a mainstream sport gender binary? Why? Why not?

Thank you for participating in this interview
Appendix B  Recruitment Flyer

*** Participants Needed for Research Project***

_What is this research about?_

The **“Straight Kits f/or Queer Bodies”** is a research project about peoples’ experiences playing sport in an LGBTQ sport space.

I want to find out about the reasons why you participate in the Metropolitan Soccer League and your experiences of playing in LGBTQ sports spaces.

If you have just completed the Metropolitan Soccer League Summer 2009 season or have played in the league prior to 2009, but no longer participate, I would like to interview you. The interview will last about 1 hour and will cover topics such as:

- league participation
- social events
- sportsmanship
- LGBTQ identities
- sport
- health
- your experience playing in the Metropolitan Soccer League

The project will show how sports environments are experienced by LGBTQ individuals and may help LGBTQ sports spaces be more inclusive of the diversity of LGBTQ individuals in our communities.

If you would like to hear more about the project to see if you would like to participate, you can contact the student researcher, Matthew Strang at 416-706-6288 or matthew.strang@utoronto.ca

Faculty Supervisor:

Dr. Caroline Fusco, Faculty of Physical Education and Health, University of Toronto  
55 Harbord Street, Toronto, ON, M5S 2W6  
Tel: 416-946-7717, Email: c.fusco@utoronto.ca
# Appendix C  Participant Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Cultural Ethnicity</th>
<th>Residence in Toronto</th>
<th>Years in the League</th>
<th>Artifact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>IaM</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>American White</td>
<td>Annex</td>
<td>3 seasons</td>
<td>Medal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>IaM</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>English, French,</td>
<td>South Eastern European</td>
<td>Church &amp; Wellesley</td>
<td>6 seasons</td>
<td>Picture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Plus 3 more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>IaM</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>English, French</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Gay Village</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jerseys - all</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Plus 2 more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>IaM</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Canadian</td>
<td>Yonge &amp; Eglinton</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jersey – one style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>IaM</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>“Canadian, you know, white”</td>
<td>Village</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3 medals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>IaM</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Caucasian Waspy, Ukranian/Irish Mix</td>
<td>Bloor Court / Westend Toronto</td>
<td>4 (past)</td>
<td>Cleats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7</td>
<td>IaM</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>In between UofT and the Village</td>
<td>1 (past)</td>
<td>Jersey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8</td>
<td>IaM</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Scottish - Russian</td>
<td>Downtown core</td>
<td>2 (past)</td>
<td>Cleats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9</td>
<td>IaM</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>American - Polish - Hungarian</td>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>USB key</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>IaM</td>
<td>English (some French)</td>
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<td>Annex</td>
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<td>No artifact</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Q11</td>
<td>IaF</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Downtown Toronto – financial district</td>
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<td>Picture</td>
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<td>Q12</td>
<td>IaF</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Asian – Caribbean</td>
<td>Downtown – Church &amp; Carlton</td>
<td>4 (past)</td>
<td>black shorts</td>
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