Cultivating Bodies, Discipline and Pleasures: An Institutional Ethnography of a Sports School

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Exercise Sciences
University of Toronto

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Abstract

Despite the proliferation of sports schools across Canada, very little attention has been paid to them within Canadian education systems. Starting from this premise, and given the relatively little academic attention directed toward understanding the sports school in sociological, educational and cultural terms, my dissertation set out to critically explore the historical development and social meaning of sport and recreation in a Canadian sports school. Engaging in a detailed institutional ethnography, I specifically examined how the space, everyday lives and experiences of student-athletes and staff in a sports school are an effect of a matrix of discourses—institutional discourses (e.g., Sport Canada policy statements, institutional documents) bodily discourses (e.g., management of the body through disciplinary technologies) as well as normalization of injury discourses (e.g., injury as a pain-reward complex), to name a few. I argue that the (re)production of disciplinary technologies, framed by discourses of excellence, enabled the manifestation of desire as a productive force. I demonstrate that while the culture of the sports school involves living within disciplinary apparatuses—apparatuses that may in fact limit the body’s potentiality—paradoxically, living within these disciplinary
technologies and networks of pouvoir, can open youth up to the potential (puissance) for a range of embodied pleasures, even if this potential is quickly harnessed by the forces of pouvoir (Pronger, 2002). What my research illustrates is that living within such spaces of discipline and pleasure becomes a way of enacting discourse and practices that athletes (and adults) choose to apply to themselves and their daily lives. While desire and pleasure can be organized through adultist cultures of excellence and performance, what my findings make clear is that young people are legitimate participants in creating the cultures of their classrooms and sportscapes and can be agents in how they experience and embody desire and pleasures in their lives.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

Exploring educational environments is not new. The society-body-school nexus (Shilling, 2010) has been a topic of study within sociology of education, youth culture research, and the wider social sciences for some time. There is a wealth of critical education literature that has documented recent changes in the USA, Canada, the UK and Australia and New Zealand in and around educational expectations, neoliberal incursions into schooling, and how youth have become the subjects of policy interventions and surveillance mechanisms (Giroux, 2005, 2010; St. Pierre, 2006). Physical education and physical activity approaches in schools has not escaped these trends with schooling the body shifting from militarized “discipline, power and regimentation” (Foucault, 1980, p. 58; Kirk, 1998, 2001) to a more individualised regulation and surveillance of active bodies (Burrows and Wright, 2007; Rich, 2010; Wright and Macdonald, 2010). The enduring characteristic of physical education in western (and global north)-influenced schooling systems is its focus on skills and activities – activities that are primarily physical in nature and focus on the body (Kirk, 1998; Penney and Chandler, 2000). This “crossing of fields” (Peterson, 2008), that is, a merge between the field of sport and the field of education has been reframed as the struggle over the appropriate form and use of sport in schools (Ferry, Meckbach and Larsson, 2013). Historically, this focused approach on sport-based activities in school physical education has prevailed (Cosentino and Howell, 1971; Kirk, 1998, 2001; McIntosh, 1968). While there has been a move away from sports and towards play-based exploratory learning in elementary schools in Ontario, Canada (Jachyra and Fusco, 2014), even this emphasis on play-based learning is being hailed by sports institutions as an opportunity to draw on the productive capacity of children’s play in order to lay the ground work for the production of high performance athletes. Federal (Sport Canada) initiatives such as Canadian Sport for Life (Long-Term Athlete Development Model, LTAD), From Playground to Podium, and No Accidental Champions, aim to cultivate a culture of lifelong participation in play, sport and physical activity “highlighting sport’s value in improving health and well-being and identifying an optimal path for athletes from playground to podium” (Robertson and Way, 2005, p. 7,
my emphasis added). These discourses are fundamental to the current narratives surrounding the propagation of sports schools across the country (Canada). With the proliferation of such schools, there has been a reorientation of physical education to physical education as sport (Way, Repp and Brennan, 2010), where the practice of physical education is fundamentally about playing sport: that is, to form teams; to arrange competition in the form of tournaments and participation around seasons; to coach players in training sessions; to develop fitness goals and to improve performance; and to celebrate sporting achievement (Kirk, 2004).

Similar to Canadian public schools, in countries like the United Kingdom and Australia, competitive sport for youth is most usually either introduced or reinforced in the context of the school (Houlihan, 2000; Houlihan and Green, 2006; Kirk, 2004). The shift from voluntary (extra-curricular) competitive sports, engaged in by children outside of school hours, to competitive sports and training within the school environment is becoming more apparent with the rise of specialist sports schools across the world generally, and in Canada more specifically. For example, a recent report, endorsed by Canadian Federal, Provincial and Territorial ministers entitled, Canadian Sport Policy 2012, reflected various levels of governments’ (Federal and Provincial) desires to increase policy initiatives that would link the importance of physical education in schools to “increasing and promoting programs that allow participants to learn and practice the fundamentals of sport, and to participate in sport recreationally and competitively” (Sport Canada, 2012, p. 8). The growing attention paid towards the use of sport as a reference for physical education and physical activity (Emrich et al., 2009; Kirk, 2004), particularly in Canada, is not new, but some have suggested that this shift is part of a larger political and economic agenda that seeks to regulate and prescribe people’s bodies in contemporary Western societies, especially in an era of rising panic concerning the obesity epidemic among youth (Burrows and Wright, 2004; Gard and Wright, 2005; Rail 2012; Rich, 2010; Wright and Harwood, 2009). A renewed focus on increasing children and youth’s participation in play, sport and physical activity has been directly related to public health policies that seek to eradicate physical inactivity, sedentariness and obesity in youth (Alexander, Fröhlich, and Fusco, 2014; Evans et al., 2008; Green and Houlihan, 2005; Rich and Evans, 2009). The increased focus on sport, in particular, as a frame of
reference for physical education in schools has inevitably meant that the role of sport in Canadian schools has come under scrutiny because it is deemed to have serious health implications for children and youth, as seen elsewhere such as the UK and Australia (Houlihan, 2000; Kirk 2004; Rich, 2010).

Despite reservations and warnings about sport and youth’s experiences of it (see Gatz, Messner and Ball-Rokeach, 2002; Green and Smith, 2016; Martens, 1978), specialist Canadian sports schools (i.e., schools where student-athletes are able to complete their education while at the same time given the opportunity to intensively participate in sport) have been developed (Way et al., 2010). While sports schools have been examined in a handful of international studies (e.g., Digel, 2002; Houlihan, 2000), very little attention has been paid to them within Canadian education systems (see Radtke and Coalter, 2007; Way et al., 2010). This gap in research and literature is significant and disturbing because of the increasing ideological and cultural pressures on youth to take control and be responsible for their bodies in neoliberal societies (Dillabough and Kennelly, 2010; Gallagher and Fusco, 2006; Giroux, 1989; 2005; MacNeill and Rail, 2010; Raby, 2012). As health budgets decline, school sport may be expected to play an increasing public health role in the surveillance and management of youth’s bodies within school environments generally, but we know little about how this plays out in a sports school specifically.

Starting from this premise, and given the relatively little academic attention directed toward understanding the sports school in sociological, educational and cultural terms, my dissertation set out to critically explore the historical development and social meaning of sport and recreation in Canadian sports schools. Delving deeply into the socio-political significance of the sports school, I investigate what I am calling the ‘neo-institutionalization’ of students. I interrogate how the institutional space of a sports school serves to reinforce and confirm neoliberal, as well as agentic and pleasurable body pedagogies, in a place where the ideologies of ‘schooling the body’ (Kirk, 1998) are central to the school’s mandate.
Setting the Context - Schooling the Body and Canadian Sports Schools

In the context of Canada, sports schools have not been an integrated part of the Canadian sport system, with the exception of the province of Quebec, which was at the forefront of developing and implementing a comprehensive network of Sport Étude programs within their school and sport system (Way et al., 2010). According to the Quebec Ministry of Education (2018a), there are currently more than 450 Sport Étude programs in the province, all of which correspond to specific educational projects in sports. The design of Sport Étude programs is meant to support student-athletes, who have been recognized by their specific sports federations, in the pursuit of their sport and academic achievement (Quebec Ministry of Education, 2018a). As witnessed by the Quebec Sport Étude program, the model of sport success adopted by the Ministry of Education is one coupled with combining academic success by offering (elite) student-athletes ‘exceptional’ personalized services adapted to their needs so they can complete their education “in the most favourable conditions [to foster sport/academic] success” (Quebec Ministry of Education, 2018b). This translates to flexibility in scheduling lessons or exams as student-athletes may require time away from the school environment to take part in competition (Borggrefe and Cachay, 2012). As Way et al. (2010) explain, the success of the Quebec Sport Étude programs is celebrated—Jean Pierre (past President of the National Multisport Centre Montreal) has credited Quebec’s winning of the 2003 Canada Winter Games to the province’s Sport Étude programs.

The tangible success of Quebec at national sports events has prompted recent changes over the past decade in education policy across the country (Canada) particularly regarding high school education, which has started to allow for some flexible education options and/or sports school programs (Way et al., 2010). A tool used across some provinces and the Northwest Territories to facilitate the education of student-athletes, have been locally developed courses (LDCs) (Way et al., 2010). These LDCs enable sport school directors to develop sport-oriented courses giving student-athletes the opportunity to train and/or study a specific sport activity and receive credit for this towards their high school diploma (Way et al., 2010). Currently, in Ontario, LDCs must
be approved by the Ministry of Education and once approval is granted all 12 elective high school credits may be filled by LDCs (Way et al., 2010).

Given the jurisdictional separation of education (including components of physical activity) to the provincial governments, and sport primarily linked to the federal government (Department of Canadian Heritage), sports school programs have developed quickly across Canada (not including the province of Quebec) and without much structure (Way et al., 2010). To date, there is no systematic and comprehensive implementation of sports school programs across the country. Houlihan’s (2000) interrogation of the sports school system in the UK revealed that there is often difficulty in bridging the competing interests that exist between sport organizations (in the case of Canada, it would be National Sport Organizations and Provincial Sport Organizations) and schools. Additionally, governments and other agencies would require considerable investment in building expertise between education and sport policy (Kikulis, 2013). Given these challenges, it remains to be seen whether sports schools will catch on in Canada and how successful sports schools in Canada will be at achieving sport excellence.

Despite their reputation for producing excellence in many countries, the role that sports schools play in the broader system of elite sport and education in Canada remains largely outside (and unknown to) public concerns about education, and has also remained outside the interest of many sports researchers to date. This is quite surprising as internationally sports schools have been in existence for over 25 years (Radtke and Coalter, 2007). Germany is one country with an exceptional comprehensive sports school program with over 11,000 student athletes enrolled in the sports school system (Way et al., 2010, p. 19). According to Emrich et al. (2009) the German Olympic sport federation considers elite sports schools to be valuable for young athletes as the offer of both academic education and optimal training conditions allows student-athletes to perform at their best. Ostensibly, the central aim of German sports schools is to produce high performing athletes capable of achieving medal positions during international competitions while, at the same time, safeguarding opportunities for primary and secondary education (Emrich et al., 2009). That said, the concept of elite sports schools
in Germany is contentious among most Germans. As Faupel (2010) explains, “the concept of elite [sports] schools is a controversial one in Germany. Many people associate the term with the special schools in communist East Germany in which high-achieving pupils were expected to contribute to the glorification of the communist ideal” (para. 10). Despite this, the central aim of German sports schools—the long-term likelihood of achievement at international and Olympic competitions, as well as the completion of educational qualifications—seems to be successful. In fact, 82% of the Olympic medals won by German athletes from 2001-2004 were won by current or former sports school student-athletes (Way et al., 2010, p. 8). With similar interests and podium successes being observed in other countries, and in the province of Quebec, the opportunity to explore the implementation of sports schools in Ontario, and possible future challenges, is timely. Certainly, the discursive and strategic link between education and sport policy, which seeks to ensure that student-athletes are able to sustain “world-class results at the highest levels of international competition” (Sport Canada, 2002, cited in Kikulis, 2013, p. 133) needs to be examined. This, and the possible effects on the space of a sports-intensive school, should be of interest to Physical Cultural Studies scholars whose interests coalesce around issues of youth, the body, healthism, sport and national identity.

Yet, there are very few studies that have taken into account the structural analyses of sports schools and the institutionalization of sport in(to) the education system (Borggrefe and Cachay, 2012). There are a number of international comparative studies analysing the role of educational institutions, such as primary schools and universities to the potential success of national elite sport systems (see, for example, De Bosscher et al., 2008; Houlihan and Green, 2006). Apart from an international review commissioned by the Scottish Institute of Sport Federation (see Radtke and Coalter, 2007) to undertake an analysis of sports school models in Austria, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Singapore and Sweden in order to determine examples of best practice and implications, there has been no in depth socio-cultural examination of policies, practices or of the embodied experiences of athletes in the context of a sports school in Canada or elsewhere. If, as Way et al. (2010) suggest, that the future is here (i.e., sports schools are inevitable) and that education systems across the country have
evolved to include a variety of educational options, including sports specific schools, what might this mean for those stakeholders\(^1\) involved? More importantly, with the convergence of education, sport, health and fitness, how might student-athletes (as well as teachers, coaches and administrators) make sense of the discourses and practices cultivated in this space?

“Where are the Kids?”

In an article that appeared in the *Sociology of Sport Journal*, Messner and Musto (2014) call on sport sociologists to begin to critically consider youth in sport from the perspective of youth themselves. Though youth participation in sport has received some attention from sport scholars (e.g., Atkinson and Kehler, 2010; Cooky, 2009; Donnelly, 1993; Dyck, 2012; Green and Smith, 2016; Messner, 2009; Smith and Green, 2005), sport sociologists have been slow to consider youth as worthy of study in sport sociology, which is particularly disturbing given the growing number of young people taking part in sport (Laurendeau and Konecny, 2015; Messner and Musto, 2014). Documenting this paradox (i.e., the absence of documenting young people’s experiences in sport, against a backdrop of enormous youth sport participation among sport sociology studies), Messner and Musto (2014) completed a content analysis of the subjects most frequently studied over the past decade (2004-2014) in the *Sociology of Sport Journal, Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, and *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*. Not surprisingly, the results of their analysis highlight that youth sports are less frequently the subject of sociological attention in the area of Physical Cultural Studies than other areas of research. Of those research articles that did investigate youth sports, many did so primarily from adults’ perspectives of youth sports (Christensen, 2009; Swanson, 2009) or included youth athletes only as one component of larger cultural sport structures (such as gender, race, sexuality etc.) (Chimot and Louveau, 2010; Giardina, 2003). Thus, as Messner and

\(^1\) According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word stakeholder has been in use since 1708 and refers to “a person with an interest or concern in something, especially a business” ([https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/stakeholder](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/stakeholder)). For the purposes of this research, I use the word ‘stakeholder(s)’ to refer to individuals who have an investment in the success of the sports school and in high-performance achievements.

\(^2\) According to the research paper, national sport participation rates of Canadians 15 years of age and older
Musto (2014) might suggest, there are clearly flaws advancing scholarly sport research when it comes to studying the topic of ‘kids and sport’.

Ignoring youth’s realities in sport, or the social processes that form around their involvement in sport, may have some important implications for the field of sport sociology and Physical Cultural Studies. A 2008 Canadian longitudinal survey found that 71% of youth between the ages of 6-9, and 84% of youth aged 10-13 participated in sport at some level (Clark, 2008; Guévremont, Findlay and Kohen, 2008). More recent reports of youth participation in sport however point to the idea that sport is changing in Canada, and one of the clearest indications of this change is the decrease in organized sport participation (Canadian Heritage, 2013; Gruneau, 2010). Although the profile of youth involvement in organized sport is inadequate, it is still clear that many youth do participate in organized sports (Messner and Musto, 2014). Many people can see this every day—in neighbourhoods, in community and recreation centres and in schools, and, now specifically, in the burgeoning sports school development across Canada.

Ostensibly, the youth who play and watch sports today may be considered the ‘future of sport’. Messner and Musto (2014) however warn against only studying this ‘future of sport’ aspect suggesting that this would have dire implications for making the constructions of childhood less visible. Instead, they argue, that it is imperative for sport scholars and physical culture scholars alike to take up studies of youth, in relation to their sport geographies, “as active subjects who create their own social worlds” (Messner and Musto, 2014, p. 107). Recognizing the gap that exists in academic literature about youth in sport from the perspectives of youth’s themselves, I believe that my research on the role of the sports school in the everyday lives of students in those spaces is important and timely. Accordingly, I have attempted to move beyond only superficial interpretations of youth in sport to a deeper research engagement in the world of children and sport (Dyck, 2012; Messner and Musto, 2014) by engaging student-athletes in my research as active, meaning-making agents whose daily lives are integral to, and integrated in, a sports school context.

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2 According to the research paper, national sport participation rates of Canadians 15 years of age and older continues to decline across organized sports defined as “an activity that involves two or more participants engaged for the purpose of competition” (Canadian Heritage, 2013, p. 13).
Purpose of the Study

In order to make sociological sense of the rise of specialist sports schools across Canada, specifically in the province of Ontario, it is essential to appreciate the diffuse social, political, economic and technological contexts (Atkinson, 2012) in which sports specific schools have developed across the country. What remains important in any study of youth, sport and the education system is paying attention to the centrality of students’ bodies in this space. Many researchers have argued that young people’s bodies are at the apex of policy and practice from which notions of physical activity and health are derived (Burrows and Wright, 2007; Evans, Davies and Wright, 2004; McDermott, 2007; Wright, 2004; Wright and Macdonald, 2010). Moreover, the instrumentalization of the body in the context of a sports school may help to symbolically construct what Atkinson (2003) has termed an individual’s sense of self and social identity. Discursive, material and symbolic meanings of the body and the larger social processes that affect how bodies are enabled and constrained in education spaces are often contested (re)produced, negotiated and resisted (Allen, 2013; Kehler and Atkinson, 2010; Leahy, 2009; MacNeill and Rail, 2010). The institutional space of a sports school may act as a cultural and pedagogical site (Fusco and McKeever, 2015), like non-sports schools, to create certain kinds of students, reflecting distinct understandings of what is expected of future (healthy and sporty) adults. As I noted earlier, there is an established body of literature, particularly in Australia, the United Kingdom and Europe that has investigated the emergence of high-performance sport and the place it takes up in their education systems, however knowledge about Canadian sports schools, and more importantly a critical interrogation of body politics in the institutionalized space of a sports school, is in its infancy. It has been argued that discourses of sport and physical education may constitute particular ideologies, privileging and legitimizing specific dominant and normative knowledge(s) about the body not limited to race, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability and (sport) pleasures (Beausoleil, 2009; Burrows and McCormack, 2011; MacNeill and Rail, 2010; Pringle, 2015b; Rail, 2009; Wellard, 2012). The coupling of high level sports activities and education may exacerbate systemic normative and dominant ideologies and, consequently, may have particular impact for how young student-athletes learn about sport, health, their bodies and social norms within these contexts. This dissertation is my
contribution to showing “’where the kids are” and opening up a physical cultural space to study a sports school—which stands at the nexus of education, sport and public health policies—and where body politics, high-performance and health knowledge(s) are constructed, negotiated and resisted.

In light of the above introduction, the aim of my study is two-fold:

• Through an analysis of specialized initiatives, such as policy reports and institutional documents, I seek to explore how these initiatives intersect in the space of a sports school and how youth’s bodies and health are produced through institutional, social, cultural and political practices.

• Thorough my study of a sports school space I seek to understand how these macro social processes (i.e., policies) affect the everyday micro realities of individuals involved in the space (i.e., how policies impact on experiences).

To do so, I engage in a detailed ethnographic study of the space and everyday lives and experiences of student-athletes and staff in a sports school in the context of sports policies, and I constructed a narrative account through which I could consider their collective stories as they came to recognize, conceptualize, understand and negotiate their desire and pleasure(s) as sports school participants. As I alluded to earlier, my interest in taking up this call has been many years in the making. In fact, my curiosity about the body, youth and physical activity predates my own personal awareness of the social organization of the sports school as a focus of scholarly investigation. More specifically, my master’s thesis which, in part, explored how female ice hockey athletes come to understand their bodies and body ideals by participating on men’s teams (DiCarlo, 2010), along with my work as a Research Assistant on a SSHRC funded (2011-2015) study\(^3\), which sought to analyze the place of play in children’s lives, provoked me to consider how converging factors—institutional, policy, identities, social, spatial—can impact individual’s experiences within prescriptive practices of physical activity and play have influenced my interest. In this dissertation, I critically reflect on and understand the

\(^3\) A socio-cultural study of the social landscapes of play in children’s lives: Discourses, negotiation, participation and pleasure. (2010-2014), Principal investigator: Caroline Fusco, University of Toronto.
(moving) sports body as politically charged and how that takes on unique meanings in a sports school. From all my reading and research work to date, I have become aware of how specific policies come to be used to influence how the body is described, evaluated and governed in the context of education, sport and public health contexts. Given this, I engaged in an institutional ethnography to understand the synergies between education, sport, policy and culture, whereby I sought to uncover what kinds of policies and pedagogical practices were experienced, interpreted and mediated by sports school participants. As well as an in-depth policy analysis, I developed a close examination and analysis of the socio-cultural and physical cultural organization of the sports school focusing on the experiences of student-athletes, their teachers and an extended set of stakeholders. Using a critical ethnographic approach, I interrogated how youth and other stakeholders (e.g., teachers, coaches etc.) constructed, negotiated and understood the moving body as continually produced by their institution’s commitment to excellence, high performance sport, education and health. Taking this together, my research was framed by a series of research questions:

• How are contemporary Canadian sport policies and the development of sports schools interlinked?
• How is the space of Canadian sports schools experienced by student-athletes, coaches and teachers?
• What kind of physical cultures are enabled and/or constrained in these spaces?
  o How do discourses about the body, sport and health circulate in these schools?
• In what ways does the school landscape mediate performance excellence?
• How is the significance of pleasure(s) in the construction of experience/identities and ongoing sets of power relations experienced in this space?
  o How is the interlocking nature of power and pleasure understood as discursive, enacted and embodied?

I believe my research is particularly salient given the rise of private sports schools across Ontario. I interrogate what desires have underpinned the development of such an institutionalized space at this particular juncture in time and how that might align with
national interests and the individualization of cultural and social life. I interrogated in detail the institutional framing, privileging and promotion of particular high performance body and sports projects and they ways in which governments, educational institutions and individuals participate in these projects, and at the wider cultural and structural spheres of action that are tied to the local experiences of the sports school. I was interested in this because I wanted to assess paradigm shifts regarding the manipulation of youth’s bodies and identities (Atkinson, 2003). By employing critical institutional ethnography (IE) to understand the social formation of a sports school, and the desires for excellence and performance that are cultivated and (re)produced there, as well as the body politics and identity work taking place at these site, I believe that my research can contribute uniquely to the call for studies in sociology of sport/Physical Cultural Studies to open up the question of children and youth in order to consider how they are affected by social relations that construct them as future (healthy and active) citizens in and through educational and sports institutions.

**Research Approach: Institutional Ethnography**

My research also takes as one of its main concerns how the organization of texts and specific institutionalized forms of (body) work (Smith, 2005) in the everyday practices of a sports school are organized to (re)produce particular configurations of social and physical life, and how power relations are key to that reproduction. All schools are composed of a network of hierarchized relations that inform both the subjective experiences of students and stakeholders, as well as the way spaces are constituted (Gallagher and Fusco, 2006; Raby, 2012), and a sports school is no different. Much like the organization and geography of sport stadia, gymnasiums and locker rooms (Bale, 1993, 1994; Fusco, 2003, 2009), I understood the sports school, as a socio-historical invention in which individuals and spaces are inevitably implicated in the complex processes that occur there. Without a doubt, I believed that the sports school offered a unique space, unlike other sports spaces, to examine the intersections of youth’s bodies, education, excellence, competitiveness, high-performance, and the corresponding commitments to discipline and regulation that are expected in that space. To explicate how certain knowledge(s), discourses and representations around these kinds of intersections enframed everyday life in a sports school, and the experiences of people
therein, I turned to the work of Dorothy Smith (see 1999, 2001, 2005, 2006) and institutional ethnography (IE). IE works from local spaces — from people’s everyday experience of institutional forms — to discover how the forms of organizing power and agency may rely on, determine, enable and/or constrain everyday activities (Smith, 2005). In particular, this method of ethnographic investigation draws attention to how people produce, out of the particularities of their everyday lives, the standardizations and generalizations characteristic of institutions (Mykhalovskiy, 2000; Mykhalovskiy and McCoy, 2002; Smith, 2005). As Smith (2005) explains, IE looks beyond the everyday to learn how these processes and experiences come to be:

Institutional ethnography begins in the local actualities of the everyday world, with the concerns and perspectives of people located distinctively in the institutional process. From this perspective, an ethnographic exploration of those institutional processes is launched. What will be brought under ethnographic scrutiny unfolds as the research is pursued...Each next step builds from what has been discovered and invades more extended dimensions of the institutional regime. The mapping of social relations expands from and includes the original site so that the larger organization that enters into and shapes it becomes visible (p. 34-35).

I believed that IE could focus my attention on the way in which daily activities in a sports school’s landscape, such as the provision and expectations of physical fitness for student-athletes, are structured and shaped by institutional relations that extend beyond the local, intersecting with larger social and political forces (e.g., Sport Canada policies such as Own the Podium etc.). In this way, I brought the local and extralocal together through people’s work with texts (Dale, 2013). Texts are important as they offer a view of the key junctures between the local of people’s everyday worlds and the extralocal ruling relations that are relevant to the everyday mapping of local institutions (Smith, 1999, 2006). Texts “come before us as something to read, watch or listen to” (Smith, 2006, p. 101). In the context of my ethnographic analysis of the sports school, an example of a text in this setting included the Student/Parent Handbook, which provided a detailed look at the school’s commitment to excellence and how that was to be achieved through work on the student’s bodies and educational goals. This coming together of people, texts and activities creates connections between individuals and their bodies at the local site with the translocal organization of ruling relations (Smith, 2006). In other words, the
organizational capacities of texts are taken up in people’s everyday doings within the context of larger social forces (Dale, 2013).

As IE’s method of building an account of an everyday world of experience extends beyond the everyday to social relations and organizations in which ‘everyday doings’ participate (Smith, 2006), observations, interviews and self-reflexivity, as well as rich ethnographic descriptions, are used to establish deeper understandings of local activities. Taking all this together, my task in this dissertation is to carefully unpack the ensemble of (con)texts, practices, knowledges and experiences in which the social, spatial, physical and cultural world of the sports school takes place, and importantly, to situate young people’s (as well as others’) lived experiences at the foreground of my examinations of this unique sports and educational space.

Chapter Overview

In Chapter 1, Introduction, I have provided an overview of my interest in this research in the first place, and have focused on developing a rationale of sorts to position the study of sports schools and their stakeholders (i.e., students, staff) and their corresponding links to Canadian government sports policies and provincial education systems as important and timely. I have introduced the research approach I undertook in my research – Institutional Ethnography – in order to show how an interrogation of the everyday world of a sports school required a method through which I could unpack text, practice and experiences within the context of relations of ruling that extend beyond the everyday (Smith, 2006).

In Chapter 2, Review of Literature, I review key bodies of literature and introduce the theoretical frameworks which assisted in my understanding of youth, schooling and power, as well as government policy and sport structures. To that end, a wide range of research literature has helped me develop my approach to this study. Specifically, the literature that most directly influenced my ethnographic engagement with the sports school spanned different subject areas: public policy and education studies; schooling and neoliberalism; and the sociology of childhood. Most influential to me is the scholarship that lends itself to a post-structural critique of the body, identities and relations of power,
which have greatly influenced my interpretations of the everyday macro and micro realities of a sports school. The questions provoked by the theoretical framework that I engaged in this study encouraged me to think critically about productions of the body, biopedagogy, subjectivity, desire, pleasure(s) and constructions of (young) people’s lives in a sports school.

In Chapter 3, Methodology, I present the methodological framework and methods of data collection that I used to explore a sports school as an institutional site for the (re)production of bodies and discourses of excellence. My methodological approach (institutional and spatial ethnography) drew on multiple methods of data collection: 1) Text analysis; 2) Participant observation; and 3) Interviews in order to develop a deeper understanding of the institutional, social, physical and spatial world of the sports school. Furthermore, in this chapter I consider my own reflexivity as I take a look back at my time as beginner ethnographer in order to demonstrate the complexity of ethnographic situations in the field.

Chapter 4, The Production of Excellence, reflects on how sport policies have been used as framing devices for the conception of sports schools, in particular that of Hillcrest Collegiate. I trace the discursive formation of excellence that strongly emerges in sport and institutional documents, paying attention to the discursive effects, subjectification effects and lived effects (Bacchi, 2009) that are incited by such discourses. More specifically, drawing on Bacchi’s (2009) analysis of ‘what’s the problem represented to be?’ approach, I trace how policies come to shape the production of excellence in a sports school. This text analysis along with an analysis of the narratives of interviewees highlights how government and non-government policies inscribe and prescribe a specific program for the production of, and desire for, excellence.

While my findings from Chapter 4 demonstrate how discourses of excellence can be linked to neoliberal biopedagogies and disciplinary power, in Chapter 5, Embodied Practices and Pleasures, I turn my attention to exploring how these pedagogies and practices of power effect the everyday lives of those in the sports school who are bound up with ways of living within this technology (Pronger, 2002). However, I move beyond
merely seeing people’s lives as wholly determined by neoliberal structural constraints to unpacking people’s agency and their embodied desires and pleasures in this sports school.

In Chapter 6, Conclusion, I reflect on the findings of this study; that is, how I came to understand how the (re)production of disciplinary technologies in the sports school was also an exploration of embodied practices and pleasure. I suggest that there are further questions to be asked of the sports school as a site of sociological inquiry.

The findings of this dissertation provide a window into the way(s) in which individuals understand themselves within an institutional space and make sense of their everyday lives here. Through my analysis of the discourses and practices present in this space, I saw how power relations in the sports school (re)produced space(s) and bodies. Yet, I was surprised to find how young people, in particular, recognized their embodied desires and pleasures in the realm of sport, physical activity and health. It is my hope that these findings opens up the possibility for rethinking about the workings of institutional power in young people’s lives, and furthers understanding of how young people can be agents in their own right as to how they experience and embody desires and pleasures in their everyday lives.

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4 While I am aware of the intense pleasure(s) that people often find in just playing their sport—I have experienced this myself in my years of participating in various sports—I admit that I was surprised to find such moments of pleasure in the context of what I believed were the prescribed structural constraints that are established in an institution like a sports school. I thought that the disciplinary and institutional frameworks around excellence and achievement in athletic performance would eliminate pleasure. I found that they did not.
Chapter 2  
Literature Review and Theoretical Framework  

The Conception of Ontario Sports Schools: From Policy to Practice?  

Over the past few years, there have been significant curricular changes and developments to physical education in Canada and internationally (O’Sullivan, 2013). Most recently, we have seen shifts away from what may be termed traditional multi-activity approaches to physical education, to the design of curriculum that reflects more instructional models to physical activity and health (Evans and Penney, 2008; Sallis et al., 2012), and to a re-orientation of school sport and its place in physical education (Houlihan and Green, 2006; Siedentop, 1994).

The ‘shifting landscapes’ (Clandinin, Downey and Huber, 2009) of physical education in school settings is not a new occurrence. Although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide a complete historical analysis particularly of the influence of Canada’s military experience on early physical education development, it is worth noting that the linking of militarism and the rise in promotion of physical activity and health aimed at Canadian youth happened as early as the 20th century (Cosentino and Howell, 1971; Maker 2009). Indeed, historically, physical education policies across Canada initially developed in response to military preparedness in order to support national desires for a strengthened male youth to become healthy citizens and efficient soldiers (Krüger and Hofmann, 2015)\(^5\). One of the earliest national physical education programs in Canada was developed and funded by the Strathcona Trust (in 1909), which approved a syllabus for physical exercises to be incorporated in school curricula (Thomson and Robertson, 2014)\(^6\). Interestingly, essential to the teaching of physical education was the

\(^5\) As the institutionalization of physical education in school settings began, in large part, as a nation-building process across Europe and Canada, both the body and physical exercises were invented as national traditions, and they began to symbolize the strength of the nation state playing a part in the development of a national identity (see Krüger and Hofmann, 2015 for examples of this in Germany and Sweden).

\(^6\) The implementation of a nation-wide program of physical education in elementary and secondary schools was the result of a joint venture between provincial education departments and military federal departments (Morrow, 2012). Activities included gymnastics, marching, calisthenics, and military drills often taught by ex-military personnel (Thomson and Robertson, 2014).
idea that physical experiences could not be separated from the mental, personal, social
and moral issues that were part of the development of youth (Krüger and Hofmann,
2015). As a result, youth were given opportunities to move and play in schools, but also
instructed on exercise, health and fitness in a systematic way, and assessed on their
abilities (Krüger and Hofmann, 2015; O’Sullivan, 2013).

The link between military and civil physical education became weaker following
World War I and II and, subsequently, concerns about the place of physical education in
school curriculum began to shift. According to Thomson and Robertson (2014), with the
re-institution of the Olympic Games, following the cancellation of the 1944 Games, a
second agenda was created for physical education in many countries. The emphasis
slowly shifted towards high performance sport and elite sport development as part of a
national strategy towards excellence (Krüger and Hofmann, 2015), and this interest was
to trickle down to school settings. Elite private schools across many countries in Europe
and the United Kingdom began sports programs to model the Olympic motto\(^7\) in order to
enhance the development of morality and virility in their students (Thomson and
Robertson, 2014). Concomitantly, the introduction of sports programs in schools also
began to include the scientific analysis of movement and the fostering of training
processes to improve athletic performances (Krüger and Hofmann, 2015). Although
there is a dearth of literature regarding the history of sports schools, specifically in
Canada, a review of the international (mostly European) history of shifting institutional
commitments in the realm of physical education, provides the backdrop for me to begin
to explore the increase in Canadian schools whose aims are to combine education with
the development of an elite sporting career.

Given this, the intent of this chapter is to first provide a review of literature from
public policy and education studies to examine the shifting landscape of sport, physical
education and health, specifically in Ontario schools. The legacy of interconnected
policies and past curriculum reforms, in the case of physical education, reaffirms this as a
unique and complex ‘policy space’ (Dery, 1999). Indeed, as Darling-Hammond state

\(^7\) The Olympic motto is Faster-Higher-Stronger or “Citius-Altius-Fortius” (International Olympic
current policies do not “land in a vacuum; they land on top of other policies” carrying with them a legacy of past political priorities (cited in Thomson and Robertson, 2014, p. 3). In turn, policy developments and, more specifically, what is deemed legitimate options to particular policies, will be framed by and in relation to past and present policies and practices within and outside the direct policy field (see Penney, 2008 for an overview of what she terms ‘crowded policy space’ of physical education in Western Australia). Given the Canadian context, the legacy of federal public policy approaches to sport, along with other corresponding issues on provincial educational agendas (such as the increased role of standardization, accountability and regulation as well as broader conceptualizations of health and sport) (Burrows and Wright, 2007; Evans, Davies and Wright, 2004; Wright and Macdonald, 2010) over the years, has prompted a repositioning of the place of physical education in school settings. This, in turn, has played an (in)direct role in the conception of Ontario sports schools. Second, I provide a review of relevant literatures that focus on how ‘neoliberalizing’ discourses circulate in relation to youth’s health. I do this to interrogate how power relations facilitate and/or constrain youth’s bodies, and the implications this may have for ‘schooling the body’ (Kirk, 1998) in contemporary sports school settings. Third, I believe that it is particularly pertinent to pay attention to the sociology of childhood literature in order to discuss the benefits of youth-based research in Physical Cultural Studies (PCS), which has helped me better understand how youth construct their (sport) worlds while navigating their (dis)pleasures, all though their active participation in sport. Finally, I provide a theoretically grounded account of notions of pleasure(s), in order to reveal the complex, diverse and fluid character of sporting desires and pleasures, which constitute young people’s worlds, and are, in turn, taken up subjectively by ‘real’ individuals.

Public Policy Approaches to Sport in Canadian Society and School Sports

Sport binds our diverse nation together through pride, people to people exchange and portrayal of Canadian values... “Team Canada” is at once our team, our athletes, our approach, our country...Cradle to the grave, we value physical activity and sport as a cultural framework (Minister’s Task Force and Federal Sport Policy, 1992, cited in Fusco, 2009, p. 2)

I begin this section with a summary of various public policy approaches to sport across Canada to show that there has been an increasingly explicit awareness among
governments regarding the value of elite sporting success over the last fifty years (Green, 2007; Green and Houlihan, 2005). This has had a significant impact on interschool sport programs since the 1980s (Macintosh 1990). Internationally, for many countries, including the United States, the former USSR and European communist countries, sport has been used as a tool for demonstrating ideological superiority (Green and Houlihan, 2005). More recently however there has been some belief that international sporting success has been valued for its ability to provide economic benefits through the hosting of mega events (Green and Houlihan, 2005); for its political utility (Green and Houlihan, 2005) and for its symbolic assertions about national identity, pride and a joining together of a nation in a moment of unity (Donnelly, 2010a; Kennedy, 2009). With this in mind, many governments recognize that if they are to capitalize on these benefits they have to guarantee the production of a number of elite athletes capable of achieving medals at international competitions. This has prompted a reorientation of spaces, priorities and actions around high-performance sport in Canada (Fusco, 2009; Kikulis, 2013).

Beginning in the 1960s, Canada’s Federal government was responsible for the establishment of a sport policy framework aimed at creating success in terms of medal counts at major international sporting events, most notably at the Olympic Games (cf. Green and Houlihan, 2005). A ‘global sporting arms race’ characterizing an increase in government interest and involvement in elite sport (Oakley and Green, 2001), resulted in significant changes related to the reorientation of priorities and actions regarding Canada’s sport policy. More specifically, the Federal government, under leadership of Pierre Trudeau in the 1970s, intensified its efforts to progress the country’s high-performance sport program focusing on the development of elite athletes (Macintosh, Bedecki and Franks, 1987). In 1985, a paper endorsed by Federal, Provincial and Territorial ministers responsible for sport, recreation and fitness, outlined the roles and

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8 Although touted for the above-noted benefits, the positive legacies left from hosting the Olympic Games, and the effects of the Olympics on citizens, is debatable. For example, research has demonstrated the harmful impact of the Olympic Games on marginalized communities, low-income populations and the symbolic violence enacted on individuals and communities during and following the Games (Broudehoux, 2016; Gruneau and Horne, 2016; Kennelly and Watt, 2011; Lenskyj, 2015).
responsibilities of all levels of government in relation to high performance sport (Kikulis, 2013). As explained in the document:

The High Performance System is comprised of those activities, programs, agencies, institutions and personnel who have as one of their primary objectives the preparation of athletes who have achieved, or, who aspire to achieve, or who have been identified as having the potential to achieve excellence in World Class competition. (cited in Kikulis, 2013, p. 97)

A ‘new’ understanding of ‘excellence’ that was directly related to world championships and medals achieved at international competitions began to take hold (Kikulis, 2013). Nearly thirty years ago, Kidd (1988, p. 12) critiqued governments’ ‘philosophy of excellence’ based on medals won, top rankings, and records set in international competition and argued that this adherence to achieving excellence has been used both to: i) develop ranking thresholds that constrain who participates in elite sport events in efforts to improve success, and ii) by governments to justify how government and corporate financial investments are allocated. Echoing Kidd’s sentiments, Justice Charles Dubin supported this general critique stating: “the measure of success of government funding [should] be linked not to medal count, but to the degree to which it has met the social, educational and national goals of government for sport” (cited in Kikulis, 2013, p. 98). These policy changes proved important to the development of school sports programs (Canada, 1988, cited in MacIntosh, 1990). The publicity and rhetoric regarding the potential to achieve excellence in world class competitions surrounding these efforts, along with highly publicized media coverage of Canadian athletes engaged in international competition (MacIntosh, 1990), put pressure on Canadian schools to strengthen the competitive nature of school sports programmes and to improve coaching qualifications. Ostensibly, an intention of the Federal government’s newly found interest in school sports programs was related to its objective of having Canada “place among the three leading Western sporting nations in the 1992 Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona” (Canada, 1988, cited in MacIntosh, 1990, p. 64) while, at the same time, fostering the development of elite sports clubs for developing young athletes. These two competing objectives—to improve the competitive nature of school sports programs, and to provide alternative sites for (elite) youth sports programs—placed pressure on school boards and provincial education ministries with the task of defining and expanding school
sports programmes (MacIntosh, 1990). School boards and provincial education ministries were faced with the task of clearly defining the purposes of interschool sports programs, along with the financial obligations for such programs. However this raises an alarming question regarding the purpose of interschool sports programs: If interschool sports programs were to become “subsumed” as part of the Federal government’s efforts to improve Canada’s international performance, how does this impact the purpose of “sport as education” (MacIntosh, 1990, p. 64)? Subsuming school sports programs as part of the Federal government’s efforts to improve Canada’s performance on the international sport scene has not been lost in recent years.

The Canadian Sport Policy, 2012, adopted by sport ministers in June 2012, reflects the Canadian governments’ explicit position in supporting and guiding sport policy, program and funding initiatives. More specifically, there has been a gradual shift in government efforts away from the administrative and bureaucratic features of sport to attention being paid to athlete development or what has been termed an ‘athlete-centered’ approach (Sport Canada, 2002; see also Kidd, 1996; Thibault and Babiak, 2005). For example, beginning in 2005, the drive for medal success has been supported by several Federal (Sport Canada) initiatives—Canadian Sport for Life (LTAD Model), From Playground to Podium and No Accidental Champions—which aim to increase participation in sport by developing essential movement skills for optimal growth and development of future Olympic hopefuls (Fusco, 2009). Canadian Sport for Life’s adoption of an LTAD, or an athlete development pathway, through a seven stage “made in Canada” model focuses on individual growth and development (Kikulis, 2013, p. 128) as well as additional targets to increase participation and sport capacity (Fusco, 2009). Accordingly:

One of the potentially most significant advances in Canadian sport since the adoption of the Canadian Sport Policy has been the endorsement of the generic Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model, known as Canadian Sport for Life, by Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers. The LTAD model focuses on the general framework of athlete development with special reference to growth, maturation and development, trainability, and sport system alignment and integration... The implementation of LTAD will ensure that all children correctly learn the fundamental movement skills and that these skills are introduced during
the optimal point in their growth and development. (Canadian Sport Policy, 2010, p. 1)

As the 2005 Canadian Sport Centres explain “the need for the LTAD [arose] in part from the declining international performances of Canadian athletes in some sports and the difficulty other sports [were] having in identifying and developing the next generation of internationally successful athletes” (cited in Kikulis, 2013, p. 128). The idea of LTAD’s application of athlete growth and development to sport and movement skills in early life, and further continued at appropriate developmental ages, is meant to prepare young athletes for international competition using a systematic approach (Kikulis, 2013). In addition, LTAD’s adoption of athlete development for sport aimed at children and youth seeks to connect more strongly with public health and education sectors. As the Canadian Sport for Life’s LTAD framework highlights:

[LTAD model] acknowledges that physical education, school sports, competitive sports and recreation activities are mutually interdependent. LTAD is an inclusive model that encourages individuals to get involved in lifelong sport and physical activity. It does this by connecting and integrating physical education programs in the school system with elite sport programs and with recreational sport programs in the community. (Canadian Sport Centres, 2005, p. 15)

From daycares to universities, the health of the nation and the long-term success of our athletes can be promoted through sport and activity programming at every level of education. (Canadian Sport Centres, 2011, p. 1)

Similarly, Own the Podium, a focused initiative based on public investment and private sponsorship that continues to identify specific performance strategies to achieve medal success at Summer and Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, has also garnered support in the world of high-performance sport as well as the Canadian imaginary to promote athletic excellence and sport capacity (cf. Kikulis, 2013; Own the Podium, 2014). As Own the Podium (2014) document explains:

Not losing sight of continuing its [Canada’s] quest to be at the top of the standings for overall medals won, Own the Podium’s goal while working in partnership with the Canadian Olympic Committee, Canadian Paralympic Committee and Sport Canada is for Canada to become the first host nation to sustain its position in the medal count at the next Olympic Games.
The lofty goals of Own the Podium did not seem to be lost on the Canadian people. In a Globe and Mail editorial entitled *Olympic medals?: We want more*, which came out in the 2014 Winter Olympic year, the author discusses how Canadian Olympic athletes who performed at the 2014 Sochi Games were in large part successful due to the initiatives of Own the Podium becoming irrelevant to Canadians, “who after all are footing the bill and getting used to success” (Globe Editorial, 2014, p. 1).9

As the LTAD and Own the Podium initiatives highlight, both have come to play a significant role in Canadian support of a “playground to podium” movement, which imagines high-performance athletes competing at the international level and sport organizations placing athlete training and ultimately developing (winning) athletes at the forefront (Kikulis, 2013; Robertson and Way, 2005). For many within the sport system however there has been critique of the use of such initiatives to promote a winning ‘at-all-costs’ attitude among Canadian sport institutions and athletes. Brackenridge (2006, cited in Kikulis, 2013) cautions that despite the athlete centred model of LTAD and Own the Podium, such initiatives fail to consider how to engage athletes in making decisions about their own training and development. Indeed, critics have asked, “is there room for alternative voices within this context of discursive activity that privileges elite performance” (Green, 2004, p. 382)? As Kidd (1988, 1995) and Donnelly (1996) have long argued, questions must be raised regarding the over-emphasis on elite sport which quite possibly serves to silence alternative voices whose interests do not rest on the drive towards the “normative legitimation of the calculating pursuit of victory” (Whitson, 1998, cited in Green, 2005, p 382). The focus on material incentives, which naturalizes (rather than problematizes) the practices and discourses of performance, excellence, discipline, nationhood and surveillance of (elite) sport bodies, further encourages athletes and coaches to organize their lives around quantifiable tasks (such as medal count) (Fusco, 2009; Kidd, 2013).

9 In 2010, the Federal government allotted $62 million to support the excellence of Canadian elite athletes (Canada’s Economic Action Plan, Year 2, cited in Langlois and Ménard, 2013, p. 9). Of this amount $44 million was designated to high-performance athletes under Own the Podium initiative (cf. Langlois and Ménard, 2013, p. 9).
The transformation of certain sport policies and programmes, I have described above, as some scholars point out, may radically alter the athlete’s experience (Fusco, 2009; Kidd, 2013; Shogan, 1999). As training has become more segmented and routinized, the athlete becomes the ‘object’ of an intricate governmental bureaucracy predicated on the ‘legitimacy’ of scientific measurement and medal count (Shogan, 1999). As Fusco (2009) illustrates in her study of National Multi-Sport Centre (NSCs) policies across Canada, the discourses, spatial practices and constructions of NSC space, increasingly serve as techniques for making useful individuals, ultimately creating the conditions and incentives that seemingly facilitate athlete’s development in their respective sports:

in such spaces, useful athletic individuals could be subjected to, and be the subject of, the organization of space, constant observation, discourses of excellence, commitment and nationhood…NSC policy interventions and subsequent spaces can also be read as mechanisms of spatialization and subjectivation that, in effect, enable the government’s subordination of Canadian athletes’ bodies to the pursuit of excellence (p. 2)

Given the changes in sport policy and programs, along with the particular spaces used to train elite athletes, the overall nature of the day-to-day activity and meanings with which athletes are encouraged to invest in themselves, and their sport, “have been changed pari passu”10 (Kidd, 2013, p. 380). This has created the conditions for full-time training whereby young elite athletes are encouraged to organize other activities, such as education, around their simultaneous participation in intense sport training and competition.

In Europe, across Germany, Sweden and Finland, combining competitive sports and education has been occurring for some time (Brettschneider, 1999; Borggrefe and Cachay, 2012; Metsä-Tokila, 2002; Radtke and Coalter, 2007; Way et al., 2010). More specifically, the structural coupling (Borggrefe and Cachay, 2012) of elite sport and school has been the direct result of the dual roles young student-athletes have confronted

10 In this context, through the establishment of better training facilities, coaching, competition and financial incentives meant to reward athlete’s for improved performance, Sport Canada and the sport bodies have implicitly created expectations for full-time training where athletes are expected to restrict other activities in favour of their sport activities (Kidd, 2013).
in countries where education and elite sport are fragmented. This poses serious issues for school-aged (elite) athletes who are faced with conflicting challenges: to further their sport training at the expense of academic study or vice versa. A solution to these challenges, as evidenced across Europe, is seen in the establishment of sports schools, whose primary aim is to safeguard education for student-athletes while adapting formal education participation requirements to the demands of elite sports (Borggrefe and Cachay, 2012). Following in the footsteps of European models, Canadian desires to build a bridge between education and sport has been gaining momentum (Radtke and Coalter, 2007; Way et al., 2010; World Academy of Sport, 2013). However, given Canada’s siloed sport system (Barnes, Cousens and MacLean, 2007), in conjunction with a fragmented education system where each Provincial government is responsible for education budgets and administering education requirements, there are some significant challenges to integrating synergies between sport and education networks and implementing best practices within Canada. The World Academy of Sport (2013, p. 6) explains that the challenge for Canadian sports schools lies not in creating more, “but instead on standardizing the existing range of schools and to integrate them more closely into provincial education programmes”.

Moreover, in addition to the *Canadian Sport Policy, 2012* promoting an athlete centered approach, it also signals a shift towards initiatives focused on participation, increasing the number and diversity of Canadians in sport (Green and Oakley, 2001; Sport Canada, 2012), and the potential links between sport, health and education policy. The explicit goals of enhancing participation and excellence enduring from the previous *Canadian Sport Policy, 2002*, to its most recent iteration, places emphasis on reviving the physical education curriculum in schools in order to increase the number of Canadian youth involved in sport, and to enhance the pool of Canadian athletes to draw from for future sports events. Thus, at the same time as investing in elite sport, investing in sport and physical opportunities for all, most notably, the attention on youth has been gaining momentum. This increase in salience is in part due to the desire to have a broader base of athletes for future development but it also appears to be driven by health concerns concerning the apparent dwindling levels of active children and youth, which has been labelled the obesity ‘epidemic’ (Gard and Wright, 2005; Rich, 2010; Wright and
Harwood, 2009). Taken together, these themes provide a framework within which I have begun to understand the nexus of sport, health and education policy aimed at Canadian youth. These policies may directly be related to the development of Canadian sports schools.

**Shifting Place of Physical Education and Health in Ontario Schools**

Since the early 1990s, and beginning of the 21st century, education policy in Ontario underwent significant changes in the areas of curriculum, program structure, accountability frameworks, governance, funding, teacher professionalism, school safety, and school choice (Anderson and Ben Jaafar, 2007; Chan, Fisher, Rubenson, 2007; Dei and Karumanchery, 1999). Although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide a complete in-depth discussion of these changes, I believe that it is worth providing a brief overview of certain curriculum policy changes that were made in order to better understand the current state of physical education curricula in Ontario.

As a consequence of the increased salience of educational reform as a policy issue and schools as a primary site for the exercise of policy influence (Houlihan, 2000), Westernized educational discourses have spread internationally, and prompted certain countries to address their own educational systems (Levin, 2001). For example, the British education system, and associated education policies, reflected the commitment to reshape curricula in an effort to support the perceived needs of the British economy (Houlihan, 2000)\(^\text{11}\). Similarly, in Canada, and more specifically in Ontario, we see a parallel with British development and their implementation of a *National Curriculum*, where curriculum reform begins to reflect broader trends in Western education focused on standardization, centralization, accountability and regulation (Anderson and Ben Jaafar, 2007). This trend was more fully developed in the *Ontario Curriculum (Grades K-8)* and in certain secondary curriculum documents, which saw greater emphasis placed

\(^{11}\) According to Houlihan (2000), during the 1990s, a significant point of departure to education reform on the British political agenda was the insertion of physical education and sport, highlighted by the design of the *National Curriculum for Physical Education* and the policy statement *Sport: Raising the Game*. In the Canadian context, we begin to see policy emphasis being placed on physical education and health during the early 21st century via the Ontario Liberal government’s new health initiatives in schools, and a more explicit emphasis on the role of sport and its orientation in schools somewhat later.
on expected learning outcomes by students via provincially based ‘standards’ for acceptable and non-acceptable academic achievement and student performance (Anderson and Ben Jaafar, 2007). Increased accountability for student learning and achievement, in relation to the Ontario Provincial curriculum outline measurable student performance, revealing shifting perspectives on knowledge production in the classroom and what counts as legitimate knowledge according to particular needs, resources and policies at that time (Penney, 2008).

Turning to physical education as a relevant policy space, both professional and government settings internationally, have positioned physical education curricula in relation to discourses that originate in health and sport. Using the United Kingdom as a parallel example to the history of the physical education movement in Canada, I learned that concerns over the place of physical education curriculum have quickly shifted. In their analysis of the changing status of school sport and physical education, Houlihan and Green (2006) provide a historical overview of the changing attitudes toward physical education curriculum in England, which has changed from neglect, to moral panic regarding the state of the health of young people, and then to attentiveness between the coordination of physical education and sport as a new priority in British schools. The inclusion of physical education and school sport in the National Curriculum for Physical Education was predicated on a curriculum structured around performance sport and traditional content (Houlihan, 2000; Houlihan and Green, 2006). Initiatives, such as Sportsmark and Gold Star, were proposed to be awarded to specific schools that met outlined governmental criteria for the promotion of sport in their schools. The political direction of the content of the National Curriculum for Physical Education, later followed by the government’s policy statement, Sport: Raising the Game, highlighted the government’s broader orientation towards sport (Houlihan, 2000). Perhaps, most interestingly, the introduction of specialist sports colleges was also a significant part of

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12 Following the new performance accountability trend, the province implemented mandatory administration of literacy and numeracy standardized tests to align with the provincial curriculum. The establishment of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) in 1996 under Mike Harris’ Progressive Conservative Party, responsible for the development and administration of these tests, is a further example of the new accountability trend that began to hold students, teachers, and schools responsible for their performance (Anderson and Ben Jaafar, 2007).
the government’s mandate to revive school sport (Houlihan, 2000).\(^{13}\)

In Ontario, however, the subject area of physical education remained in a precarious curriculum position (Penney, 2008) as much of the emphasis on new curriculum initiatives focused primarily on student \textit{academic} achievement evidenced with the \textit{Ontario Curriculum (Grades K-8)}, and the establishment of the EQAO’s implementation and administration of standardized testing in the areas of literacy and numeracy. In \textit{Harris-era Hangovers: Toronto School Trustees’ Inherited Funding Shortfall}, Mackenzie (2015) sheds light on the lasting effects of Mike Harris’ Ontario Provincial Conservative’s government funding cutbacks during the 1990s to education. In particular, the report identifies fundamental problems with the way school space needs were determined and funded, particularly regarding “inadequate provision of space for educational ‘frills’ such as art, music and physical education,” sustaining the vulnerability of these programs (Mackenzie, p. 7). In his first two years (1995-1997) as Ontario Premier, Mike Harris, and his Conservative ‘common-sense revolution budget,’ cut education expenditures by $1 billion or 5 per cent (Martin, 2009, para. 5), while endorsing new curriculum achievements and accountability measures to be implemented at both the primary and secondary levels. Furthermore, the emphasis on achieving observed excellence in the classroom meant that the curriculum position maintained physical education ‘at the margins’ (Penney, 2008, p. 34) of curriculum reform, and this was felt specifically in the number of high school students enrolled in physical education classes at the time. According to Vickers (1992) the number of high school students enrolled in physical education classes in schools across Canada began to drop in the 1990s. The emphasis on academic performance, along with the accountability and regulatory measures put in place by the Provincial government to measure academic success, pressured high-school students to focus on traditional academic subjects – reading, writing and math – as opposed to a more holistic and broad school experience. Increased focus on the pragmatics of education, particularly emphasis on the scientization of physical education, according to Pronger (2002) and Charles (1998), have been

\(^{13}\) It is important to note that education is nationally directed/funded in the United Kingdom enabling the national government to direct education curricula. This differs from Canada where the Provincial governments are responsible for mandating education curricula.
instrumental in the rationalization and mechanization of the body, overtly changing the reality of the body, and its interactions during engagement in physical education classes. Furthermore, the sweeping funding cutbacks to education generally, and more specifically, to programs supporting physical education in schools, helped to keep physical education as a supplementary curriculum subject in a precarious position outside of ‘legitimate’ curriculum reforms (Anderson and Ben Jaafar, 2007; Penney, 2008).

At the same time as Ontario’s Provincial Conservative government was cutting funding to schools and highlighting the importance of student academic achievement, the Federal Liberal government, under the leadership of Jean Chrétien, began moving towards a renewed approach to public health initiatives with a clear focus on the individual. This was perhaps most evident with the Federal government’s launch of ParticipAction, a social marketing campaign committed to increasing physical activity and sport participation in Canada (Costas-Bradstreet and Edwards, 2004). In an effort to get Canadians to lead more active and healthy lifestyles, ParticipAction spearheaded a number of school-based health strategies between 2000 and 2001 (Costas-Bradstreet and Edwards, 2004). Given the new initiatives enacted by the Liberal government during this time, as evidenced with the efforts of ParticipAction, there was hope for the transformation of physical education within the core curriculum (Fraser-Thomas and Beaudoin, 2002).

In 2004, when the newly elected Provincial Liberal government began to make revisions to the education agenda and to reinstate education funding that had been gutted under the Harris Conservative government (1995-2002), the leader of the Liberal party, Premier Dalton McGuinty (2003-2013), undertook new initiatives related specifically to health in schools. In light of a Statistics Canada report on the increasing trend of childhood obesity among Canadian youth, the Provincial Liberal government set in motion plans to: i) ban junk food from schools, ii) issue nutritional guidelines for food and beverage sales in school, and iii) make funds available to encourage 30 minutes of daily physical activity programs in elementary school classes (Active Healthy Kids
According to the Provincial government, the intention of implementing mandatory Daily Physical Activity (DPA) for youth was intended to “enable all elementary students to improve or maintain their physical fitness and their overall health and wellness to enhance their learning opportunities” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005, cited in Brown, 2013, p. 4). The program was therefore aimed at increasing student movement activities outside of physical education classes, recess and lunch breaks to promote engagement in physical activity sessions of sufficient intensity to increase the heart’s rate from moderate to vigorous levels (Patton and McDougall, 2009).

While politicians touted this province-wide intervention as worthwhile, very little is known about school compliance and the effects among schools following the program. Further, promoting the Daily Physical Activity program under the guise of reducing obesity rates among Canadian youth, defines physical fitness using a medical paradigm, including cardiorespiratory endurance, as opposed to encouraging a holistic sense of well-being (Fusco, 2007; McDermott, 2007; Rail, 2009; Rich, 2010; Thomson and Robertson, 2014; Wright and Harwood, 2009). Ostensibly, the emphasis is on measuring fitness and taking individual responsibility for one’s health.

At the secondary level, education’s commitment to health was quickly embraced in the physical education curriculum through the approach offered by the Active Living movement (Bercovitz, 2000). According to Petherick’s (2008) doctoral work on the (re)production of health discourses in an Ontario secondary school, the idea of health in the physical education curriculum “became an underlying unifying component in thinking about how physical education can fit within new approaches to education and the organization of a shortened secondary curriculum” (p. 136). Thus, the health and physical education curriculum at the secondary level began to focus on Healthy Active Living Education, including introductions to physical activity, healthy living and living skills, that allowed for crossover in physical education classes (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999). As Petherick (2008) found, fusing health and physical education

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14 The *Daily Physical Activity Policy* was officially mandated in Ontario in 2006.
together in a tighter nexus may seem like a rational connection; however, this becomes problematic for education policy in schools. With an increased emphasis placed on the health of the body, central to the re-envisioning process of Ontario’s school physical education curriculum, scientific approaches with moral overtones of self-responsibility and risk become increasingly more powerful. For example, the 1999 Ontario Ministry of Education and Training’s official policy statement for physical and health education curriculum states:

The primary focus of this curriculum is on helping students develop a commitment and positive attitude to lifelong healthy active living and the capacity to live satisfying, productive lives. Healthy active living benefits both individuals and society in many ways: for example, by increasing productivity, improving morale, decreasing absenteeism, reducing health-care costs, and heightening personal satisfaction. Other benefits include improved psychological well-being, physical capacity, self-esteem, and the ability to cope with stress. The expectations within this curriculum promote healthy active living through the development of physical, social, and personal skills. (cited in MacNeill and Rail, 2010, p. 178)

More recently, in response to the Ontario Ministry of Education’s revised and updated health and physical education curriculum (2015), the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA) supports the inclusion of health in the revised curriculum, in relation to the province’s overall health promotion efforts. OPHEA suggests that the revised curriculum “stands to be the single largest health promotion intervention that this province has ever seen – lessening the burden on our healthcare and social services systems” (OPHEA, 2015).

As these policy statements make clear, Canadian youth are inserted into a political and economic framework that benefits the country if they take the opportunity to produce themselves as healthy citizens; an effort which is closely related to the pursuit of good health and the art of healthy living encouraged primarily by DPA at the elementary level, and Healthy Active Living Education at the secondary level (MacNeill and Rail, 2010; McCuaig and Tinning, 2010; McDermott, 2007). Certainly, support for the bridging of health and physical education curriculum in Ontario schools echoes the assumption that childhood and/or youth and physical inactivity poses future risks to the health of an individual and the nation (McDermott, 2007). Giroux (2005) might suggest that all these
changes in schools are a product of the broader performative and individualist neoliberal pedagogies that have infiltrated schooling. The imperatives towards eating well, exercising regularly and monitoring youth’s bodies carry powerful moral overtones; essentially they advocate how individuals ought to behave (Rich, 2011). The rise of neoliberal economics and discourses specifically has enabled public (health) spaces, especially schools, to be produced in ways that come to corroborate neoliberal ideologies. Consequently, this has meant that there has been an ever-increasing interest in the monitoring of bodies within school environments, which has been seen as problematic as the relationship between physical education, physical activity, exercise, sport and the governance of young people’s bodies becomes so intertwined (Kirk, 2004; Lupton, 1999; Rich, 2010).

This shift in educating youth about the importance of DPA and Healthy Active Living in Ontario schools has also become enmeshed with play-based curricula (Jachyra and Fusco, 2014). With the introduction, in 2010, of (legislated) play-based learning in elementary schools in Ontario, there has been yet another shift in physical education at the primary level; away from a focus on skills and activities—activities that are primarily physical in nature and focus on the body (Kirk, 1998; Penney and Chandler, 2000), to more exploratory based learning. The prevailing understanding of play based learning, primarily stemming from research in the fields of psychology, childhood development, education and anthropology, for example, has now made its way in to school curricula (Jachyra and Fusco, 2014). Recognizing that play is a useful pedagogic practice for young children, the Provincial government of Ontario recently introduced a play-based learning curriculum focused on elementary school children. Compared to more structured examples of learning, play has been identified as the optimal method of instruction for children mainly in primary/elementary grades (Jachyra and Fusco, 2014; Stegelin, 2005). Play-based learning has been championed as a way for children to develop an understanding of the world, the ability to form important connections with space(s) and their peers, encourage curiosity, and has been argued to increase overall learning (Biazak, Levin and Marley, 2010; Stegelin, 2005). According to the Council of Minsters of Education (Canada), the importance of incorporating play-based learning in school curriculum is twofold: “research demonstrates that play-based learning leads to
greater social, emotional and academic success...and sets the stage for future health and well-being” (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 2012, p.1). More specifically, the Ontario Ministry of Education describes play-based learning as an opportunity for children to increase their physical literacy skills (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011), an important element for children’s future health (Jachyra and Fusco, 2014). Given this, the general importance of play, in the education setting, has been deemed critical for children’s optimal development, associated with academic learning and the production of a desired (Canadian) citizenry.

The Objectification and Subjectification of Children and Youth Bodies

Canadian attitudes towards sport, school sports and physical education can be linked theoretically to the organization and institutionalization of children and youth’s bodies and their activities. This does not begin and end at elite sport but is as much focused on the very fundamentals of children’s activity – play. Indeed, children’s play has garnered much attention over the past few years in the areas of education, public health and, surprisingly, sports’ organizations (Fröhlich, Alexander and Fusco, 2013; Fusco, 2007; Lester and Russell, 2013, 2014).

Recently, sports institutions are drawing on the productive capacity of children’s play and connecting this to the production of high performance athletes. Federal (Sport Canada) initiatives such as Canadian Sport for Life (Long-Term Athlete Development Model, LTAD), From Playground to Podium and No Accidental Champions aim to cultivate a culture of lifelong participation in sport and physical activity “highlighting sport’s value in improving health and well-being and identifying an optimal path for athletes from playground to podium” (Robertson and Way, 2005, p. 7, my emphasis added). The reification of play, as something concrete, essentially, a ‘thing’ to be planned, provided and manipulated (Lester and Russell, 2013) by specific sport initiatives, implicitly acknowledges the interdependency of physical education, school sports, play and recreation activities. There is a renewed focus on developing fundamental movement skills and the development of future Olympians, signaling a pertinent shift to developing athletic excellence and sports capacity among Canadian youth (Fusco, 2009).
In the case of sport, Federal initiatives are embedded in the current dominant health paradigm and its implications for physical (in)activity, as a meta-discourse of instrumental play and physical activity characterized by a focus on behaviour (Felkers, Mulder and MacLean, 2016). This is reflected, for example, when efforts are made to recognize the importance and value of childhood play in relation to overall well-being and health, and the implication this has for increasing sports capacity and performance. Increasing the sports capacity and performance of Canadian youth and focusing in on play as a touchstone for early athlete development does not escape current ideologies of healthification (Fusco, 2006). These, according to Fusco, are the continuous deployment of a range of strategies and initiatives aimed at producing ‘healthified’ spaces and subjectivities (Fusco, 2012). The discourses of individualization, personal responsibility, personal choice and accountability are essential for the operation and maintenance of neoliberal ideologies, particularly those situated at the nexus of health and sport (Miller and Rose, 2008; Rose, 1996; Fusco, 2012). It has been argued that neoliberalism’s health imperatives seek to impose a kind of moral entrepreneurship, where individuals are incited to engage in self-governance and risk management with respect to their health and bodies (Dillabough and Kennelly, 2010; Lupton, 1995; Fusco, 2012; Rose, 2007; Wheatley, 2005). Neoliberal commitments to, what has been termed ‘healthism’ (Crawford, 1980; Lupton, 1995) encourage individuals to take responsibility for their own health and/or the health of others. Concomitantly, this notion of healthism, and, in turn, neoliberal health discourses, continue to permeate new public health strategies, education policy and sport policy aimed at youth (Alexander, Fröhlich and Fusco, 2013, 2014).

This growing attention paid towards the body in contemporary neoliberal Western societies is not new; since the 18th century health experts have used strategies such as surveillance, analysis and intervention to monitor and control how and where bodies have worked, moved and played (Foucault, 1980.)\(^{15}\). However, what is specifically interesting in contemporary Western societies, is that much of this body surveillance has focused on

\(^{15}\) This biopolitics of population (Foucault, 1978; Rose, 2007) is enforced through the control and regulation of family life and the organization of health, sexuality, education and space.
young people’s bodies and the so-called obesity ‘epidemic’ (Gard and Wright, 2005; Rich, 2010; Wright and Harwood, 2009). For example, in 1998, the Federal health care system put out a ‘call to action’ to increase physical activity levels among Canadian youth:

The Canadian Pediatric Society and the Canadian Teachers’ Federation...called on parents, politicians, and policy makers to take action to increase the physical activity levels of children and teenagers. The call for action comes only weeks after two national studies...found that the health of 63 percent of Canadian children is threatened due to high levels of physical inactivity—Canadian Pediatric Society 1998 (cited in McDermott, 2007, p. 302)

Health concerns linking obesity and physical inactivity are not new, as noted in the previous section. Indeed, Gard and Wright (2001, 2005) point out that as early as the 1950s, medical research connected obesity with cardiovascular disease. Contemporary health promotion concerns, however, have intensified across a broad range of cultural institutions – governments, academic, medical and media – that have all come out to admonish youth’s physical (in)activity levels (McDermott, 2007). Critical obesity studies of policy and pedagogy have been shedding light on the prevalence of the current health crisis associated with obesity and its role in the development of school policy and practices (Burrows and Wright, 2004; Gard and Wright, 2005). The situating of inactivity and obesity within a vocabulary of risk (McDermott, 2007) has created “a widespread anxiety, a moral panic, which calls a new set of imperatives into play” (Gard and Wright, 2005, p. 174). The discourse of risk along with suggestions that one should be responsible for one’s own health (McDermott, 2007), has led to an increase in policies and initiatives targeted towards the surveillance of bodies across much of Western society in the last decade and a half, as government funding for education and health has been reduced in many neoliberal states such as the UK, Australia, Canada and the USA (Kirk, 1994; Rich, 2010).

As a result, youth in these countries have been, more often than not, targets for neoliberalism’s healthiest discourses (Wright and Harwood, 2009) and oftentimes are encouraged to take up dominant discourses about ‘proper’ health and a ‘healthy’ body. Indeed, discourses of risk and epidemic have produced conceptualizations of
‘(un)healthy’ youth, which align with specific political rationalities and modernity (Fusco, 2012; McDermott, 2007). Noted earlier, more recent public health authorities, such as Active Healthy Kids, Canada, have grown increasingly more concerned with the rising levels of obesity related to decreasing participation in sport and physical activity particularly among Canadian youth (MacNeill and Rail, 2010; Rail, 2009; Wright and Harwood, 2009).

Thus it is not surprising that in North America and across many Western nations, discourses of childhood inactivity and obesity, point to the production of sports and physical activity spaces as the solution (Fusco, 2007; Fusco, 2012; Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2011). This focus on youth is often juxtaposed with discourses of future and nationhood (Fusco, 2007), at the intersection of discourses regarding self-control and bodily self-responsibility. While young elite athletes may not be the target of obesity discourses, particularly relevant regarding the rise of obesity crisis discourses targeted at young people has been the very real potential that such discourses will affect physical education, physical activity and sport in schools, which are regarded as both a source and a potential solution to the problem (Kirk, 2004; Fusco, 2007). Specifically in Canada, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of Federal, Provincial and Municipal government policies and media advertisements directed at youth, health, physical activity and sport (Alexander, Fusco and Fröhlich, 2015; Fusco, 2012). In an analysis of excerpts from Provincial and Municipal government policies and programs such as “Our Common Grounds”, “Pause to Play”, “It’s not Going to Kill You”, and “ReActivate TO!”, Fusco (2012) sheds light on how neoliberal urban imaginaries and moral geographies of healthification centered on children’s lives in the province of Ontario. More specifically, through her critical analysis of the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion’s initiative, Pause to Play, Fusco found that youth are assumed to have an interest in producing themselves as healthy subjects in space and are incited to take it upon themselves, as healthy citizens, to find salvation in the spaces of sports, physical education and physical activity (Fusco, 2012).

Any analysis of the moral governance of youth’s bodies emerging from health, sports and physical education initiatives requires drawing on Foucault’s studies of
governmentality and his concept of biopower. Governmentality represents a rationality and strategy of governing that considers individual bodies and populations to be both manageable resources and objects (Foucault, 1991; MacNeill and Rail, 2010). According to Foucault (1991, p. 100):

"Government has its purpose not the act of government itself, but the welfare of the population, the improvement of its condition, the increase of its wealth, longevity, health etc. The population is the subject of needs, of aspirations, but it is also the object of the hands of the government. Interest at the level of the consciousness of each individual who goes to make up the population, and interest considered as the interest of the population regardless of what the particular interests and aspirations may be of the individuals who compose it, this is the new target and the fundamental instrument of the government of population."

As the above quote highlights, Foucault considered government to rest on the deliberate “endeavours to shape, guide, direct the conduct of others” (Rose, 1999, p. 3). Thus, the focus on the art of government is to manage whole populations, while, at the same time, individualizing and totalizing each and all (McDermott, 2007). Foucault (1977) argued that a new form of power, what he termed biopower, emerged with the broadening of the state’s interest to that of population welfare (McDermott, 2007). This notion of biopower conceives of the body as intimately bound with life (or bios) (Wright, 2009). As Gestaldo (1997) and Lupton (1999) point out, policies around health education, and more recently physical education and sport, have now shifted the governance of health onto a set of experts and also further into the community to oversee the moral governance of youth’s bodies specifically. As McDermott (2007, p. 317) elaborates:

"the purpose of governance is ensuring the welfare of ‘each and all’ in a population, which is itself conceived through the notion of neoliberalism whereby subjectivity is framed through discourses of responsibilisation, choice, autonomy, self-governance, and self-improvement, in contrast to a population envisioned through a prism of collective responsibility."

Consequently, populations, especially in neoliberal states, are subjected to ever-increasing neoliberal policies — via discourses of responsibilisation, choice and self-governance — whereby health concerns are managed individually, and obesity and physical inactivity are understood as an individual’s inability to make the ‘right’ choices to be a productive and healthful Canadian citizen (MacNeill and Rail, 2010; McCuaig
and Tinning, 2010; McDermott, 2007). Within contemporary societies, then, governmentality refers to the use of strategies which govern at a distance, making the use of disciplinary training less of an explicit concern and more of an implicit issue shaping the social landscape within which individuals make “autonomous choices of relatively independent entities” (Rose, cited in McCuaig and Tinning, 2010, p. 50). While an analysis of governmentality allows the working of power to be discerned, what remains to be understood is how the effects of governmentality impact on and are taken up by diverse populations of children and youth, including elite young athletes who attend a sports school. Although there have been some studies that have interviewed children and youth about how they have become the objects and subjects of such governmentality discourses (Dillabough and Kennelly, 2010; MacNeill and Rail, 2010; Raby, 2012), there are none that I know of that have conducted such a study of elite young athletes.

I would be remiss not to acknowledge the critiques levelled against Foucault’s notion of governmentality and its working at the level of individual agency. Such critiques of government have focused on the relationship between the history of governmentality and the technologies of neoliberalism, which are seen as essentially (re)producing “what is discovered as what one already knows” (Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke, 2011, p. 16). This can result in an inability to consider the co-production of discourse and workings of power. Similarly, Foucault’s notion of governmentality has also raised questions concerning its “implicit finalism” (Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke, 2011, p. 16), which assumes an ongoing and continuous effect of discipline and governmental technologies. In this way, it would seem that individuals are caught up in the circuity of government technologies with little to no opportunity to demonstrate resistance against governmental strategies. Certainly, any analysis of the institutional framing and promotion of particular body projects for people should take these criticisms into account. To help understand how the privileging of particular high performance (youth) bodies emerge from health, education and sport promoting initiatives and the way(s) in which governments, institutions and individuals participate in these projects, I paid specific attention to how macro social processes might work together to affect micro realities of individuals in a sports school. The analysis of governmentality that I undertook enabled me to consider how a particular body politic (around the production of
excellence and athletic discipline) might link to the identity-work taking place at a sports school, and, subsequently, how this could be constructed, negotiated and resisted. To that end, I outlined how wider cultural and structural spheres of action may be specifically tied to the local experiences of the sports school, while providing a critical analysis of such processes. This leads me to the theoretical concept of biopedagogy.

Studies of governmentality and biopower have identified the concept of ‘biopedagogy’ and biopedagogical practices across a variety of social and institutional sites (Wright and Harwood, 2009). As Harwood (2009, p. 15) explains:

> Across a range of contemporary contexts are instructions on *bios*: how to live, how to eat, how much to eat, how much to move. In short an extensive pedagogy is aimed at us: a pedagogy of *bios*, or what can be termed ‘biopedagogy’. This biopedagogy is premised on a conflation between *bios* and health where there is far more at stake than simply ‘being well’.

Biopedagogy has been used to bring together the idea of “biopower and pedagogy in ways that help us understand the body as a political space” (Wright, 2009, p. 7). This highlights the different meanings that can be associated with the body and how these meanings may be understood and/or contested in various ‘pedagogical sites’ (Wright, 2009, p. 7) including, but not limited to, (sports) schools. ‘Pedagogical sites’ have the power to normalize and regulate practices in multiple institutional spaces by engaging individuals or ‘learners’ in meaning making practices that they use to make sense of their worlds and selves (Wright, 2009). Biopedagogies can be produced through various discourses and sites. For example, Active Healthy Kids Canada’s (2013) daily physical activity policies, education policies for Active Living and public health physical activity policies have been critiqued as biopedagogical as they are concerned with putting individuals (parents, children, school boards etc.) under surveillance for their adherence to or lack of adherence to physical activity. All these policies and programs suggest that Canadian youth (and those in charge of them) should pay closer attention to their health practices and engage in self-responsibility practices to take charge of their health and physical activity (MacNeill and Rail, 2010). These kinds of discourses and practices have been understood as significant biopolitical projects: where biopedagogies have intersected with the neoliberal concepts of individualism that construct youth (and their
adult caretakers) as simultaneously capable of and responsible for changing their lifestyles through multiple disciplinary techniques (Rail, 2012; Rich 2011).

Biopedagogies are thought to have become a continuous feature of contemporary life and a ubiquitous system of control; society can be seen as “totally pedagogized” (Bernsetin 2001, cited in Wright, 2009, p.1; MacNeill and Rail, 2010), and of course children and youth have not escaped the reach of these biopedagogies and, as argued above, are often the prime objects and subjects of such governmentality.

For example, the increasing scrutiny, organization, regulation and surveillance of young people’s bodies cannot be divorced from their school lives because of the historical, structural and ideological education policies that have effected them (St. Pierre, 2006). Schools as institutions have historically created a range of mechanisms and disciplinary strategies that have taught students how to self-monitor, and now, more than ever, they are given the necessary instructions about how to self-regulate to meet new health imperatives associated with neoliberalism (Rich, 2010, 2011). Indeed, the increased emphasis on neoliberalism and narratives of panic, risk management and self-accountability has arguably changed the character of youth cultural activities and notions of nation, citizenship and culture (Dillabough and Kennelly, 2010). Henry Giroux (2005, 2010) has long argued that youth have been vilified through neoliberal practices, particularly in schools and he labels neoliberalism the most dangerous ideology of the present historical moment because its focus on individual accountability has had an impact on the meaning and purpose of education in North American schools. Rather than an institutional site where students could learn about having a public voice and could learn about their own power as social agents, schools are now embedded in a corporate culture-school-political nexus producing citizens less interested in inclusive democratic public spheres, and more in consumption, or worse, disenfranchised youth (Giroux, 2005). As Giroux (1989, p. xv) argues:

a concern with social transformation and critical citizenship has been replaced by a preoccupation with forging a school-business alliance...The present day culture of school appears more and more bent on producing what Andre Gorz calls ‘adapted individuals,’ by which he refers to ‘exactly the kind of people that capitalist industry needs...those who will put up with the regimentation, repression [and] discipline’.
Ostensibly, students are being offered various ways to understand themselves, change themselves and take action to change others and their environments (Wright, 2009, p. 1-2). These policies have implications for youth, yes, but also for the spaces of schools, which now require various kinds of surveillance technologies that work to discipline and regulate students (Gallagher and Fusco, 2006). These are the imperatives of neoliberal governmentality.

Understanding corporeal practices is essential to interpreting the construction of policy discourse, pedagogical practices, and, in turn, how students’ embodied experience(s) become enmeshed in the everyday operation of a (sports) school. More research on the effects of neoliberalization on youth’s bodies and their conceptualizations of the body, health and bodily practices is being conducted in Canada (Rail, 2009); what remains absent, as I outlined above, in our expanding knowledge base is any interrogation of sports school spaces where ‘schooling the (athletic) body’ may most likely be absolutely central to the schools’ mandate. In other words, what is being made and created within the spaces of sports schools, how do biopedagogies and governmentality operate in such spaces, and what are the implications for young people?

At this juncture, it is important to note that despite the biopedagogical practices of schooling, learning about youth’s bodies and experiences in school space cannot be reduced to solely biopedagogical constructions of the body; the unique and distinctive aspect of a sports school and the (body) pedagogies that take place therein may in fact demonstrate a nuanced nature of how youth are constructed by, and how they construct themselves through educational, sport and bureaucratic institutions. Following Leahy (2009), as much as governmental and school imperatives may constrain students, it is important to recognize that such school spaces also provide opportunities for pleasure, rebellion and resistance. As Rail (2009, p. 150) aptly explains:

We could say that governmental and school imperatives aim to discipline and ‘mark’ the youthful body, to ‘territorialize’ it to use Deleuze and Guattari’s (1983) concept. But this body is simultaneously fed by tastes and desires (often created by the mass media, commodity culture, peers) that continuously try to escape prescription. We could say that there is some resistance, as if this youthful body tended to de-territorialize its surface.
So, while biopedagogies can be understood as a way to encourage people to work on themselves, as Rail points out, this may not always be predictable. How youth take up various biopedagogies and biopedagogical practices will be “mediated by their own personal experiences, their own embodiment, their interactions with other ways of knowing, other truths and operations of power in relation to the knowledge produced around health and the body” (Wright, 2009, p. 9). Although I am persuaded by much of the literature on neoliberalism, governmentality and biopedagogy, I also know that viewing schools simply as a site for the reproduction of neoliberalist ideologies may be limiting to what one sees in the field under study and in fact I must make sure that I pay attention to how youth may also work to delegitimize biopedagogies and on how youth exercise their agentic practices. In the context of this study, this means paying attention to the multiple pleasures youth find in actually taking up neoliberal biopedagogical subjectivity as well as the resultant pleasures they receive in just playing their sports.

The neoliberalization and privatization of schooling and education

A recent special issue in the journal, Sport, Education and Society (2015), set out to explore the implications of global privatization and the effects of this on schooling, specifically, the provision of physical education and its variants, such as sport education, with other sectors of society. Many scholars have discussed the resulting effects of the process of neoliberalization, and its related discourses, on the privatization of a number of social and welfare provisions including, for example, education, health, social security and housing (Evans and Davies, 2015; Ferry, 2014). Such provisions of social services come at a time when governments are faced with budget deficits, economic recessions and other monetary woes and are favouring privatization and reduced government expenditures. In the education realm this is reflected in reforms grounded in neoliberal market discourses that, as Dei and Karumanchery (1999, p. 114) explain, “effectively undermine public schooling” and have continued to reshape educational systems worldwide for the past 20 years (Ball 1993; Davies and Quirke, 2005; Dei and Karumanchery, 1999; Evans and Davies, 2015). Specifically, in Canada, as a consequence of market adaptation and its deregulation and privatization of social services, local schooling quasi-markets have been gaining momentum—many jurisdictions are now experiencing a clear growth in privatized education provision for
school-aged children. For instance, in Ontario, private sector school provisions, distinguished from public schools, can be found with the rise in the number of French-language schools, gifted programs, alternative schools, preschools (Davies and Quirke, 2005; Dehli, 1998; Dei and Karumeanchery, 1999) and, of interest to my research, sports schools.

To understand this rise in private education, most of the literature points to the systemic spread of neoliberal ideologies (Davies and Quirke; 2005; Evans and Davies, 2015; Gard, 2015). As Evans and Davies (2015) explain in their editorial for the *Sport, Education and Society* special issue, what many in education are witnessing in schools is not a fragmentary involvement of private enterprises in education, but, rather, the marketization of education in and of itself. They state:

> what is new about its recent manifestations is its sheer scale, scope and penetration into almost all aspects of the education endeavor, from the administrative apparatus to policy making to both formal provision in education settings and out of school activities such as private tutoring and coaching in sport, leisure and play opportunities. (p. 2)

In the case of specialized private schools, such as sports specific academies, what neoliberalists have done is articulate varied concerns and calls (regarding alternative pedagogues for the provision of physical education, sport and health in public schools) for more market alternatives in education (Apple, 2000; Davies and Quirke, 2005; Evans and Davies, 2015). This has involved changes in both endogenous (e.g., within institutions between teachers, knowledge, and students) and exogenous relations (Evans and Davies, 2015). To understand the specific impact of neoliberal ideologies on the provision of education, Davies and Quirke (2005, p. 255) broadly outline four related components central to the adoption of privatized education:

1. The view of public education institutions as mediocre monopolies with little incentive for accountability and excellence. From this viewpoint, public school bureaucracies so concerned with conforming to legal conventions, lose touch with their true clients—parents and students;

2. Competitive pressures in education spurred on by public schools no longer guaranteed public funds. In a market setting, where markets reward pedagogical success oftentimes via monetary gains, customers are provided the opportunity to
judge differences in ‘quality’ amongst competing schools;

3. This in turn, leads to schools being run in a more business-like manner where productivity and accountability are held up as gold standards. Ball (1998, cited in Davies and Quirke, 2005) describes this ‘new managerialism’ introduced in schooling as a renewed emphasis on creating revenue, reducing costs and expanding market opportunities; and

4. Private schooling markets as the best medium for matching the preference of parents to educators. From this viewpoint, the ‘one system’ fits all in public education is understood as lacking, whereas private markets are perceived to deliver schooling that is tailored to the general interests of parents, students and teachers.

Given the above components set out by Davies and Quirke, one might be driven to ask, are new private educators driven by neoliberal ideologies in an era of what Evans and Davies (2015) call ‘new freedoms’ and raising (accountability) standards? Indeed, the flourishing of privatized schooling options for students and parents alike, signals significant changes in the way knowledge is produced, consumed and evaluated (Gard, 2015).

It must be acknowledged however that private schools, especially across the United Kingdom and Canada, for the elite and wealthy are not new, and have been a staple, as well as enactment of class for such subgroups, since the beginning of education. Perhaps, more importantly, many of these private schools across the province of Ontario (e.g. Upper Canada College, Trinity College and Appleby College to name a few), have historically placed a significant amount of emphasis on sport participation tied to character development (as opposed to elite athlete development). In spite of this, given the new emergence and propagation of specialty private schools, such as sports schools, it could be argued that this is about increasing the access of the middle class to some of the trappings of the elite. For example, in Ball’s (2003) analysis of class strategies and the education market, he found that the middle class view of schools and their decision-making regarding private schools for their children is embedded in the belief that through private institutions they are able to achieve their particular (social and cultural) ends and interests: “the private sector is an ever-present possibility, a temptation, an escape route, an obvious recourse for many of these parents” (p. 55). This parallels Bourdieu’s (1984)
work on ‘capital’, as Ball explains the efforts of the middle class to monopolize private (education) enterprises and sites establishes and maintains social cleavages – as in Bourdieu’s theories of social and cultural capital. For the middle class families in his study, private schools provided a collective interest, or subjective awareness of social networks, social capital, and economic interests held in common with other middle class families. As Teese (1981, 2000, cited in Ball 2003, p. 156) explains for the middle class today: “Private schools offer a cultural milieu, a communicative order of self-recognition…and are fortified sites within diverse school systems which represent class projects”. Thus, inasmuch as the legacies of private schools have been bastions of elite privilege and remained protected enclaves for class formation (Sedden, 2001), such private schools today, for the middle class, renew middle class culture and collectivity by tangibly transforming or reinvesting economic capital into cultural capital (Ball, 2003). In effect, using the recent propagation of private sports schools as an example, they simultaneously discipline students into academic and sport success.

Nevertheless, despite the rise of these options for children (and their families), there is a dearth of research on the propagation of sports schools across the country in a time when private sports schools are flourishing. All this is happening as the health and physical education curriculum in Ontario has moved towards a curriculum focused on inclusivity, equity and diversity while public policy initiatives are calling for more sport in school. As described by Ferry (2014), in reference to the decentralization of the Swedish school system, literature demonstrates that in these markets, education has become a commodity, where schools have become producers that compete for youth and parents who are the consumers. Bringing in private entrepreneurs (such as coaches, trainers, nutritionists etc.) to a school environment does highlight a focus on the instrumental value of education and its learning outcomes, and also valorizes their functional relationships to other areas of life post-school, for example in health, sport and extra-curricular activities (Evans and Davies, 2015). Gard (2015), as well as Davies and Quirke (2005), warn that this neoliberal preoccupation and its associated inherent risks with privatized forms of education, tend to reify neoliberal ideologies where “we end up
seeing privatization as nothing other than an expression of neoliberalism” (Gard, 2015, p. 111). As Davies and Quirke (2005) in their study on third-sector private schools in Toronto highlight, the emerging ideology of choice is much different than that imagined in neoliberal theory. In fact, they found that the market of third-sector private schools, served as a vehicle to tailor education to the specific desires of parents and youth, rather than leverage schools in competition and accountability frameworks.

Indeed, the proliferation of sports specific academies, makes clear that the health and physical education field is becoming a more crowded space, perhaps most demonstrated by the diversification of the kinds of players entering the field (Evans and Davies, 2015; Williams and Macdonald, 2015). The increasing range of choices available to consumers points to parents’ willingness to pay for physical activity and sport experiences for their children in schooling as opposed to extra-curricular sports clubs (Gard, 2015). Taken in this sense, Gard (2015), argues that “privatisation is not just part of a neoliberal agenda that is being done to us. It is also a process that at least some people are actively and enthusiastically participating in” (p. 110). Certainly, as the discourses and practices of the privatization of sport continues to grow in educational settings, it will be important to consider the impacts of these processes for sports school stakeholders—teachers, coaches, student-athletes and parents—who all have vested interest in the results (Evans and Davies, 2015). Evans and Davies (2014, 2015) ask several critical questions that are pertinent to my research. They suggest that as the language of the market economy penetrates (private) sports education contexts, it is

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16 They describe third-sector schools as private entities that are neither religious nor elite. These schools are often physically small and are often located in humble locales such as shopping plazas, office buildings and/or houses.

17 According to Way et al., (2010) since 2010 there has been a proliferation of sports schools across the country. More specifically, in their research report, “Sport Schools in Canada: The Future is Here”, they highlight the British Colombia education system which has evolved to offer over 110 sport programs in 72 schools with approximately 4000 student-athletes enrolled as of 2010 (p.6). The number of sports schools created across other provinces in Canada, specifically that of Ontario, is somewhat more difficult to discern given the accelerated, unregulated and disconnected growth of such schools. For example, in their report, Way et al. mention two publicly funded high schools offering specialized sports programs during the 2010-2011 academic year. This number however does not take into account privately funded sports schools across the province of Ontario.
important to ask: i) how will institutions sort, select and allocate resources to pupils and students and subjects in attempts to maximize overall performance and consequent institutional attractiveness? ii) Will physical ability/literacy be seen as a source of human capital beneficial to schools’ market/able profile, and if so, what kind? And, iii) importantly, what are the implications for socially just, democratic and inclusive education?

Together these questions identify important issues concerning what the privatization of sport in schools might mean for the conceptualization of physicality, sport, health, and, more specifically, youth in (sports) schooling contexts. Using Messner and Musto’s (2014) call to sport sociologists to begin to consider youth and sport from the perspective of youth themselves, highlights an opportunity for sport scholars to shift their attention “toward a sociology of kids and sport” (Messner and Musto, 2014, p. 110; Laurendeau and Konecny, 2015). For the purposes of my study then, paying sociological attention to youth sports in the context of sports schools, an area that has been largely ignored by North American sport sociologists, will help me extend Physical Cultural Studies towards the burgeoning sociological and interdisciplinary fields of children and youth, bodies and health, at the nexus of intersectional analyses of physical activity, sport and education (Messner and Musto, 2014).

Youth and Sport

As I noted in the introductory chapter of this dissertation, although youth sport has received some attention from sport scholars, generally, youth, and their participation in sports have not been taken ‘seriously’ (Laurendeau and Konecny, 2015; Messner and Musto, 2014). Yet the sociology of childhood and youth is an expansive field. In her book, Figurations: Child, Bodies, Worlds, Castañeda (2002) shows how the ‘child-body’, historically, geographically and culturally, has been ‘made’ and put to varied use as a cultural resource. Via historical tracing across nineteenth and twentieth century cultural sites (e.g., science, adoption, organ theft and theory), Castañeda’s work reveals the extent to which the child-body is held in an ongoing process of becoming or potentiality, highlighting its capacity to be made and remade in particular sites, often in the (adult) making of worlds. My purpose here, in which I include a short summary of Castañeda’s
influential work, is to emphasize the means by which the child-body has been foregrounded in different cultural and institutional sites regarding its uses and values for adult discourses (Castañeda, 2002). Ostensibly, this includes, but is not limited to sites such as education and sport. As Hardman (1973) explains, instead of drawing on children’s perspectives and understandings of childhood, scholars tended to overgeneralize children as “helpless spectators” who remained passive recipients of adult produced knowledge, values and meaning (cited in Messner and Musto, 2014). Viewing children simply as ‘humans-to-be’ (Eliasson, 2015, p. 6), or in the case of Physical Cultural Studies as ‘the future of sport’ (Messner and Musto, 2014, p. 107), marks youth as agentic-less and submissive beings.

More recently, pedagogic shifts within the (new) sociology of childhood, and the social sciences more broadly, have begun to weaken the boundaries between childhood and adulthood challenging the predominant idea that youth simply assimilate into existing social structures (Corsaro, 2003; Eliasson, 2015; Messner and Musto, 2014). Scholarly research in other areas, primarily in geography, sociology of childhood and education, have been studying youth in specific contexts (e.g. schools, in cities), not simply as future adults, but as subjects who actively create their own social worlds (Dillabough and Kennelly, 2011; Raby, 2012). In conversation with Messner and Musto’s (2014) arguments, moving toward a sociology of sport and youth requires an active consideration of the child as a social agent worthy of study in their own right (Laurendeau and Konecny, 2015), and not as predetermined future adults. For example, Messner and Musto’s (2014, p. 108) review of the past ten years of articles within SSJ, JSSI and ISSR, found that “sport sociologists have mostly emphasized future-oriented outcomes when studying youth sports” (see Coakley, 2011 for a review; Miller et al., 2005; Denham, 2011; Shakib et al., 2011). Framing studies of youth, in terms of their development, or lack thereof, “encourages an academic ghettoization of children and childhoods” (Pugh, 2014, p. 72) and risks imposing adult perspectives and meanings on the lives of youth (Messner and Musto, 2014). In other words, while studies, such as those highlighted above, provide insight into children’s sport and physical activity, we may be missing opportunities to understand and theorize the processes and meanings youth assign to their (physically active) lives, as well as how they construct and negotiate
these practices *together* (Messner and Musto, 2014). Importantly, considering how youth come to construct and negotiate daily meanings and processes, does not suggest a one-dimensional understanding of the discourses youth apply to their own lives (Laurendeau and Konecny, 2015).

The idea of childhood as a (primarily developmental) stage of life is not new. In fact, the birth of the ‘public child’ began as early as the nineteenth century when a child was, in many ways, recognized as an adult in training (Malkki, 2010, cited in Laurendeau and Konecny, 2015). More recently, however, the emergence of the ‘public child’ has become more significant. With the turn of the twentieth century, the emergence of a public concern for the well-being of youth was constructed around medical discourses circulating in relation to prevention, protection, surveillance and statistical analyses (Gleason, 2005). At the same time, the playground movement began to take shape, which was in response to children’s presence on public streets. This further illustrated the increasing public surveillance of youth and their families. During this time, beginning in the late 1890s, according to Laurendeau and Konecny (2015), the playground movement solidified three interrelated imperatives, all implicitly concerned with the well-being of youth: 1) Providing a (supervised) substitute for children to play during the summer months when schools were no longer in session (as opposed to playing on the street); 2) Encouraging physical activity among youth; and 3) Providing spaces for immigrant youth to be immersed in new national identities and citizenship.

In the context of youth and sport, this significant public concern for the ‘public child’ paved the way for similar anxieties to take shape as the nexus of health, youthhood and sport became institutionalized. For example, in 1930s Canada, making it onto the government’s socio-political agenda was the notion that fitness and sport, in the context of youth development, could be connected to work and health. With the introduction of the *Dominion Youth Training Act* in 1937 encouraging occupational training, and industrial training for war work later in 1939, the ideological mandate connecting nationhood to the country’s youth is apparent. Whereas the playground movement’s connection to nationhood was geared towards getting immigrant and poor children healthy via physical activity *and* off public streets, the ideology underlying the
Dominion Youth Training Act, was getting youth off the streets via employability of unemployed youth (Harvey, 1988; Harvey, Beamish and Defrance, 1993). Thus the main focus of this Act was exercise, health and employability (Blair, 2009). Despite the incentive for the Dominion Youth Training Act focusing on the preparation of youth for occupational readiness rather than sport and physical fitness, in the 1940s international sport competitions, and Canada’s place at such competitions, was beginning to grow in popularity across the country. With the National Physical Fitness Act passed in 1943, we begin to see a re-orientation of government interest in the importance of physical activity and fitness among Canadians. Furthermore, the government’s hand in encouraging the fitness of all Canadians, while simultaneously doing well on the world stage at sporting events, continued well into the 1960s. With the introduction of the Fitness and Amateur Sport Act of 1961 there began to be increased interest in subsuming school sport programs as part of the Federal government’s efforts to improve the health of the nation and the long-term success of our athletes. It is interesting to note that at the same time as the government’s ideological commitment to increasing the fitness of all Canadians, while touting the importance of achieving world class results on the international stage began to gain momentum, the emergence of institutionalized youth sport spaces and organizations also began to grow across North America (Wiggins, 2013), further illustrating a growing investment in a political, cultural and social economy related to youth and their bodies. According to Laurendeau and Konecny (2015, p. 337) “the particular understandings of young people as ‘at risk’ in early twentieth century North America shaped (and were shaped by) the emergence of [these] institutionalized youth sport spaces and how [these] organizations and institutions operated.” This has not been lost in recent years. As I noted earlier, the ramifications of these concerns are directly related to explicit discourses of risk and epidemic concerning childhood obesity that are having real consequences in the realms of policy, practice and (youth) subjectivities today (Alexander, Fröhlich and Fusco, 2014; Laurendeau and Konecny, 2015; McDermott, 2007). This has also had a direct impact on youth and the myriad of institutions (e.g. family, education, sport and health) to which they are connected to, specifically, there has been increased attention paid to families and their childrearing with respect to the (physical) health of their children.
Taken together, over a century the development of various industries (e.g., state-funded education), organizations (e.g., athletic organizations), private industry (e.g., sports schools) and other stakeholders that promote and support the institutionalization of youth sports programs, many of which were concerned about the risks young people apparently face, has increased exponentially (Laurendeau and Konecny, 2015). Not only does this illustrate the magnitude to which the sporting and recreational practices of youth were, and continue to be, constituted by specific stakeholders, it also highlights the ways in which institutionalized youth sports are shaped, and reshaped across time and place (i.e., streets, schools). The discourses and practices of various organizational bodies (i.e., playground movement, sports organizations, schools) have drawn on specific constructions of childhood and youth, and have served to (re)produce particular narrow understandings of young people. Laurendeau and Konecny (2015) argue that the emergence of complementary industries, ostensibly involved with the proliferation of the institutionalization of youth sports (i.e., coaching, nutrition, athletic goods), have directly benefitted from, and continue to be sustained by, specific (adultist) constructions and understandings of childhood and youth. More recently, this has created new markets for the proliferation of safety equipment manufacturing to deal with the concussion crisis across youth contact sports, which again are located at the nexus of responsibility, risk and young people’s health and well-being.

That said, this notion of youthhood framed within a moral rhetoric, most often centered around the notion of risk, is connected to particular social contexts and conduct. According to Messner and Musto (2014) the sacralisation of childhood, or more specifically, the production of childhood as a moral rhetoric, is particularly more pronounced in some circumstances while less evident in others. Indeed, it is extremely important to question what childhoods become the focus of public debate and action, and what others are delineated to the shadows (Laurendeau and Konecny, 2015)? Some childhoods, for example, such as those exploited in sweatshop labour (Donnelly, 1997), bodies trafficked, often from the Global South to the Global North, in the name of sport (McGee, 2012), as well as low-income youth and immigrant youth (The Social Planning
Council of Toronto, 2016), and homeless youth (Kennelly, 2017) are often rendered invisible as part of the logic of modern capitalism (Laurendeau and Konecny, 2015). Certainly, an understanding of non-participating youths’ experiences and views of sport and physical activity have been absent from much of the public debate surrounding physical activity, health, and the institutionalization of sport in education spaces. Atkinson and Kehler (2010), for example, provide a critical examination of young Canadian boys who are produced within the context of physical education, and who feel they do not live up to the codes of dominant masculinity. Data from their study indicates that young boys in Ontario schools, are “slipping through the cracks” within physical education programs across Ontario high schools because their alternative conceptions of masculinity are being ignored within school-gym settings. Certainly, Atkinson and Kehler’s (2010) work highlights the need to not only ask youth how they are experiencing school sport and physical education but to pay closer attention to how youth might imagine alternatives to sport, alternatives that might emphasize inclusiveness (over orthodox masculinity for example), engage physical activity across the lifespan and that work on building co-operative relationships (Messner and Musto, 2014), as opposed to the ‘brutal economy’ (Pronger, 1999) of elite sports. I am hoping that my research can lead to a better understanding of institutionalized youth sport (Messner and Musto, 2014)

Although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide a detailed analysis of youth athletes’ rights in sports, it is worth noting the limited research on child athlete protection (Donnelly, 1993, 1997; Kerr, 2010; Stirling and Kerr, 2009). This is concerning as evidence of child sexual, emotional and physical harassment and abuse in sport has grown over the years (Brackenridge, 2001; Brackenridge and Kirby, 1997; Eliasson, 2015). Speaking in the Canadian context, academic and public attention did not focus on athlete abuse until the mid-1990’s when there was a heightened awareness of a series of high-profile cases of (child) athlete sexual abuse (most notably, that of professional hockey player, Sheldon Kennedy) (Donnelly et al., 2014). Despite this, studies have shown that sport organizations are not sufficiently prepared to address both preventive measures and processes for tackling athlete mistreatment. For example, Donnelly et al., (2014) found a large majority of (Canadian) National Sport Organizations (NSOs) and Provincial Sport Organizations (PSOs), are falling short of the minimum requirements for athlete protection. More specifically, their review found that only 86% of national, and 71% of provincial (Ontario), sport organizations had accessible harassment policies. Of this, only 10% of NSOs and 14% of PSOs actually had harassment officers (none of whom were arms-length from the organization), a requirement mandated by Sport Canada in 1996. Given Messner and Musto’s (2014) review regarding the silencing of children’s voices in sport, and the need to match policy to the ‘real-world’ context of sport (Donaldson, Leggett and Finch, 2011; Donnelly et al., 2014; Eliasson, 2015), what questions might this raise about athlete welfare, and its significance to child development and well-being? More specifically, as new markets and corporations embed themselves into sport and youth spaces, what might this mean for athlete welfare, specifically, in the context of the sports school?
and youth experiences of discourse, practices and subjectivities that are enacted in spaces such as the gym, change room, classrooms and corridors of a sports school.

In conclusion, I am persuaded by a turn towards child-based research because it has provided me with an opportunity to gain further insight into the way youth view their (sports) school worlds. Furthermore, rather than starting at a place where I compare youths’ experiences of sport in narrowly defined ways—often defined as institutionalized, rationalized and rule-bound (Messner and Musto, 2014)—I am provoked rather to ask about their specific desires and pleasures while they participate in sport. It is to a theoretically grounded account of pleasure(s), which arguably also constitutes young people’s sporting worlds, identities and sets of relations of power that I now turn.

**Youth(ful) (Dis)Pleasures and Sport**

Few studies have theoretically unpacked the concept of sport pleasure(s) (Elias and Dunning, 1986; Maguire, 1992; McKay, Gore and Kirk, 1990; Pringle, 2009; Pringle, Rinehart and Caudwell, 2015; Pronger, 1999; Wellard, 2012), and even less have considered youth sport pleasures. This is interesting since there appears to be a widespread and unquestioned belief (evidenced with specific sport, health and education policies) that playing sport and engaging in physical activity should bring the participant pleasure through its social and physical benefits (Pringle et al., 2015). Certainly, many parents believe that their children should feel the pleasure of participating and this more often than not leads to parental encouragement and endorsement of sports. In the same vein, the recent appropriation of pleasure through individual well-being—for both youth and adults alike—has become an area of interest for academics, politicians, governments, schools, health educators and sport institutions (Pringle, 2015b; Wellard, 2012). Many western neoliberal governments (e.g. Canada, United States, England, Australia, New Zealand) have promoted pleasure through sport participation as part of a biopolitical strategy to enhance citizens’ feelings of well-being and happiness. Pringle’s (2015a) examination of the connections between sport participation, subjective well-being and governmentality found shifts in policy by certain governments, who encouraged sport participation as a means to achieve happiness. Although critical of this shift, Pringle’s
examination highlights how this emphasis on happiness, pleasure and individual well-being dovetails with specific economic, social and sport development policies. Within such policies the assumption that well-being is predicated on the idea(l) of happiness and pleasure is palpable (Vernon, cited in Wellard, 2012). Yet Ereaut and Whiting (cited in Wellard, 2012, p. 23) point out that the notion of well-being is a social construct with fluid meaning determined by context, time and place:

There is no uncontested biological, spiritual, social, economic or any other kind of markers for well-being. The meaning of well-being is not fixed—it cannot be. It is a primary cultural judgement; just like ‘what makes a good life?’...How far any one view dominates will determine how stable its meaning is, so its meaning will always be shifting, though maybe more at some times than others.

Consequently, while the notion of well-being continues to be institutionalized in favour of health-related measures, the physical, emotional and social aspects of pleasure are often overlooked in the context of sport and physical activity (Wellard, 2012). Nonetheless, the academic study of pleasure in sport, and specifically, youth sport (dis)pleasures, and the recognition of its subsequent effects on youth subjectivities, corporealities and the circulation of power, has been limited (Pringle et al., 2015). As Rinehart (2015a) explains the examination of sport pleasures is particularly fruitful as it can change our social and sociological imagination (cf. Mills, 1959) while also allowing us to direct attention to certain problems in sport:

To begin to unravel ‘problems’ in sport, it may be enlightening to get back to understanding basic joy in movement, to celebrating the pleasure that physically active bodies may give us—and to understand why and for whom this pleasure works. (p. 16)

Research specifically using a pleasure lens in an attempt to understand individual subjectivity, has predominantly focused on the pleasures of so-called dangerous or deviant extreme sports (e.g., Atkinson, 2009, 2010; Donnelly, 2004; Fletcher, 2008; Pringle, 2009). These studies are interested in the growing number of individuals who seek out risk and derive pleasures from partaking in such endeavours. Atkinson’s (2009) study on the physical culture of free running (parkour) detailed how the participants involved in this post-sport derived pleasure in the subversion of modernist ideologies underpinned by the desire to explore the parameters of the self through limit experiences.
It is through their subversion of neoliberal ideologies that free running ‘traceurs’ (Atkinson, 2009; p. 169) come to a collective desire for self-reflexivity predicated on ludic exploration of the everyday self. This type of pleasure and desire – to engage in or discover a sensuous self—however may be quite different than the pleasures that are to be found in more mainstream sports cultures where reflecting on ludic exploration of the everyday self are typically suppressed. In his work with rugby players, Pringle (2009) examined the social construction of rugby participation pleasures. His results illustrate that players’ negotiation of the vague boundaries between pleasure and pain, confidence and fear, and well-being and injury shaped their subjectivities, desire to play and enhanced feelings of social connectedness. The negotiation of the fine line between such boundaries, is assumed by Pringle, to highlight how sport pleasures can be understood, in the Foucauldian sense, as productive forces, “constituting desiring sport subjects and the contemporary shape and social significance of sport” (p. 229). Thus, in both cases, social context plays a significant role in how individuals come to understand their sport pleasures and (displeasures) as well as how they experience their bodies in relation to such pleasures compared to more conventional understandings of pleasure as a unidimensional, untroubled and non-productive state (Rinehart, 2015a; Wellard, 2012).

The work of Atkinson (2009) and Pringle (2009) illustrate how, the kinetic and corporeal pleasures derived from participation in sport, whether that is realized via participation in post-sport subcultures or more traditional sport, is often multiple and contradictory. Similar to Pringle (2009), my own experiences as an athlete reveal the interplay of the body (e.g. sweat/pain/skill), psychology (e.g. focus/determination) and the socio-cultural context (e.g. women’s competitive ice hockey), in the production and subjective experience of my sporting pleasures (and displeasures)—all of which have played a role in my continued participation in sport. In this sense, the pleasure(s) that I derive from sport may be understood as productive as they are related to my desires to keep participating (Pringle, 2015b). This parallel/multiple/dual nature of pleasure experienced in sport, as Pringle (2015b, p. 47) explains “is produced by the creation of balanced tensions that do not have the same risks associated with other life situations yet can still evoke anxiety, pain, despair and euphoria”. The apparent paradox of finding pleasure in sport, as Elias and Dunning might suggest, lies in the tension that exists
between the pleasure(s) one feels while participating in sport often taking place within controlled contexts. Sport pleasure(s) do not necessarily have to be selfish and hedonistic, and many youth, may in fact, enjoy sport within the confines of neoliberal biopedagogical contexts and may only experience their participation as desire and pleasure. As Donnelly (2004) explains, although some individuals may participate in post-sport or more traditional iterations of sport as a form of reaction to (neoliberal) life stressors, such explanation may not hold true for everyone. For Pronger (2002, p. 66), the social constructions that are imposed on subjective and bodily pleasures in sport place limits upon the way we think of, and about the body, and impede the potential or ‘puissance’ to be found in (bodily) pleasures which exist outside the boundaries of traditional thinking (Wellard, 2012). For some individuals, and specifically youth who attend sports schools, their sport pleasures (whether productive or unproductive) may, in fact, be found within the confines of the very disciplinary and governed spaces they play in. Thus, if pleasure is a raison d’etre of a well-lived life, researchers must pay attention to the constructions and productions of pleasure and desire through neoliberal discourses and practices, as well as through resistance to these discourses and practices (Pronger, 2002). As Pringle (2009, p. 213) contends:

One of the many unintended outcomes of the human search for pleasure, or the productive result of desire, is the contemporary political, economic and social significance of sport. Pleasure, more broadly, can be understood as a prime existential project, an organizing principle of social life, and a productive force in the constitution of desiring sport subjects.

Taken in this light, the broader project of understanding pleasure in physical activity and sport, particularly for youth, cannot simply be limited to understanding pleasure as an apparatus of neoliberal biopolitical governmentality but to exploring pleasure as discursive, enacted and embodied (Pringle et al., 2015).

Finally, as I have noted throughout this chapter, school is a significant site where Canadian youth are ‘hailed’ or interpellated, and asked to take pleasure in their transformation into active healthy citizens (MacNeill and Rail, 2010). This process might be understood as subjectivization, which Foucault has described as a process where subjectivity is constructed via experiences connected to workings of discourse, power
relations, disciplinary techniques and processes of self-negotiation (Markula and Pringle, 2006). MacNeill and Rail (2010, p. 176) explain subjectivization as a process “within which humans come to take up various subject-positions”, which offers codes regarding how one should act, behave and perform in social practices. This notion of subjectivity, proposed by Foucault, generates questions regarding how power is exercised and thus how ‘knowledge’ is constructed and what ‘knowledge’ is legitimized about health, sport and physical activity (Rail, 2009), as well as how pleasure and power are connected.

Foucault’s (1977) work, particularly his ideas about the body as the object, target and instrument of power, power as productive, and the role of desires and pleasures to create specific ‘knowledges’ and ‘truths’ (Markula and Pringle, 2006; Markula, 2003, 2004; Miller and Rose, 2008; Pringle, 2009; Pronger, 1995; Shogan, 1999) are well used in Physical Cultural Studies and sociologies of sport. Foucault’s concept of power was particularly useful for those researchers who sought out new conceptions of power beyond Marxist theories that regarded power “as a group of institutions that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state…or a system of domination exerted by one group over another…” (Foucault, 1978, p. 92-94). Instead, Foucault’s idea of power was something that circulates in all aspects of life, and by all social subjects at different times, and in different contexts. I am persuaded by this understanding of power because, as Foucault argued, I find it important to think about how various institutions and dominant individuals did not arrive at their position because they have power, but rather become significant due to the workings, and usage of, circulating discourses, or the rules of formation that shape and make vague perceptions of social reality (Markula and Pringle, 2006). If power is considered as omnipresent, circulative and is in everyone (Rail and Harvey, 1995), then it is both important to pay attention to how youth are governed in spaces like sports schools and how their exercise of power at different times and in different contexts comes to reproduce their own governance or challenges governmentality and biopedagogies, for example.

Foucault’s notion of power is relational, that is, the actions of one individual help guide the conduct of another (Foucault, 1983). Subsequently, “power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free”, whereby individuals are the primary
locus for the production of power (Foucault, 1983, p. 221). This of course is pertinent to any examination of a sports school where there are multiple and intersecting relations (student-student, teacher-student, teacher-coach, coach-athlete) that may organize and monitor conduct in different ways. Inherent within Foucault’s theorization of power, is that power is productive, and it is in the ceaseless relations between individuals where certain subjectivities, social realities and transformations are (re)produced (Markula and Pringle, 2006). For Foucault (1977), it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined, and it is in this way that power is productive because certain bodies, gestures and desires come to be identified and produced via the discursive mechanisms of power:

In a disciplinary regime, on the other hand, individualization is ‘descending’: as power becomes more anonymous and more functional, those on whom it is exercised tend to be more strongly individualized; it is exercised by surveillance rather than ceremonies, by observation rather than commemorative accounts, by comparative measures that have the ‘norm’ as the reference rather than genealogies giving ancestors as points of reference; by gaps rather than deeds…But it should not be forgotten that there existed at the same period a technique for constituting individuals as correlative elements of power and knowledge. (1977, p. 193-194)

Foucault’s point, that power passes through individuals—it is not applied to them—focuses on the body as the materiality on which power operates and through which it functions (Markula and Pringle, 2006). His work has been useful to me because it provides a detailed analysis of the micropolitical regulations of the body via specific disciplinary techniques that pervade social life. Specifically, this helps me think about people’s bodies in a place like a sports school, and how they might be influenced by discursive and disciplinary practices. It is through disciplinary techniques, such as the use of hierarchical observation, timetables, and systems of rank that the body became “the object and target of power” (Foucault, 1977, p. 136) in a manner that trained and shaped individuals as docile bodies, which are economically and politically obedient bodies (Butler, 1997; Markula and Pringle, 2006; Miller and Rose, 2008). Particularly pertinent to me is Shogan’s (1999) examination of how disciplinary technologies shape desires, pleasures and actions within high-performance sport. She provides an in-depth analysis of the technologies that go into the ‘making’ of high-performance athletes in elite sport
while, at the same time, encouraging scholars to pay attention to how athletes confront these technologies and discourses in the construction of identities (Shogan, 1999).

While Foucault was a theorist of power, he also theorized the multiple forms of resistance because as he (1987, p. 12) explains “if there was no possibility of resistance—of violent resistance, of escape, of use, of strategies that reverse the situation—there would be no relations of power”. This resistance is part of the productive effects of power and can be linked to desire for alternative understandings of reality and power.

Extending the idea of resistance, pleasure(s) and desire in sports, Pronger (1999, 2002) calls on Deleuze and Guattari (1987), who, in much of the same way as Foucault discuss the potentiality of power, regarded desire, not as lack but as the “productive energy, the power of human being/becoming/actuality” (Pronger, 2002; p. 379). Understood in this way, desire moves beyond its association with sex, to one that constitutes the “life force by which we move, by which we are being or becoming at all” (Pronger, 2002, p. 379). Thus, to regard desire (and pleasure), as enabling forces allows one to explore how they might play a role in constituting the social life of schools. Indeed, Pronger’s (1999) article entitled Outta My Endzone theorizes the “sociocultural organization of desire and the libidinal economies of bodily interactions” (p. 375) of competitive sport: it is important to my examinations of the constitution of desire in and through competitive sport in sports schools.

Pronger was not a great fan of mainstream competitive sport and saw it as limiting to the body’s potentiality. Indeed, he regarded sport as a technological discourse and practice that exploits and limits the fullness of the body’s potential. Extending Heidegger’s (1938) account of technology, which reveals the essence of modern technology in the production of beings as objects, Pronger (2002) problematizes physical fitness (and sport) as a modernist technological approach to life. He draws on Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) two senses of power which “looks at its energy both as puissance, which is capable of transcendence…and as pouvoir, available to exploitation by modern technological approaches” such as the technology of physical fitness (p. 55). Pronger’s work has been particularly influential in my understanding of subjectivity and pleasure(s)
and plays a key role in my examinations of the sports school. Pronger believes that the kinds of social and cultural constructions that are imposed on subjective and bodily pleasure in sport impede the potential or puissance to be found in (bodily) pleasures (Wellard, 2012). In contrast, the controlled channelling and re-sourcing of the body, referred to as pouvoir, territorializes the body in ways that are productive to neoliberal governmentalities and biopedagogies. In the context of a sports school, the forces of pouvoir may be hard at work but this is in constant interplay with puissance. Pronger (2002, p. 67-68) states:

puissance is not the opposite of pouvoir; it is a resource for the governmentality of pouvoir. Pouvoir has no power without puissance, whereas puissance does have power without pouvoir…and in that process of coming to presence lies the potential both to construct and deconstruct cultural content.

Furthermore, Pronger (2002, p. 233) explains that while analysing desire, particularly within restrictive domains, such as sport:

The point is to attend to puissance and to let *it* play freely, to let the in-itself of puissance simply happen. This does not mean abandoning modernity and the technologies that appear to be indispensable for most humans now, but it involves living and seeing through the pouvoir of technology to realize puissance.

Such an approach to understanding pleasures and desires in sport begins with the opening of resistance to the technologization of the body from *within* hegemonic discourses that often work to silence such possibilities (Pronger, 2002). He concludes that understanding specific sport pleasures requires us to live “within body fascism while being less of it” (Pronger, 2002, p. 233). These conceptions of desire and pleasures, as theorized by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), and extended by Pronger (2002), provide me with a framework for analysis for my research because they enable me to theorize resistance and sporting pleasures as productive, as the force that underpins the production of actions, relations, subjectivities and ways of living (Pringle et al., 2015) in a school space that is often understood as a neoliberalist and biopedagogically enframed place.

As such, I must also consider the agentic and resistive practices of youth in their negotiation of school-based sport and physical activity practices, which can “shape the ‘somebodies’ young women and men are invited to become” (O’Flynn, 2010, p. 444).
While many youth are called to restrictive normative subject positions, many young people’s constructions of health, identity and the body are diverse and, at times, contradictory (MacNeill and Rail, 2010). As youth come to be subjected to various discursive positions, which may have material effects on their bodies, relationships and communities (MacNeill and Rail, 2010), these subject positions are often understood and experienced differently by young people in different social, cultural and physical locations (Burrows and McCormack, 2011). As George and Rail (2006, as cited in Rail, 2009, p.144) explain, “identity is dynamic and multiple [and] is negotiated in relation to various sets of meanings and practices that youth draw on as they participate in the bodily and wider culture and come to understand who they are”. Although many youth may largely adopt dominant discourses of health and the body, they may also exercise agency and reflect critically on social processes (Beausoleil 2009).

The subjectification of youth is a complex and negotiated process; youth often negotiate oppositional understandings of corporeality, embodiment and self (MacNeill and Rail, 2010). In this sense, identity is not simply the outcome of individuals taking up various subject-positions inside and outside of dominant and limited subject positions. Instead, as Rail (2009) argues, identity involves a notion of performativity (Butler, 1990): a constant re-experiencing of fluid meanings associated with such identities associated with gender, sexuality, race, dis/ability, ethnicity, or even athlete, (un)healthy, physically (in)active etc. that are already socially established.

**Conclusion**

I have demonstrated through my review of literatures that the topic of sports schools and subjectivities and bodies, is highly dynamic and complex. Taken together, public policy approaches to sport in Canadian society and the shifting place of physical education in Ontario schools, provides a framework within which I have come to understand how the nexus of sport, health and education policy impacts on youth, and, more specifically on (elite) student-athletes. The explicit goals of promoting excellence and enhancing participation in sport, laid out by the most current *Canadian Sport Policy, 2012* document, highlights the Canadian government’s desire to increase both the number of youth actively involved in sport and the pool of developing Canadian athletes to draw
from for its elite programs. As I discussed in the second section of this chapter, the push for more youth involvement in sport, in part, has appeared to be driven by health concerns about inactive youth and rising obesity levels. This signals a neoliberal commitment to health and the body, via physical activity, where youth are encouraged to take responsibility for their own health/bodies, which, of course, has impacted on the delivery of physical education and sport spaces in Ontario schools. Healthism and neoliberal health discourses continue to permeate new public health strategies, education policy and sport policy aimed at youth (Fusco, 2012; MacNeill and Rail, 2010; Wright and Harwood, 2009), and may be (in)directly related to the development of Canadian sports schools. Taken together, the literatures identify how the propagation of sport in schools in Canada might be thought of as at the nexus of concerns over physicality, sport performance, health and youth, as well as the valorization of privatization, accountability and freedom of choice for youth schooling. In order to address the abstract policy and theory approaches in which children and youth are absent, I turned to the sociology of childhood literature and have ‘put the child back in’ in order to help me think about the ways in which youth might themselves create and understand their own (sport) worlds as constituted through their subjective sport pleasures. An understanding of desire and pleasure as both constrained (by biopedagogical forces of governmentality and discipline) and enabling (as the force that underpins the production of actions, relations, subjectivities and ways of living) (Pringle et al., 2015), are key to my examinations of the (re)production of power and desire that may operate in the space of a sports school. Ultimately, the literature I reviewed provoked me to consider what has been written about, and what gaps remain in the already extensive literatures on youth sport policy, children and youth’s bodies, and neoliberal governmentality in sport. I believe that my taking up of the sports school as a biopedagogical site in conjunction with my turn towards concepts of pleasure and desire in youth sport (and in the context of a sports school) is timely and fills a gap in the literature and makes my research unique and well placed to extend the literatures across interdisciplinary fields of study. In Chapter 3, Methodology, I illustrate how the theories I have taken up in this chapter have influenced the methodological choices I made in the field in order to extrapolate the connections among bodies, discourses and the workings of power and pleasure(s) in a sports school.
Chapter 3
Methodology

The aim of my research project was to trace and understand how power, pleasure(s) and desires are enacted in the making of elite student-athletes in a sports school. Given that there is limited scholarly research in this area, my study was largely exploratory; it remained flexible and open as I engaged in multi-method approaches to data collection in order to develop an understanding of the social world and actualities of the lives of those involved in this specific institutional process. The many methodological practices I employed for this research can be described as a ‘bricolage’—that is, I aimed to use multiple voices, different texts and ongoing participant observation to bring together a story about the physical culture of a sports school in distinctive and productive ways. Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p.5) explain the qualitative research process as inherently multi-method in focus: “The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to any inquiry”. What this meant for me, as qualitative researcher, was learning how to be creative and adept at gathering and interpreting data from a variety of sources.

Following Denzin and Lincoln’s (2011) conceptualization of the methodological practice as a bricolage approach to data collection, and working from/within multiple methodological practices, I wanted to draw upon diverse data sources to weave together a snapshot of the practices and complex realities of daily life of a sports school. To do so, I first engaged in an institutional and spatial ethnography of the sports school to understand the space and the day-to-day lives of individuals in this space and to explore their (dis)connections to/from the institutional relations therein. To supplement my time in the

19 I am aware of the tensions inherent in mixed methods design, such as the possibility of contradictory data arising from each method (see Gibson, 2012 for a discussion of the underlying tensions in mixed methods design). I did feel some of this tension when analyzing my data and the contradiction in findings between data sources. However, this was the crux of my research; contradictory data highlighted the nuanced nature of my topic of study and the complexity of understanding the political, social, cultural and historical underpinnings of a sports school.
field, and to further explore how this particular institutional space could be analysed through socio-institutional narratives, as well as textually mediated practices, I engaged in a critical analysis of various institutional documents (e.g., Sport Canada’s *Canadian Sport Policy 2012*, *Hillcrest Collegiate* Information Package, and *Hillcrest Collegiate* Student/Parent Handbook). Furthermore, after situating myself as researcher and participant in the sports school for a few months, I believed that interviewing various stakeholders involved in this setting (e.g. student-athletes, teachers, coaches, trainers, administrators) would help me gain a deeper understanding of the social space of the school and people’s interpretations of everyday experiences, pleasures, social relations and the institutionalized forms of work (see Smith, 2005) and play that take place there. Overall, the multiple sources from which this story is created, and the ongoing process of meaning-making via several forms of analysis, I believe, has helped create a deeper understanding of the everyday organization, teaching, coaching and desires(s) for success that are constrained/enacted in this sports school.

The following chapter provides a summary of the research I undertook in a sports school in Toronto, Ontario over a period of six months. I first offer a critical discussion of the methodologies I used for this process. Next, I describe the major sources of data collection I engaged in and provide a detailed description of the research site. Finally, I conclude with a reflective piece of my time as neophyte ethnographer detailing what I term three reflective starting points to describe the multiplicity of my experiential process both in and out of the field. In doing so, I situate this research in broader debates about the process of ‘actually doing’ ethnographic research, and the taken-for-granted assumptions therein, trying to bring to life the ethnographic process and the complex situations qualitative researchers in the field may find themselves.

**The Methodology of Institutional Ethnography (IE)**

The aim of the sociology we call “institutional ethnography” is to reorganize the social relations of knowledge of the social so that people can take that knowledge up as an extension of our ordinary knowledge of the local actualities of our lives. (Smith, 2005, p. 29)

Developed and named by Canadian sociologist Dorothy Smith (1987, 1999, 2005, 2006), institutional ethnography (IE), as a method of sociological inquiry, begins in the
actualities of the lives of those involved in the institutional process focusing on forms of social coordination as they occur in people’s everyday activities (Dale, 2013; DeVault, 2006; Smith 2005, 2006). This fundamental link between the particularity of people’s lived experiences and how these actualities are embedded in the social relations of the society in which we live is the ground of inquiry that IE sets out to explore (Campbell and Gregor, 2002; Griffith, 1995). Inherent in this methodology is the grounding of inquiry “in the ongoing activities of actual individuals” (Smith, 1999, p. 232). Ostensibly, a central component of IE is an ontology that views the social as materially constituted in the practices and activities of people as they are organized via different social relations (DeVault and McCoy, 2002; Smith, 1999). This kind of ontology differs from other empirical approaches to sociology because it purports to look at social life in terms of how it is actually organized (Smith, 1999). To do so requires the ethnographer to know the world, and the institutional process under sociological investigation, from inside its social organization. As Mykhalovskiy and McCoy (2002) explain, IE as methodology is similar to other forms of ethnography in its concern to produce detailed descriptions of social phenomena, but differs from other ethnographic research focused on empirical investigations of ‘experience’ and/or ‘culture’. Instead, IE is concerned with addressing processes of social organization. As a researcher taking up IE as methodology, I needed to pay attention to exploring and describing various social and institutional forces that shape, constrain and organize people’s actual everyday worlds20 (Mykhalovskiy and McCoy, 2002).

Inquiry into the ‘problematic’ of the everyday world (Smith 2005, 2006) in an effort to understand social relations (DeVault and McCoy, 2002) has been empirically used to investigate the social organization of health care (see Mykhalovskiy 2000); education (see Griffith, 1995); and sexual regulation (see Walker, 1995). These projects contribute to a larger picture of the variety of ways and contexts in which Smith’s methodology can be taken up. Quite surprisingly, however, to date, very few sport and physical cultural researchers have explored the potential of IE in their work (Atkinson,

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20 What is meant by the everyday world is the material context of each embodied subject (DeVault and McCoy, 2002).
That said, taking up IE in sport and Physical Cultural Studies will help researchers interested in the social organization of lived experience realize an alternative form of knowledge of the social in which people’s own knowledge of the world and of their everyday practices are connected to social relations and institutional orders in which we participate (Smith, 2005). To further explain Smith’s IE methodological approach it is important for me to discuss certain particularities relating to this methodology. To do so, I proceed to unpack the idea of using everyday experience as a lens to examine social relations and social institutions to discover how forms of organizing power and agency rely on, determine, enable and/or constrain everyday activities.

*(Gendered) Standpoint and Ruling Relations*

The methodological approach that Smith has taken in developing an alternative sociology began within a feminist tradition or from the position of women’s standpoint. Along these lines, IE grew out of a tension between what women knew to be their experience and the forms of its social expression (Smith, 1987). As such, Smith takes up women’s standpoint not as a final form of knowledge, but as knowledge in experience from the standpoint of the subject—that of subject as knowers and actors (Smith 1999, 2006). A sociology for women therefore does not reduce the subject into an object of study or use conceptual methods that remove the active presence of subjects. In one of Smith’s earlier works, *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*, she explains how IE, its methods, and analytic procedures, must preserve the presence of the active subject:

For actual subjects situated in the actualities of their everyday worlds, a sociology for women offers an understanding of how those worlds are organized and determined by social relations immanent in and extending beyond them…A sociology of women must [therefore] be conscious of its necessary indexicality and hence that its meaning remains to be completed by a reader who is situated just as she is – a particular woman reading somewhere at a particular time amid

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21 While, from the beginning, Smith has been writing about doing IE as a method of research from women’s standpoint in the local actualities of the everyday world, the methods and framework she has devised support inquiry from any standpoint in daily life.
Standpoint understood as the subject position in IE creates a point of entry to discover the social that does not subordinate the knowing subject to objectified forms of knowledge (Smith, 2006). Instead, as a method of inquiry it works from the actualities of people’s everyday lives to understand the social beyond experience (Smith, 2006). A critical feature of IE is its analysis of ruling relations or processes that objectify people’s lives (Mykhalovskiy and McCoy, 2002). Given this, a standpoint in the everyday world is the basis for ways of knowing developed in a ruling apparatus (Smith, 1990). These ruling relations can be found in the familiar – government, professions, education—as well as in textually mediated discourses that coordinate such complexes:

They are those forms that we know as bureaucracy, administration, management, professional organization, and the media. They include also the complex of discourses, scientific, technical and cultural, that intersect, interpenetrate, and coordinate the multiple sites of ruling. (Smith, 1990, p. 6)

Further, for Smith, the concept of ruling relations (Smith, 1987, 1999) does not refer to modes of domination, but to modes of organizing life in particular ways that came into prominence during the late nineteenth century in Europe and North America (Smith, 2005). Growing at this time was the widespread access to words from beyond those spoken locally. Taking this trajectory of ruling relations, such modes of ruling have obscured the experiencing subject, and have coordinated varied sites of power changing relations among men and women where women found themselves outside or subordinate to the ruling apparatus (Smith, 1990, 2006). It has been from the exclusion of women as subjects from relations of discourse and ruling that situate Smith’s formulation of women’s standpoint.

Although IE as a methodological approach began within a feminist framework reflecting on the division Smith experienced in her own working life as a woman, it is not simply an ethnography based on an essentialist view of one group, such as women (Dale,

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22 To explain how particular modes of organizing life came into distinction during this time, Smith (2005) uses the example of the availability of the Bible as printed text. The Bible printed in the vernacular, and, thus, readable by people without the facilitation of priests, altered not only the substance, but also the organization of Christianity.
2013). Instead, Smith is careful to explain that particular groups are marginalized and excluded from generating specific (cultural, political, and intellectual) knowledge(s). A central feature of ruling practice in contemporary society that continues to exclude particular groups from specific knowledge is its reliance on (Western) text-based discourses and forms of knowledge (DeVault and McCoy, 2002). If, as Smith (1990) explains, we begin our ethnographic inquiry where people are actually located outside texts, we are delving into unpacking the particularities of an actual everyday world.

Building on the concept of ruling relations, Smith’s understanding of institution does not refer to a bounded organizational space as might be suggested by doing a ‘school’ ethnography (Mykhalovskiy and McCoy, 2002); but rather it is meant to draw the ethnographer’s attention to a complex of ruling relations (Mykhalovskiy and McCoy, 2002). Ostensibly, institution, in this usage, refers to the several activities of individuals, organization, professional associations, and the discourses they produce and circulate that are organized around specific ruling functions such as education (DeVault and McCoy, 2002; Mykhalovskiy and McCoy, 2002). For example, when the sports school is considered an institution in this kind of context, what comes into view is a vast interconnection of coordinated work processes and courses of action – not only within the site of the school, but in sites as diverse as sports institutions, government ministries and departments (such as public health and education departments) and mass media (advertising and information texts supplied by the school). As such, IE explores how the day-to-day lives of individuals (dis)connect to/from institutional relations and take into account how the specific experiences of individuals in particular local (institutional) settings is coordinated with, and organized by, work knowledge or practices and points of connection with other sites and courses of action (Mykhalovskiy and McCoy, 2002; Mykhalovskiy and McCoy, 2002).

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23 Smith (2005, p. 151) describes two aspects of what she delineates work knowledge:

1. A person’s experience of and in their own work, what they do, how they do it, and how they think and feel; and

2. Coordination of an individual’s work with the work of others.

Ostensibly, for institutional ethnographers, work is used to signify anything done by people that takes time and effort, that they mean to do and is done under definite conditions (Smith, 2005). Work is intentional and discussing it in this way incorporates the individual’s subjectivity and his/her experience. Further, the concept of work and work knowledge, understood by institutional ethnography, positions the researcher to learn from and gain insight into people’s everyday experiences; into what they do, how their work and lives are organized, and how they feel (Smith, 2005).
Smith, 2001). In other words, institutional ethnographers take as their entry point of study the experiences of specific people whose everyday worlds are “hooked into, shaped by, and constituent of the institutional relations under exploration” (DeVault and McCoy, 2002, p. 753). Moving ethnography beyond the local is made possible by this approach through an understanding and analysis of the work knowledges of participants (Smith, 2003) and through the inclusion of the functions of text into ethnographic practice (Smith, 2001). Generally, it is people’s experience of their everyday worlds that sets the problematics of the study as the first step of ethnographic inquiry into the institutional relations in which people’s everyday lives are inserted (Smith, 2005).

**Experience and the Everyday World as Problematic**

As noted above, institutional ethnography, as a method of inquiry, is concerned with constituting the textuality of social phenomena that begins with the everyday experiences of those individuals related to a specific (ongoing) process (Smith, 1999, 2005). This constitutes the problematic of the study, or a particular problematic, that is being lived by someone in the everyday world (Campbell and Gregor, 2002). The concept of the problematic makes it possible for the researcher to begin to identify an experience or area of everyday practice that is taken up as experience to be explored (DeVault and McCoy, 2002). For Smith, the concept of the problematic:

> Makes it possible to differentiate clearly between, on the one hand, the actual properties of the everyday/every night worlds of our contemporary societies that are never self-subsisting but always tied in multiple ways to complexes of relations beyond them and, on the other, making that actual organization the problematic of inquiry that tracks from people’s experiences of the local actualities of their living into the relations present in and organizing but at best only partially visible within them. (2005, p. 39)

In other words, the general problematic of institutional ethnography takes the everyday world as always in flux, never static, but an always changing and unfinished field of discovery in which social relations are to be explored (Smith, 2005). Taking the everyday world as problematic does not, however, refer to problems as individuals of a setting might explain them or refer to the problems or issues the researcher may be motivated to want to take up in his/her own work (Campbell and Gregor, 2002; Smith, 2005). In fact, throughout her work Smith is quite clear in her cautions against this
approach. Instead, the concept of identifying the problematic as an institutional ethnographer is meant to direct attention to a possible set of questions that are yet to be formed by the researcher but are located in the ordinary doings and language that make up the actualities of the experienced world and people’s everyday lives (Smith, 1987; Smith 2005). Taking the idea of exploring experience(s) to provide the starting place to identify the problematic, I began my inquiry observing the institutional space of the sports school and then moved on to the experiences of those people (student-athletes, teachers, coaches, trainers, administrators) who attend and work in a particular sports school. From here, using institutional ethnography as my method of inquiry, I went on to investigate the institutional processes that are shaping that experience via my exploration of the organizations and institutions that connect to the sports school. To that end, I began with a number of research questions going in to the site:

- How is the space of Canadian sports schools experienced by student-athletes, coaches and teachers?
- What kind of physical cultures are enabled and/or constrained in these spaces?
  - How do discourses about the body, sport and health circulate in these schools?
- What (if any) alternative pedagogies are apparent in these schools?
- In what ways does the school landscape mediate performance excellence?

Although the above research questions framed a large part of my study, additional research questions began to surface following my observations in the school that were ‘located in the everyday doings’ (Smith, 2005) of the people in this space:

- How significant is pleasure(s) to the construction of experience/identities and ongoing sets of power relations in this space?
  - How is the interlocking nature of power and pleasure apparent in discursive, enacted and embodied relations?

For the institutional ethnographer, taking the everyday world as problematic to locate the starting point of inquiry anchors ethnography in people’s actual experience and creates a problem of exploration (Smith, 2005). As I discuss in further detail later in this chapter,
this particular practice of exploration, as ethnographer, for me began with becoming familiar with the actualities that Smith writes about throughout her various works (Campbell and Gregor, 2002).

Although this form of ethnography may begin by exploring the experiences of those directly involved in the institutional setting, they are not the object of inquiry (Smith, 2005). Instead, it is the aspects of the institution relevant to the people’s experience that constitute the object of inquiry (Smith, 2005). Taking this into account, then, exploration for the institutional ethnographer may begin with talking to those individuals whose everyday experiences and participation in an institutional process are of concern. Inquiry sets out from there; exploring with people their experience of what is happening to them and learning how the institutional process, along with their experiences and doings, are connected beyond their everyday (Smith, 2005). In this type of ethnography, one beginning in experience, it is people’s experiences which ostensibly sets the problematic of the study leading inquiry to move into the institutional relations in which people’s everyday actualities and lives are embedded (Smith, 2005). Research is then moved beyond the local to learn more about the social organization that governs the local setting.

While a standpoint beginning in people’s everyday experiences is an important source of meaning about the institutional practices at work in the actualities of people’s lives, this is not the only one. Although much of what young people, in particular, learn about their bodies and identities in a place like school occurs through official institutional

24 It is worth noting, the purpose of institutional ethnography is to explore everyday life, not theorize it (Campbell and Gregor, 2002). Of course, my assumptions about everyday life and how it works reflects the theory on which this research project is based. Given the institutional requirements of graduate students where theory is embedded into the research process at an early stage (i.e., comprehensive examinations and research proposal defence), the choice of how I established a problematic for this particular study has been influenced by these (institutional) requirements and expectations. To some extent, before setting out and determining my method of inquiry for this project, I was already working with a theorized view of education and sport, as well as youth’s (moving) bodies and subjectivities, which may have positioned me to hear my interview subjects’ stories in a particular way. To that end, I aimed to focus my attention on social relations, as opposed to individual actions. My choice of how to establish a problematic for this particular study relied on my belief that social life is socially organized (Campbell and Gregor, 2002), and that it would be useful to describe and unpack the socially organized features of the institutional setting of a sports schools, including in what way(s) ruling practices are involved and continuously circulating in this space.
texts and policies, perhaps as much is learned through ‘unofficial cultures’ or practices, and spaces, that are not officially sanctioned or recognized (Allen, 2013, Dillabough and Kennelly, 2010; Raby, 2012). Indeed, as Allen (2013) explains, the unofficial cultures and spaces of schooling may impact how young people’s bodies and identities are spatially and materially (re)produced and read. Given this, as part of my methodological frame, and in conjunction with institutional ethnography, I employed a spatial ethnographic method to this research to unpack the spatial(izing) aspects of institutional discourse and discursive practices as they operate and circulate within the sports school.

**Spatial Ethnography**

Space is at once result and cause, product and producer; it is also a stake, the locus of projects and actions deployed as part of specific strategies, and hence also the object of wagers on the future—wagers which are articulated, if never completely. (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 142-143)

Thinking about space, and its intimate ties with biopedagogies (Fusco and McKeever, 2015) and the political, practical and epistemological concerns of postmodern conceptions of space — particularly questioning what is (re)produced in specific spaces — for me requires an engagement with social and cultural geography (Crang and Thrift, 2000). Space can be considered a significant element of theory, with a history that is bound up in ways of knowing and creating different objects of knowledge (Crang and Thrift, 2000). As Henri Lefebvre (1991) explains in *The Production of Space*, social space works as a tool for analysing the social actions of individual and collective subjects. From this point of view, Lefebvre draws together two concepts that have effectively been inseparable, space and everyday life, explaining that social relations produce space while simultaneously being produced by space (Buchanan, 2005; Friedman and van Ingen, 2011; Lefebvre, 1991). Building on Lefebvre’s idea of the inseparable relationship between space and everyday life, and connecting this to the material and symbolic constitution of space, human geographers, Dewsbury and Thrift (2005), understand space as a relative, but active term. Space, then, does not simply evolve and exist separately from the subjects who imagine and use them, but is rather a social construct where the subjects involved in that space are actively creating and modifying it as they go along (Friedman and van Ingen, 2011; Fusco, 2005; Razack,
To reiterate, social and spatial relations are never static. They are inherently dynamic, and implicated in this thinking of space, not as an absolute fixed independent dimension, but as constructed out of social relations requires understanding “that the spatial is social relations stretched out” (Massey, 1994, p. 2). Since social relations are inevitably imbued with power and meaning (both material and symbolic), this view of space is located in an ever-changing geometry of power and signification. Such a way of conceptualizing the spatial implies its existence in a multiplicity of spaces: intersecting, aligning with one another or existing in relations of paradox (Massey, 1994). This is so because space and its social relations are experienced and interpreted differently by individuals holding different positions as part of it.

The idea that space is socially produced and imbued with power has not been lost among scholars of sport and physical cultures (Friedman and van Ingen, 2011; Fusco, 2005). Analyses of space have prompted sport sociologists to pay closer attention to how space influences athletes’ experiences and conceptualizations of sport spaces (Vertinsky and Bale, 2004). Sport has, to some extent, always been determined by space and has itself produced specific forms of space. Indeed, Vertinsky and Bale (2004) suggest that sport, through the operation of relations of power that construct and re-inscribe boundaries around specific sport spaces, mark belonging and exclusion, as well as the understanding of particular sporting experiences. Scholars have argued that sports spaces are highly gendered, (hetero)sexualized, classed, constructed for able-bodied individuals, and are places where dominant masculine subjects and discourses of imperialism and nationhood prevail (Fusco, 2005; Vertinsky and Bale, 2004; Whitson and Gruneau, 2006). Thus, in the context of sport sociology and Physical Cultural Studies, the (re)production of sport space should be understood as a key factor in the process of forming and transforming relations of power (Friedman and van Ingen, 2011), which have significant influence on people’s relations in space.

Certainly, Lefebvre (1991) may argue that methodologically analyzing a particular space may reduce space to an object, ultimately fetishizing and fragmenting space, not allowing for an appropriate understanding of the production of space. However, Lefebvre also remarks that while messages, codes and information may not
help trace the genesis of a space; “the fact remains [however] that an already produced space can be decoded, can be read (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 17 emphasis in original). My examination of discursive practices, bodies, and pleasures in a sports schools was not just spatial because I chose to read and analyze a particular ‘space’ and the texts, discourses and practices that (re)produce that space. Applying a spatial ethnography to my study of sports schools meant focusing on a kind of geography of subjectivities, bodies and spaces and how they were constituted in a specific place and at a particular time. Taking this into consideration, to examine how spaces are produced and appropriated requires attention to the material and symbolic constructions of space (Fusco, 2005; Razack, 2002). Implicated in the material and symbolic construction of space is the ‘spatial body’ (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 195). This notion of a ‘spatial body’ is a body conceived and produced, much like the production of a space, and is immediately subject to the determinants of that space (Lefebvre, 1991). As Razack (2002, p. 8) suggests, there is a “dialectical relationship between spaces and bodies” and it is through this relationship that “the symbolic and material work through each other to constitute space”. Here, space is a material and symbolic reality in individuals’ daily lives—it is a product of society while at the same time a significant element in the production of the social becoming socially constructed, idealized and ideological (Crang and Thrift, 2000). When the making of particular subjects in specific spaces is evoked, it is difficult to avoid the body (Nelson, 2002) because the production of space is constituted by the production of excluded and included bodies in that space (Razack, 2002). Thus, if I imagined myself as a spatial ethnographer, I needed to pay attention to what and “how bodies matter” (Butler, cited in Nelson, 2002, p. 17) in the space(s) of a sports school. As Fusco (2008, p. 167) explains:

So I turned my attention toward what bodies do, how they function, what they affect, and what they produce (Grosz, 1994, p. 170). This helped me, methodologically, to choose ways of capturing the body’s performativity (as flesh and texts) in my research. In my interviews with participants, I asked questions about their routines, their feelings and their reactions to things that they saw, felt, touched, and smelled in locker rooms. Through these questions I could get at the embodied subjectivities of locker rooms. I asked them about how the space enabled and/or constrained their bodies and about their adherence to, or disruption of, the rules and regulations of this
Their stories communicate much about space, subjectivity, privilege, normativity, and power in relation to space and the body.

Given this, as much as I was concerned with turning my attention, as Fusco (2008) notes above, towards what bodies do, I was also interested in learning how the processes of discourses as well as material and symbolic practices of high-performance sport, health and education work to (re)produce each other in such a space rather than asking what these processes actually mean.

Taking my methodology, both institutional and spatial, as a starting point for this study, the ethnography employed herein was not about tracing the genesis of sports schools in Canada, or Ontario more specifically. I wanted to explore how an already produced space is in a constant flux of (re)production and how this particular institutional space could be analyzed and read through textual (and subsequently, bodily) narratives. As I wanted to examine how the meaning of institutional practices work in the actualities of people’s lives and how space(s) were simultaneously and continuously reproduced in a sports school, I paid particular attention to social, symbolic practice(s) and context(s) (and later physical contexts). My methodology was institutional and spatial because it explored an already produced institutional space continuously at work (socially) coordinating the everyday activities of people through socio-historical and institutional narratives and textually mediated practices.

**Institutional Site and Methods of Data Collection**

Before continuing on to a description of the methods I chose to undertake this research, it is important that I describe the research site. Initially I wanted to carry out the research and collect data at a number of different sports schools, but after careful consideration, it was believed that I would probably have enough information from one site to observe the making of youth elite athletes and the institutionalized forms of work (e.g., sports participation, teaching, coaching) occurring in the sports school space. My decision to carry out my institutional ethnographic research on a private sports school was related to the fact that there is so little research on this topic in Canada, as I alluded to in my introduction and review of literature. Moreover, I wanted to interrogate what kinds of discourses and practices created the desire to produce such an institutionalized
space at this particular moment in history when there is great attention paid to the privatization of cultural and structural life (Ball, 1993; Davies and Quirke; 2005; Evans and Davies, 2015; Gard, 2015). This reflection of autonomous choice, whereby youth/parents can select and pay tuition\textsuperscript{25} for a specific sports/academic institution that best suits their child’s (sports) needs, was interesting to me because of what I had read about the sports school model, which was supposed to enhance, not constrain the body (Borggrefe and Cachay, 2012; Radtke and Coalter, 2007; Way et al., 2010; World Academy of Sport, 2013). Given the private school context, parents/guardians must be fully aware that their choice leads a particular and exact “schooling of the body” (Kirk, 1998). I was interested, then, in learning more about the desire that produces such schools as academic and sport institutions for school-aged students.

After researching a number of private sports schools\textsuperscript{26} situated in Ontario via the internet, I chose to carry out my research at/on Hillcrest Collegiate (HC)\textsuperscript{27}. My decision to carry out research at HC was partly because it was one of only a few sports schools in Ontario catering to a diversity of youth athletes through the different sports programs offered (e.g., hockey, soccer, squash etc.). According to the school’s Student/Parent Handbook its mission is to:

Further the development of student-athletes and help them become top-level performers in their sport, life-long learners and career-oriented, respectful individuals. (p. 3)

As such, given the link between people’s everyday experiences and how these actualities are embedded in the social (and discursive) relations in which we live, HC seemed like a great place to carry out an institutional ethnography in order to examine the social and institutional power relations involved in the making of (elite) youth student-athletes and the (re)production of particular subjects, one that was legitimized by the school’s

\textsuperscript{25} Tuition ranges from $15,500 to $27,000 per academic year depending on the particular sport-specific training the student-athlete is involved in.

\textsuperscript{26} A Google search with the search terms ‘private sports schools Ontario’ yielded approximately seven results although this number may be misleading.

\textsuperscript{27} The pseudonym given to the school is Hillcrest Collegiate (HC).
mission. The nature of this research depended on different stakeholders’ (i.e., student-athletes, teachers, coaches, trainers and administration staff) willing participation in the study within their school spaces. After receiving ethical approval from the University of Toronto’s Research Ethics Board (REB) on November 12th, 2014 to begin my data collection, I met with the Managing Director of HC school to talk about entry in to the research site. Initially, I contacted the school’s Managing Director via email, introduced myself, and the purpose of the proposed research (see Appendix A: School Email). Following this email, the Managing Director scheduled a face-to-face meeting to review the study protocols, questions and the data collection methods. At this meeting, I described in detail the amount of time I would like to spend in the school for observation, (and for subsequent) interviews and collection of pertinent documents. I emphasized my focus on learning more about the context of a sports school and explained that I would not be disclosing any individual or institutional identifiers. At the completion of our interview, the Managing Director expressed an interest in my research and hoped that I would gain insight into the complexities of running such an institution. In particular, the Director was quite keen on me learning more about the “awesome work” done at the school. Following the interview, I sent a follow-up email, confirming when I would attend the school and provided hard copies of: Information Letter to the School (see Appendix B); School Permission Agreement Form (see Appendix C); and Information Letter to Staff, Parents, and Students (see Appendix D). I began collecting data on January 5th 2015, and data collection took place over a period of approximately six months. I was present in the school three days a week (for 6 months) up until I finished data collection in June 2015. Formalized regular observations of academic classes, training sessions and intermittent observations of the everyday life outside of the classroom and sport setting (e.g. lunch room, class trips, staff outings etc.) provided me with an intimate glimpse of the practices occurring within the school environment. Also, the general infrastructure of the school enabled me to move about and observe student-athletes, teachers, coaches/trainers and administrative staff within the school’s hallways, gym facilities, cafeteria, ice rinks, and soccer fields. Although an ethnography of the sports school did not allow me, as a researcher, to be completely immersed in all aspects of the everyday lives of the myriad stakeholders involved in the sports school space, it
did provide me with many opportunities to explore how macro social processes affect the micro realities of individuals and spaces. Through policy analysis, observation, casual conversation, reflexive field notes, focus group interviews with student-athletes, and semi-structured interviews with teachers, coaches, trainers and administrators, I gathered a tremendous amount of discursive, material and symbolic data related to the social organization of institutional sports school space. The data collected enabled my analysis of the processes of social organization that made up the various social and institutional forces that shape, constrain and organize people’s everyday lives at *Hillcrest Collegiate*. As an institutional ethnographer, I came to know the world of the sports school from the everyday experiences of different stakeholders, and the institutional processes that shape such experiences from inside the social organization.

**Setting**

My research took place at a private sports school in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. *HC* has approximately 80-100 students\(^\text{28}\) in Grades 6-12 and is described as a place “designed to provide high-performing student-athletes a unique opportunity to learn\(^\text{29}\) and train in a state of the art facility” (Information Package, p. 3). According to the school’s mandate, *HC* provides a one of a kind place addressing the needs of high-performance athletes, by fusing education and sport, which enables student-athletes to complete their middle and high school education while continuing to train and compete in their chosen sport. Most students enrolled in the school live within the upper-middle class and working-class neighbourhood where the school is located, though some students do travel from outside of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) to attend the school. A unique feature

\(^{28}\) The number of student-athletes enrolled at *HC* is constantly in flux as the school consistently accepts new students throughout the school year and has a number of student-athletes who leave *HC* during the academic year. In conversation with a member of the administrative staff I was told the school’s retention rate is about 50%.

\(^{29}\) Although the school provides a space to learn the provincially (Ontario) mandated educational curriculum as well as training in the sport of their choice, during my time in the field, I was constantly aware that there was an overarching emphasis on sport training and excellence in athletics and not the same kind of emphasis on academics.
of the student body at *HC* is the incorporation of international students. Given the number of international students who attend the school and who are living in Toronto without family and/or friends, *HC* provides residency near the school grounds with live-in supervisors. During my ethnography of the school, there was little mention of the racial and ethno-cultural groups represented by the student body (apart from the presence of international students). My own observations indicated that the school’s population was primarily White, Canadians of Eastern/Western European origin with small numbers of other ethnicities represented. Most teachers, coaches and administrators of the school were also of white Euro-Canadian descent with the exception of three teachers and one administrator.

The school itself is approximately 10 years old, and differentiates itself from other sports schools by incorporating specialized programs designed to fit every individual student’s needs with the “goal of producing first-class academic athletes” (Information Package, p. 4). *HC* prides itself on its professional faculty—both educational and recreational—as the school hires accredited teachers who are in good standing with the Ontario College of Teachers, and coaches/trainers who have extensive experience in their respective sports, many of whom are former professional athletes. Perhaps, most notably, what sets *HC* apart from other Canadian sports schools is its emphasis on the “marketing” of players to the “right people as a means to help our athletes achieve their athletic goals” (Information Package, p. 5). *HC* provides their student-athletes a network of player agents, scouts and elite teams. In particular, *HC* encourages post-secondary applications to Canadian Interuniversity Sport (more recently U Sports) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association, recognized universities in Canada and the United States respectively. According to the institution’s information package, *HC* conducts

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30 Although I was not able to obtain any information from documentation outlining the official number of international students at the school I did learn about, and speak to, students attending *HC* from Russia, Japan, Taiwan, Egypt and China.

31 Both the Canadian Interuniversity Sport/U Sports national body, and its American counterpart, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), oversee postsecondary amateur athletics for student-athletes at their country’s various universities and/or colleges (see U Sports http://en.usports.ca/landing/index; NCAA http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/ncaa-101/what-ncaa )
informational trips to various Canadian and US universities to showcase their athletes by meeting with coaches and academic advisors giving students the opportunity to submit their “athletic resume” and “academic resume” (Information Package, p. 5). Although this is a primary function of the school’s marketing push, I did not witness this during my time spent at HC.

A typical day at HC is made up of nine daily activities shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 a.m. - 10:10 a.m.</td>
<td>HC Time – All Sports Training or Academic Recovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:10 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Snack Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Period 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:35 a.m. - 12:35 p.m.</td>
<td>Period 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:35 p.m. - 1:05 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:10 p.m. - 2:10 p.m.</td>
<td>Period 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:10 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Snack Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Period 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Athletic Fitness Session or Academic Recovery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enrollment for students at HC requires completion of an extensive application package including general student and family information, previous education, a teacher referral form, a coach referral form, a student questionnaire, an athletic questionnaire and more recently, an individual and family health history questionnaire. Once the school receives the completed application package, prospective student-athletes are invited to

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32 Many of the application packages also contained videos of the student-athletes engaged in their sport, either during a game or training session. Although videos are not a specific requirement of the application process, as HC’s Athletic Director explained, many of the student-athletes incorporated this into their application to showcase their athletic ability.
the school for a one-day introductory tour where they get to participate in classes and training. During their trial day, aptly named by the school “A Day in the Life of HC”, prospective students are matched with what HC terms “a student-ambassador” (i.e., a current HC student-athlete in the same grade who plays the same sport as the prospective student) who is responsible for guiding the future student through the everyday workings of HC. While in academic classes, the prospective student is expected to complete an educational booklet testing their knowledge in particular subject areas (e.g., math, science, English) which is later graded to determine his/her academic level and class placement. The prospective student-athlete is also expected to take part in HC’s daily physical training, both before and after the day’s classes. These ‘showcase’ events provide coaches and trainers with the opportunity, in real time, to evaluate the athletic ability of the prospective student-athlete and to determine whether he/she would be a ‘good fit’ for the school in terms of athletic skill and attitude (HC website, 2016).

HC offers a number of sport specific programs catered for student-athletes enrolled in the school, which continue during the complete length of the academic year (from September-June). These programs include training in: hockey, soccer, basketball, track and field, and squash. Student-athletes are expected to participate in two training sessions, four days a week: sport specific training in the morning; and strength and conditioning training (or athletic fitness sessions) following classes (see daily activity chart above). At each training session, both morning and afternoon, attendance is taken, and three times a year student-athletes are assessed in their sport specific training regimen as well as in strength and conditioning program. HC provides the opportunity for student-athletes to earn an Ontario Health and Physical Education credit with successful completion of physical testing and adequate attendance at training sessions over the course of the academic year.

In terms of academics, for student-athletes in grades 6-8, HC focuses on student-centered, exploratory learning to promote student engagement in the learning process (HC website, 2016). Courses offered include math, science and technology, language arts, history, geography, French and physical education (see above regarding HC’s fulfillment of the physical education credit). For student-athletes in Grades 9-12, courses
offered align with the Ontario Ministry of Education’s curriculum including, but not limited to, math, science, French, and business. High school student-athletes are also offered NCAA and CIS/U Sports guidance and are provided assistance with the post-secondary school application process, and, if needed, support with the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) preparation. All academic classes have a small student to teacher ratio with the largest classroom size observed at approximately 20:1 (Grade-Nine English class), and the smallest at approximately 5:1 (Grade-Six class). Apart from their focus on athletics, HC claims that what sets them apart from other private and public schools is the extra flexibility they offer student-athletes to help them “maximize their potential and succeed in the sport they love” (HC website, 2016). To realize this, I observed the school administrators, along with teachers, providing flexible deadlines for assignments, tests and class attendance options (e.g., if a student was away at a sport tournament they were not required to attend class, but were expected to catch up on the day’s work with their teachers and complete any homework via an online interface Edsby).

For the purpose of this study, the architectural layout and spatial design of HC proved to be fascinating as the school was undergoing renovations while I was collecting my data in the spring and early summer of 2015. They had undergone this renovation because of prior concerns regarding the aesthetic appeal of the school and the implications that had for promoting the school as a site of academic and sport excellence. The school grounds provide direct access to an arena with four large ice rinks, a basketball court, four indoor turf fields and squash facilities. The school also offers access to two larger outdoor soccer fields used during the spring and summer months. The sport specific training centres mentioned above, are not owned directly by the school, but are leased by HC. The school does however own a specific change room in the hockey arena dedicated to their boys’ elite hockey team. The change room is designed to look like a professional hockey locker room with HC’s colours and insignia on the walls and floor. The gender-segregated use of this space is apparent (i.e., no girls’ teams use this room), and marks the room as ‘male space’. Once inside the school, past the rows of student lockers, you are immediately faced with a long corridor. The corridor is a unique space in the school, and is where HC displays several trophies, photographs of past student-athletes and their sport accomplishments, newspaper and magazine clippings
about HC or past student-athletes who attended HC, and class graduation photographs. At one end of the corridor there is also a flat screen TV looping sport videos during the school day primarily showcasing HC’s male ice hockey athletes completing specific training drills. Bordering the corridor are seven classrooms that have transparent windows making the inside of each room visible to/from the corridor. Across from the corridor is the lunchroom that looks more like a small gymnasium filled with picnic benches. Food plays an integral role in the school culture of HC. The school offers a meal plan for its student-athletes with freshly made daily lunches and two snacks. Along the main wall of the lunchroom is a newly painted mural displaying the faces of various current and former student-athletes. To the left of the lunchroom lies the school’s athletic facility where students engage in their strength and conditioning routines. This is a space where all (female and male) student-athletes are expected to train together. As the summary of the school setting highlights, there is much to learn about the physical layout, culture and social formation of HC and how they might link to the body politics and identity work, produced as institutional commitments to high-performance sports. In order to interrogate this everyday world as problematic, my research had multiple components: a text analysis of policy initiatives describing the relationship between education and (elite) sport in the school setting; observations in the school; and semi-structured interviews (e.g., with administrators, coaches, trainers, teachers, and student-athletes). I will now describe these methods in detail.

**Methods for my Institutional and Spatial Ethnography**

**Text Analysis**

One line of inquiry or method that I used to gain an understanding of the development of this Ontario sports school, and the ways in which commitments to excellence, desire to achieve high-performance and pleasure in this achievement, were implicated in this process, was through an analysis of various institutional documents. This formed an important portion of my data collection as I was interested in analyzing the connection between sport, education and health policy and how such policies are taken up in the sports school. Texts are often thought of as the realization of discourse intersecting with power and governance (Foucault, 1977) and organizers of ruling relations (Smith, 2005). Taking Smith’s explanation of textual analysis as organizing...
ruling relations, she explains that the study of institutional texts, keeping in mind the core tenets of IE as methodological inquiry, enables researchers to explore not only institutional texts and their intertextual conversation, but also the activities of individuals who produce, use and take up their conceptual frames in their everyday lives:

Institutions exist in that strange magical realm in which social relations based on texts transform the local particularities of people, place, and time into standardized, generalized, and, especially, translocal forms of coordinating people’s activities. Texts perform at that key juncture between the local settings of people’s everyday worlds and the ruling relations. They come before us as something to read, watch, or listen to. (Smith, 2005, p. 101)

Exploring how texts mediate, regulate and authorize people’s activities expands the scope of ethnographic method beyond the limits of observation. Keeping in mind that an institutional ethnography is oriented by a problematic, primarily, the everyday experience of people active in an institutional context, helped me move away from thinking of texts and narratives of the sports school as existing independently from each other, and moved my analyses to focus on them as a network of intertextual relations. This meant questioning and thinking about how specific institutional texts and policies related to sport, education and health are established and legitimized as ‘true’ in their relationship with all other texts taken up in a sports school and their impact on the everyday lives of those working in that context.

Similarly, as much as texts organize the lives of individuals, the understanding, conceptualization and legitimization of particular texts also has implications for the material and symbolic constructions of space and contributes to the (re)production of

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33 Both material and symbolic constructions of space enable me to ask questions about how spaces come to be and the relationship between identity and space. To that end, I understand the material construction of space to be made of the co-constitution of bodies and space; that is the material construction of space understood as socially constructed (e.g., through the social, ideologies, technology, economics, politics etc.) that results in the physical creation of material settings in which the body is implicated and given meaning (Lefebvre, 1991). Symbolic understanding of space, on the other hand, sheds light on how different individuals construct, contest and navigate their everyday embodied experience through social interactions, relations, and actions (Lefebvre, 1991). Working together, an analysis of the material and symbolic constructions of space play a role in the identity-formation of individuals and the ongoing power relations and social formations which individuals experience on a daily basis.
subjectivities in the sports school space. As explained by Lefebvre (1991), the study of texts in relation to their (material and symbolic) construction of space, create and maintain relations of power.

To that end, although I was interested in identifying specific texts on the basis of their contribution to the production of the sports school and to the (re)production of subjectivities in this context, I was also interested in exploring texts that were related to, but did not directly mention the sports school per se. These together, I believed, established part of the institutional context for a sports school space to exist and in different ways serve as a resource that people draw into their everyday work/life processes (DeVault and McCoy, 2002). In fact, Smith (2005) suggests that there are links between discursive, textual practices and their actual presence in people’s everyday lives and activities, and, as such, how these activities are coordinated both locally and institutionally. It was important, then, to analyse texts in order to examine how people relate to and are organized by specific sport, education and health policies.

Given the significance of text-based forms of knowledge and discursive practices to social processes, including relations of ruling, and its impact on institutions, throughout this research I draw on a wide variety of texts that are closely connected with the legislating and institutionalization of health, bodies, pleasures and subjectivities. To do so, I analyzed a number of policy documents from Sport Canada and Hillcrest Collegiate. The grey literature that makes up such documents, although not explicitly involved in the (re)production of sports schools, creates a framework influencing the (re)production of desire for those who follow disciplinary ways of life and whose day-to-day lives come in to contact with it (Pronger, 2002). Specifically, I engaged in a textual

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34 Understood as an ongoing process of identity formation, subjectivity is constructed via daily experiences connected to the workings of power relations, discourse and processes of self-negotiation offering ideas on how one should perform in different social settings.
analysis of any text that I thought may have been used in the “key juncture between the local settings of people’s everyday worlds and the ruling relations” (Smith, 2005, p. 101). In addition to the institutional policy texts analyzed, I also examined other, ‘unofficial’ texts that pertained to the culture of the sports school (e.g., the school’s student and parent handbook, grading sheets used during specific training sessions). I also observed and examined what can be considered ‘official’ signage, notices, and advertisements displayed on the walls of the sports school. This set of texts was read and analyzed to illustrate the extent of a sports school institutional organization and were examined to better understand how they might affect people’s everyday activities. To that end, drawing from Foucault (1977, 1978, 1985, 1986), and following Richardson and Jensen’s (2003) analytical approach to explore the relations between language, power and space, I aimed to uncover the complexity of talk and text to understand how individuals negotiated their experience of high performance, excellence, desire and pleasure/s, in relation to the field of knowledge that surround the sports school, and the webs of social, spatial and physical culture relations in which interviewees are enmeshed (Pringle, 2009). I remained curious about how individuals were both constituted to be(come) particular subjects in this school and were constitutive of the subject positions they take up (Delhi, 2008) within particular fields of knowledge and texts (e.g., I paid attention to how texts work together to produce understandings of excellence that in turn affect the micro realities of individuals in the sports school). Thus, I focused on how words, actions, social structures, representations, imagined and performative texts “create conditions for thought, and, communication and action, and how different configurations of power and rationality shape, and are shaped by, policy processes” (Richardson and Jensen, 2003, p. 8).

To understand how texts work in the institutional space of a sports school, and how they are imbued with narratives of power impacting the everyday social processes of those people in that space, I needed to ask complex questions of the texts. For this I turned to the work of Carol Bacchi (2009) who outlines an approach to policy analysis—called ‘what’s the problem represented to be?’—explaining how researchers interested in interrogating texts, particularly institutional policies, should question its sources and how it operates by identifying the implied problem representation within the text. As she
explains:

There is an underlying assumption that policy is a good thing, that it fixes things up... The notion of ‘fixing’ carries with it an understanding that something needs to be ‘fixed’, and there is a problem... It is at this level that a ‘what’s the problem represented to be?’ approach intervenes. It makes the case that it is important to make ‘problems’ implicit in public policies explicit, and to scrutinize them closely. (Bacchi, 2009, p. x)

To accomplish the task of uncovering implied problems in policy texts, Bacchi (2009, p. xii) sets out six questions for researchers to ask of policy texts:

1. What’s the problem (of whatever subject is being discussed) represented to be in a specific policy?
2. What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the ‘problem’?
3. How has this representation of the ‘problem’ come about?
4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the ‘problem’ be thought about differently?
5. What effects are produced by this representation of the ‘problem’?
6. How/where has this representation of the ‘problem’ been produced, disseminated and defended? How could it be questioned, disrupted and displaced?

These six questions help researchers delve into understanding policy texts as implying a certain understanding of what needs to change. These problems, as explained by Bacchi, are created within, rather than existing outside the policy making process. In effect these questions help researchers unpack how particular policies give shape to specific ‘problems’ rather than addressing them. Similarly, Deleuze (1994) shares the concerns of Bacchi and is equally critical of policy texts and the ‘problem solving’ such texts purport to accomplish. He argues that we remain “slaves so long as we do not control the problems themselves, so long as we do not possess a right to the problems, to a participation in and management of the problems” (cited in Bacchi, 2009, p. xvi). Like Bacchi, Deleuze argues for researchers to shift focus onto policy texts when deciding what is posed as a problem and how it is understood.

This change in focus enables a paradigm shift for analyzing texts; one that is now centered on ‘problem questioning’ rather than ‘problem solving’ creating new ways to recognize relations of rule (Bacchi, 2009). With this in mind, using Bacchi’s six questions to understand how policy texts work in the institutional space of the sports
school provided me with a critical mode of analysis to understand policy texts, and enabled me to question taken-for-granted assumptions that are often embedded in government and ministerial policies. This form of inquiry helped to inform my data analysis, coding and identification of key themes and concepts emanating from the data. To that end, it is important to make note of the connection between both Bacchi’s ‘What’s the problem represented to be?’ and Smith’s approach to institutional ethnography. Both methods view the everyday world as problematic. For Smith this means critically analyzing various social and institutional forces that shape, constrain and organize people’s actual day-to-day lives. Similar to Smith, Bacchi’s approach to understanding texts sets out to explore how such macro social processes (encompassed in various policy initiatives) affect the micro realities of individuals. Used together in my ethnography of Hillcrest Collegiate, both Smith’s and Bacchi’s approach to text analysis, have enabled me to examine how certain policy initiatives, embedded within social contexts, play a direct role in how individuals are governed, and the framework for the production of desire and pleasure this sets up for individuals involved in this space. A focus on the (re)production of texts in this way, and their subsequent (re)production in the daily lives of those involved in the sports school, has enabled me to examine how ruling relations take place, and within that, alignments of power.

**Participant Observation**

To help me examine the everyday practices of a sports school under the framework of institutional ethnography, I believed that I should situate myself as researcher in the sports school and engage in daily observations to provide me with details and understandings of how people do the work of their part in the process (Smith, 2005). IE, like other more traditional forms of ethnographic study, such as realist ethnographies, involves the close exploration of several sources of data. For institutional ethnographers interested in investigating the social, this approach highlights the importance of connections among sites of everyday life, professional practice and policy making. One method used to unpack this connection is to focus on textually mediated social organization via analysis of specific policy documents and texts as I described above. To further understand how various social and institutional forces shape, constrain and organize people’s actual everyday worlds, institutional ethnographers are encouraged
to observe and interact with various social actors in that particular culture in order “to
learn what the culture means to its members, to grasp how it shapes members’
worldviews and life practices, and to conceptualize how cultural life is organized and
cultural mores provide maps of meaning to individuals’ everyday lives, a long-term
engagement in the field setting where particular people meet and interact daily is a
fundamental part of the ethnographic process providing the institutional ethnographer
with an important source of ethnographic data. My direct contact and experience with
members of the sports school culture over time helped me to learn about and
“sociologically capture” my participants’ everyday worlds and work in intimate, inter-
subjective detail (Atkinson, 2012, p. 26). At the same time, my ethnographic
commitment to learn from those involved in the sports school and how they go about
doing work, implicated me in this process (i.e., my knowledge of the sports school was
acquired as participant). As Atkinson explains, inherent in the notion of participant
observation is the simultaneous dual role of the ethnographer as participant in the culture
being researched and academic observer of the culture under study.

To develop an involved/detached understanding of what it is like to be a member
of a culture, the researcher becomes a participant in the life of the settings
wherein the culture operates, while also maintaining the stance of an observer,
someone who can describe the experience with a measure of what we might call
professional detachment. (Atkinson, 2012, p. 27)

Taking this into consideration, I was also socially, culturally and physically, doing the
work of those I was observing (Smith, 2005), while in the field as an observer. A few
weeks in to my research, I was aware of my body, and management of my body, in
relation to others—both student-athletes and staff—in this space. For example, while
taking part in training sessions, I was keenly aware of my performing body (being
observed) and remember thinking carefully about how I should move, where I should be,
and how I should engage my body appropriately and in ways that pushed past the
physically demanding nature of certain sessions, such as pushing myself during a strength
and fitness testing session to complete 50 military style push-ups. Through these kinds of
explicit physical experiences during my research, I was learning from my own practices
and others’ work knowledge (Smith, 2005). Furthermore, as Donnelly (2009, cited in
Giardina and Newman, 2014, p. 185) explains, “it was in and through my body that I was able to make sense of those bodies performing around me”. This illustrated for me the ongoing body politics observed during my daily accounts of sports school life, and also helped me appreciate my research participants’ understanding of bodily interactions, pleasures and experiences (Giardina and Newman, 2011). Similar to my participants’ engagement in what I call the work practices that occurred in the sports school, I was also experiencing, thinking about and feeling about how my work and (research) life was organized by the institutional space of the sports school. Thus, participation, as ethnographer, in the everyday life of the sports school helped me interrogate the institutional complex and dimensions of the institutional process.

To that end, to reflexively analyze all that I was observing in the field, both as participant and academic observer, field notes were taken throughout the ethnographic study: during/after training sessions, in classrooms, during sporting events and field trips, and/or after lunch. Most often, I was able to record more detailed notes away from the school after observation. In fact, my first three to four months in the sports school followed the same routine. For many weeks I simply observed and listened; this entailed speaking to a few students, teachers, coaches, trainers and administrators and learning how the sports school is integral to their everyday lives. This was my ethnographic work for many weeks – being in the school on a regular basis, watching everything I could and writing as many field notes as possible. Throughout my field notes I documented: informal conversations; students’ discussions; teacher/coach interactions with each other and with students; daily routines; everyday events; my feelings; and special moments.

For example, and as I elaborate in Chapter 5, Embodied Practices and Pleasure(s), in my field notes I self-reflexively noted the embodied pleasure(s) I felt participating in training while attending Hillcrest Collegiate. This feeling of implicit pleasure(s) I found in such a context, where disciplinary technologies are at play, was something quite unexpected for me, and made me think about how such feelings, in turn, can underpin the production of actions, subjectivities, relations, identities and agency of all those involved. From this time onwards, this ‘special moment’ made me think about the social significance of pleasure(s) as a productive force, which I began to see as connected to how the individuals in this school might exist in competing discourses and realities of pleasure
and power amidst the development and maintenance of neoliberal technologies. Further, my understanding of the ethnographic events I observed and subsequent tensions I believed were inherent in this process (e.g. the power relations involved with my entry as university researcher into an institution based on hierarchical ranking of individuals, the differentiation between researcher and the researched etc.) (re)presented itself in various ways during the research study. These tensions are further dissected later in this chapter under Methodological Experiences.

Finally, after situating myself as researcher and participant in the sports school for approximately six months, I believed that interviews with various stakeholders involved in this setting (e.g. student-athletes, teachers, coaches, trainers, administrators) would further enhance my understanding of the setting and their interpretations of their experiences, social relations and the (institutionalized forms of) work occurring in the sports school space.

**Interviews**

I describe the dialogue that recovers what becomes data for the institutional ethnographer as one in which the researcher evokes and consults other’s experiences. I would be seeking people who are knowledgeable about the work in the area I was investigating because they are doing it. I would be interested throughout in participants’ experiential knowledge of the work involved. (Smith, 2005, p. 148)

Given Smith’s advice above, I pursued a third line of inquiry to explore how the meaning and organization of institutional processes at work in the sports school bear on the actualities of people’s lives alongside my textually mediated and spatial analysis. This required drawing on people’s work knowledge—on what they do, on the contexts and conditions in which they complete their work, and their everyday experience of social and spatial relations (of ruling) that shape their local experiences (DeVault and McCoy, 2002; Smith, 2005). Of course, these accounts were not written accounts, but were evoked through daily informal conversations and more formalized conversations undertaken during the interview process. In institutional ethnography the use of interviews are meant to trace and uncover connections among the individuals working in a place and how they might take up different elements of the institutional complex and
related activities. The interviewers goal is thus not to reveal subjective states but to learn about the institutional nexus that shapes their locales. Taking this together, as DeVault and McCoy (2002) explain, the researcher’s purpose, using an IE approach, is not to generalize about the individuals he/she interviews, but to locate and explain social processes that have generalizing effects. In this way, although I drew on interviews conducted with participants to learn about their experiential knowledge and conceptualization of work in the sports school, I also recognized that my participants were located somewhat differently in the institutional process, and were thus subjected differently to discursive and organizational processes shaping their activities.

I conducted semi-structured interviews and focus groups with individuals who were in the sports school on a regular basis, such as student-athletes, and those who are involved in the day-to-day management of the school (e.g., teachers, coaches, trainers and administrators). I did this because Smith (2005, p. 149) states, “in drawing on people’s work knowledge, the researcher is learning from their expert and exclusive knowledge of what they do and of the contexts and conditions that complement their work”. Thus, I was interested to see how, and if, these narratives intersected with, confirmed, or contradicted the institutional texts I was analyzing. The wide selection of individuals who were involved in/with the sports school, and their commentaries, provided multiple perspectives on various work and institutional processes taking place in this space.

**Staff Recruitment:** Staff at Hillcrest Collegiate including teachers, coaches, trainers and administrative staff (such as HC’s principal, managing director and athletic director) were asked whether they would like to volunteer for one-on-one semi-structured interviews to explore their interpretations of the work and institutional processes taking place at the sports school. Staff were informed of my request to interview them at the beginning of the research study when my field observations began at HC. This proved beneficial to me, as I was able to build rapport with my participants prior to the interview process. A more formal invitation to participate in interviews was sent to staff via email, and respondents provided me with a date and time that was convenient for their interview. At the discretion of the participants, interviews were conducted in a private
space during school hours, during the lunch period, after school or before class time during teacher’s preparation period. Prior to the commencement of each interview, each participant was required to review and sign a consent form (see Appendix E for a copy of consent forms given to staff; Appendix F for parental/guardian consent forms; and Appendix G for a copy of student-athlete assent forms) outlining the study’s research ethics and protocols.

In total, 23 semi-structured interviews were conducted with staff and student-athletes, each lasting between 20-90 minutes. I conducted one-on-one interviews with: 6 teachers, 2 coaches, 2 trainers, 2 administrative staff and 8 student-athletes. As each participant had a different relationship to the sports school and the work they engaged in on a daily basis at Hillcrest Collegiate, multiple interview guides were prepared (see Appendices H, I, J and K). As I said above, while there was an interview guide, I also allowed for flexible communication and new lines of inquiry to be opened up by research participants. At times, the order of the interview questions was changed depending on whether themes were addressed before we arrived at a particular question or I used different words from those written on the page in order to clarify if the participant did not understand what I was asking or perhaps a further probe was added based on my analysis of the data, as I proceeded. All interviews were tape-recorded with the consent of each participant.

**Staff Participants:** I believe that the interviews with HC’s staff provided a deeper analysis of the sports school and gave me more insight into the complexity and dynamics of the school and as an education environment, which helped me bridge my policy analysis as institutional texts, with policy in practice. Staff participants ranged in the number of years they had worked at HC (e.g., six months to four years). Most staff had some background in a variety of competitive sports (including, hockey, soccer and gymnastics) having played youth sport; two female teachers and the principal had experience playing sport at an elite level as young adults. In fact, as all of the teachers remarked during the interview process, one of the requirements for working at Hillcrest Collegiate was to have some history of participation in competitive sport or, at the very least, an interest in competitive sport. I was able to recruit eight participants who
identified themselves as Anglo-Canadian and four participants who identified as African-Canadian and Indo-Canadian. All participants were able-bodied and none identified themselves as LGBTQ.

**Staff and Student Interviews - Semi-structured**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with staff participants to understand the complexity of the institutional processes at work in the sports school. Apart from informal conversations with staff during field observations, HC’s teachers, coaches, trainers and administrators were asked if they would like to volunteer for a one-on-one, semi-structured interview to explore their experiences and interpretations of the social organization of the sports school (institution). During the interview process with the participants, I used a pre-determined semi-structured interview guide with a set of established questions and themes (see Appendices H, I, J and K). I also allowed for flexible communication and new lines of inquiry to be opened up by research participants and myself (Berg and Lune, 2014). For example, when asking student-athletes how their bodies felt during training sessions at the school they often began to speak of the pleasure(s) they feel when engaged in hard work and pushing their body. I followed my interviewees’ train of thought and asked them to explain further how such feelings of pleasure specifically connected with their identities as student-athletes and the practices taking place at Hillcrest Collegiate. I thus approached the interview process, as one where the informant and ethnographer collaborate to create an inter-change of views for the purpose of constructing particular knowledge grounded in the individual stories of and about the sports school (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). As I was part of that collaborative process, I tried to resist the tendency to view participant’s stories as complete descriptions of social life, but rather acknowledged throughout my analysis that participants’ stories are partial perspectives of their everyday actualities in the sports school, and that they were created through the interview process because of the particular questions that I asked.

The data is always produced collaboratively. It is always shaped by and to the situation of talk or observation and under particular discursive conventions…It is a dialogue within an institutional ethnographic discourse…It is a discourse that avoids imposing interpretations and collaborates with informants—or with the
ethnographers themselves—in *discovery*. (Smith, 2005, p. 139-140)

In this research, then, I treated participant narratives (both informal and formal conversations) pertaining to the social life of the sports school as constituted within a nexus of institutionalized, intertextual and discursive fields of sport, education and health, and within the research moment with me as researcher.

**Student Interviews – Focus Groups**

The primary objective of focus group interviews is to generate rich, complex, and often, contradictory data in interactive settings. According to Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2011) the complexity of data generated from group interviews is important for the qualitative researcher because they provide accounts of how people ascribe meaning to and interpret their lived experience in relation to others. The collective nature of focus group discussions, particularly for the students involved in this study, provided them with an opportunity to share similar lived realities as well as differences with one another. Conducting interviews in group settings has the potential to afford researchers access to social-interactional dynamics that produce particular memories, positions, ideologies, practice and desires among a specific group of people (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis, 2011). In this complex interaction between participants, I was provided with the ability to see the nuanced and dynamic ways they interacted and positioned themselves in relation to one another.

In the focus groups, I took note of the importance of group dynamics and how different experiences, both individual and shared, were interpreted and used. Similarly, the way I positioned myself as researcher during the group interviews was crucial. I worked with the participants involved in the focus groups rather than on them (e.g., at appropriate times, I gently encouraged them to share their experiences, and, at other times, I interjected or back grounded my own involvement) (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis, 2011). In my field notes, I wrote:

35 Similar to Smith (2005), I view the interview process as collaborative through the process of discovery—discovery of the subject creating meaning in a particular context, with me, as researcher, interpreting this in specific ways.
Navigating group interviews is a skill in itself. At certain times, the student-athletes are eager to discuss their shared experiences with one another, and oftentimes find contradiction in what one another is saying. I find it quite interesting when the youth disagree with one another and take up these contradictions critically. This is perhaps when I enjoy being a qualitative researcher the most. Other times, however, I find myself coaxing and encouraging the youth involved in the focus group setting to share their ideas. I can tell they have much to say, but seem reluctant. (Field notes, June 17, 2015)

As the above field note excerpt illustrates, despite group interviews providing a wealth of information and generating different kinds and amounts of data that may often be difficult to create via one-on-one interviewing, focus group interviewing is not without its limitations (Fontana and Frey, 2005; Short, 2006). In some cases, a group setting may in fact impede, rather than facilitate, participants to share their experiences and ideas during group discussion. To that end, I recognize that group dynamics, the effects of interpersonal relationships between myself, as researcher, and research participants, as well as my presence during focus group interviews, informed and influenced the nature of the data collection and my research findings (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis, 2011).

**Recruitment:** Interviews with student-athletes were sought in order to examine the complex relationship among bodies, institutional space, discourses and practices and the effects of power in the (re)production of sports school spaces. Student-athletes were initially informed of the possibility of participating in focus group interviews when I was introduced at the school. A more formal invitation to participate was provided during first period classes (after a four month period), which I regularly attended. At this time, I was asked to outline why I was interested in speaking to them about the sports school. I provided them with a study information sheet (see Appendix D), an informed consent form for parents/guardians (see Appendix F) and assent form (see Appendix G). Those students who were interested in participating in a focus group interview were asked to return (parent/guardian) signed consent forms and student signed assent forms to me and suggest a time/date that they would be available to participate. Forms were not returned

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36 I also made it clear to student-athletes that if they decided to speak to me about their experiences, they could request a one-on-one interview or take part in a group interview with peers of their choosing. I hoped that this would increase their interest in the study.
to me at the same time\textsuperscript{37}, so I conducted focus group interviews with students on an ad hoc basis as the forms were returned. All youth interviews were conducted during the month of June 2015.

Focus group interviews ranged in approximately 50-70 minutes in length; in total 5 focus groups were conducted, with a total of 14 student-athletes participating. Students were given the choice of what focus group to be in and this included 3 of single-sex interviews and 2 of mixed sex interviews. A semi-structured interview guide was used during all focus group interviews (see Appendix H for a copy of the student-athlete interview guide) and all interviews were tape-recorded.

Prior to the beginning of each focus group, I outlined the nature of the research and reminded students of the content of their informed consent and assent forms, and their rights to withdraw their participation from the study at any point during the research. I outlined that their participation in the research was confidential and no one would ever know what they personally said and that a pseudonym would be used for all formal write-ups, communications and publications resulting from this study.

\textbf{Participants:} Youth participants ranged from 11-18 years of age and played a number of sports including soccer, basketball and hockey (the majority of student-athletes interviewed were hockey players). 8 female students and 14 male students were interviewed. Although my intent was to keep the recruitment criteria broad in nature, the majority of student-athletes who came forward to be interviewed were predominately White, with some participants describing themselves as ‘White of European descent’. The remaining student-athletes identified their ethnicities as Black Canadian, Asian Canadian, Jewish, Russian and Norwegian. I did not ask questions about how students identified in terms of their sexual orientation. All participants were able-bodied. Finally, all of the students interviewed had played competitive sports for a number of years (starting between the ages of four and six) and had demonstrated some desire to attend a sports school because other family members (e.g., brothers, sisters, cousins) or fellow

\textsuperscript{37} A number of teachers informed me of students’ ongoing reluctance to return school administrative forms for extra-curricular events.
teammates were already attending *Hillcrest Collegiate* or another sports school to help them ‘get to the next level’ in their sporting careers. They wanted to attend *Hillcrest Collegiate* because they want to have an advantage over other youth athletes not attending a sports school so that they could be recognized for post-secondary sport scholarships to either American or Canadian universities and/or they wanted to increase their chances of being recruited to play in professional leagues.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**

To maintain the privacy and confidentiality of data collected, I adhered to the confidentiality and privacy procedures that I had outline on my University of Toronto approved Ethical Protocol (i.e., I ensured that all information collected through field notes, photographs and interviews was kept secure from theft and unauthorized reading and analysis and that data was kept in a locked filing cabinet in my home office to which I was the sole person who had access). As per my ethical protocol, to maintain participant confidentiality, all names and identifying information, such as specific references, characteristics, situations and/or locations that may identify participants have been omitted from written notes, and pseudonyms have been assigned. Prior to the onset of each interview, participants were informed via an Informed Consent or Assent document (see Appendices E, F and G) outlining the privacy and confidentiality parameters I would be employing to the data. In addition, interviewees taking part in focus groups signed a form at the commencement of each interview acknowledging that they would not disclose who was taking part in the focus group and that they would not disclose what was said by other interviewees during focus group sessions. Any official school documents that were provided to me, or made accessible to me, have only been read and analyzed by me. Further, as every effort was made to uphold the privacy and confidentiality of this research, photographs taken to record the architectural layout and textual representations on the walls of the school were taken outside of regular school hours. Any photographs containing identifying information of the school were altered using Adobe Photoshop, where identifying information was removed or blurred prior to printing. In addition, I am the only one who has listened to the interview recordings and thematically coded the data I collected.
As I intend to publish this research (e.g. scholarly journal articles) and to present this research at professional conferences, as per my ethics protocol, original tape recordings of interviews, photographs and field notes will be stored for five years after the research is completed. When this time period has elapsed the material will be erased and destroyed. The coded data will be kept for an additional five years after publication of the results of the study. When this time period has elapsed, the material will be erased and destroyed. As mentioned above, all participants were informed of the data security procedures and the plans for retaining data during the informed consent/assent process (see Appendices E, F and G). Furthermore, as per ethical protocol procedures, in the interest of confidentiality, participants’ names will not be identified in any written publications or verbal report.

**Data Analysis**

So what should the ethnographer orient to in the data dialogue? The ethnographer is the one who’s looking, asking questions, wanting to discover what people are doing and how people are putting things together. As ethnographers, what should we be looking for and asking about? How should we orient questions or observations? How should we frame the informants’ attention so that what is learned can become the data on which the researcher relies on analysis? (Smith, 2005, p. 145)

Keeping in mind Smith’s questions regarding the data collection process employed during qualitative research, the above-noted methods were chosen for my institutional ethnography in order to engage with the social and textually mediated lives of those involved in a sports intensive school. The complex relations and networks of the sports school encouraged the use of multi-method approaches to gather information and to organize, collect and analyze data. This multi-method approach to data collection provided me with multiple ways to critically engage with and begin to understand the ‘socio-spatial realities’ (Richardson and Jensen, 2003) of the sports school and how their lives in this space and its institutional processes are connected beyond their everyday (Smith, 2005). Thus, as part of my institutional and spatial ethnographic approach, I provide a critical analysis of both text and talk to enhance my descriptive and analytic understanding of this institutional space. To do this, I approached the coding of data in such a way as to permit me to conduct a detailed analysis of discourses, practices and
spaces by identifying key themes and concepts emanating from my analysis of the data collected. Coding of data involved more than simply indexing different occurrences of words in the data, rather deeper consideration of the meaning of codes was undertaken as coding took place (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996), as well as consideration of the relationship between codes and themes. Once categories were established, the data was sorted and grouped together to determine common themes that were then related back to my original research questions. For example, a primary category that emerged from my analysis of policy texts was what I termed ‘Technologies of power applied to youth’. Pieces of data from the policy texts that fell under this broad category were then given codes under the heading entrepreneurial subjects. This code was built upon to make a number of themes pertaining to the relationship between excellence and performance as instrumental in the pursuit of education and sport and youth as flexible consumers and producers of investing in the self. Therefore, once arriving at the theme excellence and performance as instrumental in the pursuit of education and sport, I was able to relate this back to my original research question: How do discourses about the body, sport and health circulate in the school? More detailed coding began once interviews and focus group transcriptions were completed. This required constant comparison and synthesis from interpretations of texts, practices, interviews, focus groups, observations and field notes to determine the similarities and/or differences within the everyday production of the sports school.

Methodological Experiences

I don’t think anyone grows up wanting to become “an ethnographer”. At least I’ve never heard a child, or an adolescent, say so. Some of my trusted colleagues say ethnography is a calling. Maybe it is. I think you don’t choose to do it so much as it chooses you. Nobody is exactly sure how that happens. (Goodall, 2000, pgs. 9-10)

After reading the above quote by Goodall, I could not help but look back on my brief ethnographic immersion at Hillcrest Collegiate. Throughout my graduate studies, and while engaging in work as a research assistant and in my own research projects, I have learned that ethnography means, entails and reveals something different to the individual ‘doing’ it. My pursuit of ethnographic research has shed light on aspects of certain kinds of social life, but also more critically, it has enabled me to examine what it
means to be an ethnographer. The compelling relationship between the researcher conducting ethnographic research, and the ethnographic research process itself, offers opportunities for researchers to question and reflect on how their subjectivity matters in ethnographic research (Berry, 2011). As a young researcher and ethnographer, I continue to learn through the act of ‘doing’ ethnography; that is to become a competent qualitative researcher, I have had to do it – to train in it, to practice it directly, and to make mistakes while I engaged in research (Young and Atkinson, 2012). Guided by an epistemological approach that sees the nature of qualitative research as reciprocal, where the relationship between the researcher and respondent are both intimately involved in a process of the co-creation of meaning (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Young and Atkinson, 2012), I set out in this section to engage in a reflexive discussion of the ethnographic research process that I engaged in. Exploring my ethnographic story, through reflexivity, is important, in part, because I can articulate a more personalized dimension to the ethnographic process and it enables me to reflect on this experience— and on my pursuits, my failures, my questions, and my concerns (Berry, 2011).

As discussed in the introductory chapter, I come to this research as a former student-athlete (although I did not attend a sports school) with academic interest in the (moving) body, specifically around how institutional, social, and spatial factors may influence individual experiences within prescriptive practices of physical activity, education and health contexts. Both my personal and academic interests have been models for my ethnographic practice and research identity. Drawing on González (2000, p. 627), I suggest that my complex, dynamic and nuanced academic and subjective history “provided the cultural ontology that served as the backdrop for my practice of ethnographic methods I would one day learn.” Reflecting on my histories, and their influence on the ethnographic research process, provides me with a view of my research as being comprised of a range of experience(s) that have helped shape not only my understanding of certain cultural phenomenon, but also how I interpret my participants’ understanding (Berry, 2011). In this section I share, what I have termed, three reflective starting points, to shed light on the multiplicity of my experiential processes both inside
and outside the field\textsuperscript{38}.

\textit{Reflective Starting Point \#1: Maneuvering into the trenches of social life – Navigating U of T’s Research Ethics Protocol}

The ‘beginning’ of my ethnographic practice begins with my experience(s) of the ethical review process that research projects are subjected to at the University of Toronto. Since a core tenant of institutional ethnography is to explore aspects of an institution and its processes in connection with people’s experiences of what is happening to them, I set out to immerse myself in the everyday world of those people who ‘work’ in a sports school via participant observation. During my studies, I have come across the work of social scientists who have written about their troubling experience(s) navigating institutional ethics boards and what Research Ethics Boards often cite as ‘proper’ ethics protocols (Atkinson, 2014; van den Hoonard, 2001; 2002, cited in Atkinson 2014). As Atkinson (2014) argues, conducting qualitative research in Canada has become increasingly more difficult for researchers as research is more constrained, restricted, evaluated, screened, monitored and discouraged by REBs who consider this form of research an ethically problematic mode of inquiry. Despite knowledge of this possibility, it was necessary for me (as it is with all other researchers at the University of Toronto) to submit my ethics protocol to the University of Toronto’s REB. My first ethical protocol was returned with the following comment:

“The plan is (in part) to use observations made as a ‘participant observer’ to develop an understanding of the sports culture in such schools. Observations will be made in ‘public spaces’ within schools. Unless all students (participants) agree to participate (which is highly unlikely) the investigator will need to exclude those who do not elect to participate. How will this be done in such a public domain?”

In order to address the concerns of the primary reviewer regarding the unease they felt about observation processes, I reiterated that institutional consent would be sought for all

\textsuperscript{38} Given that ethnography is a highly experiential process, it is somewhat problematic to limit oneself to three reflective starting points (Berry, 2011). A question I asked myself while writing this was: where do I even begin to describe my ethnographic experience? As Schrag (2003, pp.2-4) suggests, “we never stand at a beginning but are always somehow already begun, held within a web of delivered discourse, social practice, professional requirements and the daily decisions of everyday life…all starting points are contingent. One could always choose another beginning”. For the purposes of my dissertation, I have deliberately chosen, as a starting point, to discuss the “beginning” of my ethnographic experience.
participant observations of the daily practices that take place at the school, and would only occur after I had gained permission to be in the school or the classroom from the principal or teacher, respectively. I explained that during my initial phase of observation in the school, I would not collect data on any person until I familiarized myself with the research setting and introduced the study to those involved in the daily practices of the school. I also outlined that I would not be seeking written consent (beyond the formal permission gained from the principal and/or school) during the participant observation phase, but instead this phase would involve an ongoing process of oral consent.

Following this, I received additional queries from the university’s REB, once again, questioning the merits of participant observation:

“How will you deal with situations where you observe an interaction between a person who has consented to the study and one who hasn’t? Would you record just one side of the interaction or omit the whole thing altogether?”

Similar to the first revisions that I submitted, I restated that in the case of a situation where I “observe an interaction between a person who has consented to the study and one who hasn’t” that I would omit the interaction altogether from my field notes. Having to make this declaration in my ethics protocol to, in some ways, ‘convince’ reviewers that I would follow ethics protocol concretely, I felt my agency as a researcher was diminished, and I felt that it undermined my on-going ethical decision making with people in the field and limited, in many ways, the (qualitative) research process where both participant(s) and researcher are co-producers of decision-making in the field (Atkinson, 2014).

Of course, I understand the necessity for ethics protocols, particularly with research involving human and non-human participants, and when it comes to management of risk (defined by the REB), protection of participant confidentiality and the process of informed consent. I was however frustrated that the REB continued to question my particular type of research - qualitative research via observation. Continually having to answer the REB’s inquiries made me question the merits of my specific study. For me, it further emphasized the REB’s discomfort with qualitative research and the interactions between researcher with participants. I am sure that not all qualitative research is unproblematic in terms of the dynamics of the research process but
the hyper-vigilance of the REB with regards to conducting my fieldwork, made me acutely aware of how misunderstood the mandate of qualitative (sport) sociology and the ethnographic process is among institutional/research ethics boards and their sense of participants’ powerlessness in the research process (Atkinson, 2014). As Atkinson explains, systematic warnings and discouragement from REB representatives about undertaking ethnographic fieldwork as a form of inquiry:

. . . are typically offered by researchers with little to no experience in fieldwork, understanding of ethnographic processes, or sense of how people in the so-called ‘real world’ are not nearly as powerless, gullible, emotionally vulnerable or easily duped as we present them in ethics policy and practice” (2014, p. 75).

I believed that my research project should be classified as ‘minimal risk’ (of harm) to participants – essentially meaning that research subjects participating in the study will experience no risk greater than those they encounter in the regular procedures of their daily lives in the school, and thus I remained skeptical that the REBs response to my ethics protocol demonstrated a good understanding of the type of methodologies I was engaging in the study.

This critique is not to dismiss the merits of ethics protocols or the value of institutional/research ethics boards. Ostensibly, the purpose of ethics protocols is to maintain and protect the rights of subjects and to ensure participants are safeguarded during scientific inquiry (Atkinson, 2014)—tenets I hold of utmost importance when conducting research. What I find questionable, however, is how constrained I felt by the REBs uncertainty regarding my qualitative fieldwork. The constant monitoring and critique by the review committee, confirmed for me that the knowledge gathering process, via qualitative research, is always up for scrutiny. As Atkinson (2014, p. 78) claims “ethnographers not only face questions regarding the ethical bases of their research efforts, but also questions regarding the very mandate of the work”.

To conduct research, particularly ethnographic research as an objective observer, is simply not possible. As Khan (2011, p. 201) explains, “to stand outside people, looking in at their lives as if they were in some laboratory or snow globe is not to understand them”. As I have alluded to in previous sections, the purpose of ethnographic
fieldwork is to provide an account of how individuals live their lives with one another in particular places, with the researcher embedding themselves in both the narrative and the lives of the subjects (Khan, 2011) – an uneasy notion, I believe, for the REB to appreciate. When I first entered HC to discuss the merits of my study, I was completely honest about the research project. I dutifully explained to the school’s director, the principal, teachers and student-athletes that my aim was to understand the everyday life of the sports school and how I would achieve it – by immersing myself in the social and cultural life of the school, observing its workings, and speaking to people (Khan, 2011). During my time at HC, I frequently reiterated the purpose of my research, oftentimes reminding those that I might be speaking to that they could be (de-facto) participants in the research. In this way, informed consent with my research participants was not a singular event; it was an ongoing process between myself and those I interacted with on a daily basis. There were times when participants asked me not to include accounts of our interactions or what I had seen or heard. I categorically respected all of these requests and for that reason there are many observations that I did not record. While the REB might be skeptical of researcher-participant interactions, I know myself that I respected all the wishes of my participants and that an element of trust was established between my participants and I because I honoured the requests they made for my discretion (Khan, 2011).

Nevertheless, given the concerns articulated by the REB regarding participant observation, and specifically what information I could and could not include as data, I did feel constrained while I was in the field. At the end of each day, as I was writing up my field notes, I often found myself struggling over what events and interactions I should ‘forget’! Indeed, the claims that ethnographers may find themselves juggling various, oftentimes contradictory, demands (Monaghan, 2014) within the context of their approved ethical procedures, now made sense to me.

Reflecting back on my time spent as an ethnographer in the field and the tensions that I faced with my institution’s REB, I realized that there is often a difficult transfer

39 The process of ongoing informed consent was explained to the REB in my initial protocol.
between the words on the page of ethical protocol documents and what the experience(s) of being in the field entail (Woodward, 2014). These everyday tensions of human relationships that emerge while immersed in the processes of research, whether anticipated or unanticipated, are what forms the ethnographic method and the interrelationship of researcher and researched.

Reflective Starting Point #2: Knowing when I have started learning about social life

I set out to conduct a cultural study of the everyday life of a sports school—exploring the complex relationships among bodies, spaces, discourses, practices and the effects of power and desire—while employing an orthodox ethnographic method. As I have stated previously this meant that as an (institutional) ethnographer I had to situate myself as a researcher in the sports school, spending long periods of time in the space of the school with my research participants. More specifically, for me it meant spending time in HC; attending various sport events (games, banquets, tournaments); sport-specific training sessions and classes; at times, teaching and advising students as well as observing the daily life of the school. As much as I was getting involved in the daily life of the school, it took me quite some time to learn the significance of the everyday processes taking place and the cultural complexity of these practices. Needless to say, during my first few weeks at HC, I felt overwhelmed, I felt that I had a hard time taking everything in! Identifying, specifying and interpreting the meaningfulness of the everyday ‘work’ taking place at this site was difficult. My insecurities about being a good researcher surfaced and I felt unsure about the significance of what I was observing. This, coupled with the uneasiness and, at times, awkward interactions between myself and participants, left me feeling as if “I could almost see nothing” (Khan, 2011, p. 202).

This changed after being a couple of months in the field, when I was inadvertently positioned within the relations of the school. Upon learning of an upcoming ice hockey tournament, I approached the school’s athletic director and began asking questions about the particulars of the tournament – who were HC’s opponents, where was the tournament taking place (specifically mentioning the names of a few arenas I knew in the area), and how many games were expected to be played etc. From this conversation, the athletic
director came to know about my familiarity with ice hockey (we later began talking about my playing experience) and he invited me to assist on the bench during the tournament. It was during this time, when I was, ostensibly, now immersed in one of the HC sports, and representing HC, on the bench and off, that the research relationships with participants really took off—people began talking to me more and this made more connections possible. As Khan (2011) explains, the study of human relations to understand social life or cultural agency is essentially an embedded one. Thus, as a result of a casual conversation about, and interest in, one of the dominant sports of the school, that I became (re)positioned within the space(s) of HC and began to feel more like a successful ethnographer.

Researcher positionality is quite complex, something which I address below, but from my first attempt at immersing myself as researcher in the field, I came to understand that fieldwork has many different dimensions—all of which the researcher and participants are actively co-navigating as the process unfolds—that are personal and unique to those involved in that particular moment of time. What worked for me at HC may not have necessarily worked for me at another site, making ethnographic fieldwork an interesting social activity when interpreting cultural agency. What I learned from the real world process of actually doing research (Waddington and Smith, 2014) in my everyday experience at HC as an ethnographer, is that social processes are most often multifaceted “many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular and inexplicit” (Geertz, 1973, part 1, III). Given a researcher’s embeddedness in the everyday social processes and cultural activities of the site being explored some things are often noticed serendipitously, or quite simply, by chance (Waddington, 2014). For example, I approached this research thinking I would be analyzing a site where biopedagogical and neoliberal ideologies restrict subjectivities and the agency of individuals involved in this space. From my observations and everyday

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40 During ice hockey games there are typically two to three coaches (and a health trainer) behind the bench assisting the players. They each have a role in providing tactical advice and strategies to players and opening doors for players to enter and exit at the beginning and end of their shift. During my time ‘on the bench’, I was responsible for maintaining the defense lines, calling players off as per the coaches request and releasing the bench doors to allow for players to come on and off the bench.
embeddedness in *Hillcrest Collegiate* however I began to notice the different pleasure(s) enacted in this space and the importance of such pleasure(s) in identity formation, power relations and social transformation (Pringle et al., 2015). For me, being in the field was not something that could be taught through any formalized knowledge application or reading of text. Undertaking fieldwork and learning about the social life of the school was a constant process of navigating and negotiation by all those involved. Indeed, while participant observation may enable a researcher to investigate particular phenomena, while in the field the researcher must learn to manage the (un)predictable tensions that their positionality can bring to the field.

**Reflective Starting Point #3: Betwixt and Between – Negotiating my positionality in the sports school**

While I have not explicitly and purposefully employed an auto-ethnographic analysis as part of my research study, I most certainly drew on my experiences growing up as a student-athlete playing competitive hockey and soccer. As a former student-athlete, I had similar experiences to my participants—I was familiar with playing competitive sport while attending school and of having to complete assignments, as well as study for tests, in between my time on the ice and/or field. Having some familiarity with negotiating school and sport, there were many times in my conversations with student-athlete participants that I told them that I understood their experiences. This made me feel (and perhaps made them feel) like I was one of them. Juxtaposed to this is the position of ‘outsider’ (DiCarlo, 2015; Fletcher, 2014). Although I played competitive sport while I was enrolled in elementary school and high school, I did not have the experience of attending a sports school, where sport specific training was incorporated into the daily life of the curriculum. Nevertheless, I believed that my former positionality
as student-athlete, and now as adult helper41 (Skelton, 2000) at HC, would enable me to explore the inner workings of this social space and the ongoing daily experiences therein without feeling like a total outsider. I was wrong however because there were a number of times when I was quite surprised by youth asking me ‘Who are you and what are you doing here?’ (Jachyra et al., 2015). These encounters, along with the nickname, ‘note-taker’, that I was given by a grade nine student, prompted me to reflect on my assumptions about fitting in and my positionality in relation to the field of study and to more carefully consider the various tensions and dilemmas of being betwixt and between as both an insider and outsider at HC.

The Researcher and Researched Relationship

As I have indicated, conducting research in a school-based participant observation setting can be quite complex and multifaceted because the researcher has to learn to negotiate the unique relationships with each child, each teacher, the collective classroom culture, and in my case, the shared sports culture. My main goal for the first part of my fieldwork at HC was to build rapport with as many teachers and students as possible in the hope that they would be willing to engage in an interview to talk about their daily experiences and understandings of the sports school. I was cognizant that entering the school and being introduced as a ‘researcher from the University of Toronto’, might (re)create power differentials, which could not be fully eliminated in my day-to-day interactions with research participants (Berg and Lune, 2014). Therefore, working on building rapport and trustworthy relationships with youth and adults alike during the participant observation phase of my fieldwork was essential and I believe that it would further help to contextualize my role/position (as researcher) in the spaces of the school,

41 During my time at HC, I was often asked to take on the role of assistant teacher (in the classroom), assistant trainer (during strength and training routines in the gym/on the field) and assistant coach (for the primary boys’ under 14 hockey team). To that end, I was involved in tutoring students during their free time in class, setting up activities during strength and training testing, encouraging students to participate in strength and training routines, and was on the bench for some hockey games. It is important to note, in light of my assistant activities, I did not teach nor evaluate students (in their sport specific training or in the classroom), nor did I engaging in any disciplining of them. Similar to Jachyra, Atkinson and Washiya (2015), I wanted to limit any relationship and image of authority (as an older female, graduate student, assistant in the school, and researcher) as much as possible in my daily interactions with students. To mitigate this, I also took part in some sports specific training, alongside student-athletes, including soccer training in the morning, strength testing and soccer scrimmages during the lunch hour.
and participants’ daily lives (Jachyra et al., 2015).

From the outset, I introduced myself to all the student-athletes I interacted with using my first name in an attempt to symbolically dissociate myself from authority figures (director, principal, teachers) at the school—or to position myself somewhere in between the teacher-student hierarchy at HC (Jachyra et al., 2015). During my preliminary observations, I found myself assuming an almost static position as a complete observer (Jachyra et al., 2015, p. 253), often sitting on the peripheries taking notes on my observations. Although the students and teachers during this time paid minimal attention to me, I felt quite uneasy about my presence in the school. Needless to say, I was not welcomed as the insider I assumed I would be and my presence in the school was often challenged by teachers and students alike. The following excerpt from my field notes was taken from a conversation that I had with a grade nine student while observing his class illustrates these challenges:

Steve (Grade-9): Hey Danielle. Tell me again why you’re here. Why do you want to study us? I don’t get it. I see you everyday here taking notes. What are you taking notes on?

Danielle: Well, I’m interested in learning more about sports schools and about the experiences of everyone involved in the sports school. I think it’s important to learn more about this as there’s not much research on sports schools, particularly, on what young student-athletes have to say about their experiences in such a place. I’m sure you have lots to say.

Steve (Grade-9): Ah…I still don’t get why you would want to study us. That notebook that you bring in…what are you writing in there? Are you taking notes on us? Hey guys! [student turns and gets the attention of three to four of his classmates sitting nearby]. This is note taker! She’s taking notes on us! (Field Notes-February 27, 2015)

As the above excerpt illustrates, the denotation of me as ‘the note taker’ by students (some students referred to me as this over the course of six months at the school), made me feel that I held a precarious position at HC. I was not a teacher, nor a student—I remained in a liminal position for some.

Along with this recurring tension that I experienced with some of the students who seemed to constantly question my motives while I was at the school, I also
experienced some tensions around my relationship building with some of the teachers at the school. For example, I overheard this comment that one teacher made to another as I walked by their classroom:

Oh no. Here comes the researcher. She’s going to be taking her notes and storing it all in her head [laughs].

Although, I believe that these were relatively isolated events (although I cannot be completely sure) during my six months at HC, they illustrate my status as betwixt and between in the spaces of HC and the dynamic, but sometimes uncomfortable position, of both insider and outsider. Insomuch as I was asking questions about the daily activities of my participants, they too questioned my presence. As Atkinson (2014, p. 87) explains, “we spend so much time thinking about how to safely watch and interact with subjects that we forget that they are watching, monitoring and managing us, making their own conscious choices about how much involvement and detachment they will allow us to experience”. During my time at HC, I recognized how contingent my identity and role as a researcher was during participant observation as this was constantly being negotiated not only by myself, but by my participants as well. As Fletcher (2014) suggests, the subjectivity of researcher positionality during the research process is never certain but is a fluid and ongoing performance—a performance of which I was very much aware.

It was following this initial questioning by students and teachers about my research, that I transitioned from a static, complete observer (on the peripheries taking notes) to a complete participant observer role. As stated above, I joined students during their sport specific training (engaging in soccer drills or lifting weights in the weight room) and engaged in debriefing sessions with some teachers to provide them with an overview of what I was observing and experiencing at HC. Adopting these multiple positions while in the field helped me build rapport and maintain relationships with many students and staff members and also allowed me to concurrently observe pedagogical practices, behaviours and interactions in the school from the ‘inside’ (Jachyra et. al., 2015).

Conclusion

Given the complex and multifaceted nature of sports school life and spaces, and
the experiences of those in the school, I engaged in what Denzin and Lincoln (2011) term ‘a bricolage’ of data collection. I engaged with a diverse range of methods including participant observation, textual analysis and interviews to enhance my understanding of the social, spatial and physical cultures of HC. By consciously employing a multi-method approach in the research process, I wanted to create as comprehensive a story as possible of the day-to-day life of the institution.

I believe that it is important to note the tensions, contradictions and hesitations inherent in my research. Whether these tensions, contradictions and hesitations hampered the methodological processes at times or invigorated the methodological processes at other times, it is difficult to truly say. Now I understand more fully when people talk about the messiness of research or research as a process of discovery both of the subject and discovery of the self (Lincoln, Lynham and Guba, 2011). All these things considered, I believe that I was then prepared to ask questions of the data and see things that I had not considered asking or looking for before my ethnographic fieldwork.

Guided by my methodological frameworks, in Chapter 4, *The Production of Excellence*, I establish an analytical framework through which to examine the way(s) specific policy texts have been used as a framing device for the conception and reproduction of *Hillcrest Collegiate*, as a discursive, subjective, and lived effect of excellence. In Chapter 5, *Embodied Practices and Pleasure(s)*, I turn my attention to the stakeholders’ lived experiences that emerged from my institutional ethnography, paying particular attention to how the everyday lives of individuals at *Hillcrest Collegiate* are paradoxically bound up with ways of living within neoliberal disciplinary technologies and desire and pleasure(s).
Chapter 4
The Production of Excellence

In this chapter, I will illustrate how policy has been used as a framing device for the conception of sports schools, in particular that of Hillcrest Collegiate. Throughout this chapter, I will reflect on the “uses of discourse and the effects of discourse” (Bacchi, 2000, p. 51) to highlight how certain texts and narratives (evoked from participants’ interviews) work together to produce understandings of excellence. I believe that my findings raise important points about the extent to which policy, constituted in various discourses, work to ensure that institutionalized space, along with those subjects co-constituted in that space, are (re)produced in particular ways. This includes understanding more about what Bacchi (2009) terms ‘problematizations’ inherent in specific policies, especially ones that play a role in influencing and constructing, to whatever extent they can, a way of thinking about social life, space(s) and subjectivities. More specifically, such policies are often used to (re)produce a way of thinking about youth participation in sport and physical activity, often failing to address the complexity of context and meaning making of sport in youths’ lives (Wright, Macdonald and Groom, 2003).

Problematication is a concept derived and expanded on in contemporary social theory (Bacchi, 2009; Foucault, 1977). From a Foucauldian perspective,

42 It is worth noting how understandings of excellence are constituted at the policy level and in popular imagination. For example, in much of popular discourse, and education policy, excellence and equity are often equated, as the statement by the Ontario Ministry of Education (2014) makes clear: “Equity and excellence go hand in hand. So, while Ontario has come far in closing gaps for many learners, more needs to be done for those students who struggle the most…by ensuring equity in our education system, we can help all students achieve excellence” (http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/equity.html). Similarly, equity is positioned alongside Sport Canada’s policy goal of achieving excellence in sport: “the vision for the Policy is to have, by 2022: A dynamic and innovative culture that promotes and celebrates participation and excellence in sport” (Sport Canada, 2012, p. 5). Further investigation into the mutual positioning of excellence and equity however reveals the contradictory nature of policy positioning. In the context of the sports school, this is made clear through the discursive formation of excellence and how such macro social processes (in)directly affect the micro realities of individuals who inhabit this space. That is, as I interrogate in this chapter, while Hillcrest Collegiate is committed to providing “support in all aspects of school life: academic, social, athletic, emotional and personal” (Student/Parent Handbook, 2015, p. 3) endeavours, understandings of excellence and performance in this space can be read as mechanisms of subjectivation, that, in effect, enables the disciplining of bodies and making of particular subjects in the pursuit of excellence.
problematization is used in two ways: to indicate the need for interrogation of everyday taken-for-granted assumptions; and, as an approach for understanding particular ways of thinking behind forms of rule (Bacchi, 2009). As I indicated in my methods chapter, Bacchi’s conceptualization of problematization in policy/institutional analysis suggests that the very idea of ‘policy’ as a cultural dimension rests on the notion that policies are put in place in order to ‘fix’ things. The use of problematization in this approach, places emphasis on problem representations, as elaborated in discourse, in which both problems and solutions are created in ways that have real effects on/for the subjects constituted in such discourses (Bacchi, 2000, 2009). Expanding on Foucault’s (1970, 1972, 1977) concept of discourse, Bacchi (2009, p. 35) argues that discourses are “socially produced forms of knowledge that set limits upon what it is possible to think, write or speak about a given social object or practice”. The emphasis here is on how problems are represented and created in discourse, and given shape in policy; that is, how policy is framed as a discursive tool within specific historical, institutional and cultural contexts.

Concepts such as problematization, problem representations, and how individuals interpret texts have been explored in the literatures in relation to policy analysis (Alexander and Coveney, 2013; Bacchi, 2009; Green, 2007; Hovden, 2006). These scholars argue that there is an inherent assumption in the making of any (public and/or institutional) policy, which is that problems explicitly exist and can be rectified. By making explicit links between problematization, and the kind of implied change in a policy proposal, attention is directed away from the ways in which specific representations of policy play a direct role in how we are governed (Bacchi, 1999). Ultimately, Bacchi (2009, p. 31) argues “because every policy constitutes a problematization, it is fair to say that, in effect, we are governed through problematizations rather than through policies.” Thus, policy texts are embedded within social contexts and should be understood by the shape and character of the problematizations, not the purported implied problems evident in specific proposals (Bacchi, 2009). This broader focus suggests that examining policy using this approach allows one to analyse how rule takes place, and within that, alignments of power.
My dissertation sets out to explore a range of specialized policy initiatives pertaining to a sports school, and how these macro social processes affect the micro realities of individuals in the sports school. Using Bacchi’s (2009) question-posing approach as a guide to analysing problem representations inherent in policy, I traced the discursive formation of excellence emerging through sport and institutional documents paying particular attention to the discursive effects, subjectification effects and lived effects that are incited by such discourses.

‘What’s the Problem Represented to Be?’ Approach to Policy Analysis

I have argued that the sports school is a worthy topic for sociological examination, and I have analysed the political, economic, ideological and discursive factors that have played a role in the development of sports schools across Canada. More specifically, I have engaged in a detailed institutional ethnography of one particular sports academy, Hillcrest Collegiate. I conducted a discourse analysis of a selection of policy reports, including Sport Canada’s Canadian Sport Policy, 2012, and the institutional policies of Hillcrest Collegiate relating to high-performance sport. Taking a “what’s the problem represented to be?” approach to policy and institutional analysis, I show that the ideological commitment to the development of sports academies is, not surprisingly, embedded in discourses of sport excellence, and in discourses of performance and development as they pertain to the young bodies of athletes and the framework and curricula of the school.

43 Following Bacchi’s ‘What’s the problem represented to be?’ approach to policy analysis, I understand the three effects as interconnected effects of problematizations. For example, discursive effects are the discursive limits imposed on what can be thought and said about a particular problem representation; subjectification effects influence the subjectivities of individuals experiencing particular problem representations inherent in policy discourse; and lived effects are felt as the actual impact of such representations on the experiences of individuals subjected to specific policy discourse(s).

44 I have chosen to focus on three of Bacchi’s questions as a guide for interrogating discourse in this chapter. However, all of the questions posed by this approach are incorporated into each section during analysis.
**Question 1: What is the problem represented to be?**

*Canadian Sport Policy, 2012*

As I illustrated in Chapter 2, the legacy of Canadian public policy approaches to sport, along with other policies in the education and health realms, have shifted over the last 40-50 years, playing an (in)direct role in the conception of Ontario sports schools. The priorities of specific governing bodies and institutions that shape the operation of a local sports school can be said to steer the overall purpose and objectives of the school in specific directions (Dyck, 2012) creating desirable subjects through the shaping of child and youth sports in Canada. One such effect of changing policies, and implied discourses, are their priorities, which include, among other things, “a concerted drive to systematize sport and employ it as a compliant vehicle for policymaking and service delivery in a range of sectors” (Dyck, 2012, p. 26). More specifically, youth sport and youth involvement in physical activity have come to represent an important position within successive policy statements regarding societal values, like democracy and health, along with the role of youth sport as a tool for social and economic development (Thibault and Harvey, 2013). More specifically, sport’s connection to the personal and social well-being of the Canadian population, explicitly suggests that it delivers multiple benefits to society (Henry and Ko, 2013; Österlind, 2016; Thibault and Harvey, 2013), making this a central theme worthy of investigation in many contemporary discourse analyses of sport policy.

In light of the above possible motives which justify sport’s reach in new domains, including education and health contexts, there was a renewal in sport policy development that began to focus on athlete support and achievement eventually leading to the development of the *2002 Canadian Sport Policy*. The policy concluded that sport is ever-present in the lives of all Canadians and is an essential tool for “social and personal development, health and well-being, culture, education, economic development and prosperity, tourism and entertainment” (cited in Dyck, 2012, p. 35). Of interest to the conception of sports schools across Canada, this policy laid the foundation for the current focus on enhancing the high-performance sport system and a renewed emphasis on medal count and championships (Kikulis, 2013). In particular, “the vision of the 2002 policy
reflected governments’ desire for increased effectiveness of the sport system and for Canadian athletes to move to the forefront of international sport” (Sport Canada, 2012, p. 2). What is especially instructive in the 2002 Canadian Sport Policy is its explicit promotion and celebration of participation and excellence in sport. According to Donnelly (2013, p. 200), the goal of ‘enhanced excellence’ in the 2002 sport policy “was the most politically popular aspect of the CSP”. Moreover, the objectives set out by the 2002 Canadian Sport Policy underlined the extent to which the following would play in Canadian sport: addressing the declining rates of sport participation among Canadians, specifically youth; eliminating barriers to sport participation; improving school sport and physical activity; and emphasis on the development of high-performance athletes to help bolster international competitive success of Canadian athletes (Dyck, 2012).

At a provincial level, the province of Ontario identified four objectives linked to the 2002 Canadian Sport Policy, illustrated in ACTIVE2010, with a primary focus on enhancing excellence and participation in sport. Both these objectives encompassed short-and long-term solutions that sought to meet and support the needs of developing athletes within an educational environment. What is especially instructive in the policy statement is the manner in which youth excellence and participation in sport is folded into a sport delivery system, which is integrated at the elementary and secondary school levels. Moreover, provincial strategies called for an effective and value added approach to increasing student sport and physical activity opportunities and participation in all Ontario schools as:

Combining a secondary school education with the rigour of high-intensity training associated with elite athlete development presents unique challenges for secondary school students. (Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion, 2010, p. 15)

Increasing participation in sport and physical activity in Ontario schools will lead to healthier students, who will realize the benefits of participation through increased health, decreased absenteeism, increased self-esteem; improved health and lifestyle choices, and an increased tendency to participate in their community. (Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion, 2010, p. 20)

Several years later, the 2012 Canadian Sport Policy demonstrated even more that federal policy now explicitly illustrates the extent to which institutional investments in Canadian
sport has proceeded. Building on its 2002 predecessor, the 2012 policy priority aims to promote and celebrate a balanced approach between high-performance sport, via both participation and excellence, through an integrated system for athlete development connecting with the education system and the role of school sport (Sport Canada, 2012). More specifically:

The Policy is ambitious in its efforts to improve the full spectrum of sport in Canada. Whereas CSP 2002 was essentially a government policy centred on competitive sport and traditional sport sector stakeholders, the focus of CSP 2012 is broader. The importance of forging linkages—both within the sport system and with stakeholders beyond it—cannot be overemphasized. Resources and creativity from a broad array of partners in both sport and related sectors will drive the success of the Policy.

Linkages and collaboration offer the opportunity to increase participation and share resources. The following linkages are particularly noteworthy: among NSOs, P/TSOs, municipal clubs and community organizations; between the Sport, Education and Recreation sectors—among NGOs and within governments; and between federal, provincial and territorial governments and their departments. (Sport Canada, 2012, p. 15)

A further emphasis on sport excellence, particularly among youth, is primarily achievable through collaborative partnerships with specific sectors, “most importantly with Education and Recreation” (Sport Canada, 2012, p. 2); this has solidified the place of sports in the Canadian school system. Ostensibly, the Canadian Sport Policy, 2012 document reflects the Canadian governments’ explicit position in supporting and guiding sport policy, program and funding initiatives across the country. It has been argued that the drive for medal success has been supported by several federal (Sport Canada) initiatives—Canadian Sport for Life (LTAD Model), From Playground to Podium and No Accidental Champions—which aim to increase participation in sport by developing essential movement skills for optimal growth and development of future Olympic hopefuls (Fusco, 2009). One feature of the Canadian Sport for Life initiative is to implement an integrated system for high-performance sport and athlete development within the education system (Kikulis, 2013). This has led to a new sector of sport investment: the role of the sports school. In particular, there has been support for “the establishment of sports academies and Sport-Étude programs” across Canada (Canadian Sport Centres, 2005, cited in Kikulis, 2013, p. 132). The report entitled, Sport Schools in
Canada: The Future is Here, published by the Canadian Sport Centre (Pacific) and written by LTAD experts, provides the most recent up-to-date review of sports specific schools (cf. Way et al., 2010, http://www.vancouversun.com/pdf/NationalPaper2.pdf). Specifically, the report maintains:

While much is being done to own the podium on the international stage, up and coming athletes have not reaped the benefits of the increased focus of high performance sport and many student athletes may be ‘falling through the cracks’ or dropping out of sport because they cannot manage the time demands of both sport and their educational endeavours…The expansion of sport specific academies in many provinces creates a tremendous opportunity for the sport system to work with school districts and others to create a high quality environment for thousands of student athletes across the country. (Way et al., 2010, p. 9)

As the above excerpt illustrates, the recommendations of the report suggest that a ‘Canadian Sport School Model’ should become an established brand for youth elite athletes and the brand of choice across Canada (Kikulis, 2013; Way et al., 2010). More specifically, the Canadian Sport Centre Report (Pacific) (2010, http://www.vancouversun.com/pdf/NationalPaper2.pdf) highlights the need to reconcile coordinating the role of athlete and student. The problem with what Borggrefe and Cachay (2012) term “dual careers” – being in elite sport and attending school – arises in countries where education, sport and politics are not integrated and when elite youth athletes are responsible for furthering their own educational training alongside their sporting careers in order to secure their livelihoods when they retire. Structural changes to education systems in order to alleviate the problems posed by dual careers faced by school aged elite athletes are not necessarily possible within provincially-funded and mandated education systems, therefore the introduction of (private or semi-private or publically-funded) sports schools is seen as a remedy to this problem (Borggrefe and Cachay, 2012).

While policy and institutions indicate the importance of support for student-athletes and the inextricable link between sport and education, they also explicitly show what they most value when they state that: “with the expanded infrastructure and flexibility in high school education at our disposal many provinces are ready to become
leaders in the development of new Senior National team members for Canada” (Way et al., 2010, p. 9). The focus of the proposed sport system integrated into educational contexts then appears to be there to primarily serve Sport Canada and provincial desires, through the development of new Senior National team members for Canada. The institutional positions involved in the conception of these policies are reflective of the prevalent discursive hierarchies circulating in relation to sports schools; they appear to privilege sport training and the pursuit of excellence over other educational objectives (Petherick, 2015). Thus, the collaborative arrangements between different governmental sectors reflect the increasingly instrumental ways in which sport and physical activity have emerged as salient mechanisms through which Sport Canada and provincial governments’ hope to achieve future success at international competitions.

To re-iterate, the Canadian Sport Policy, 2012 emphasis on collaboration between different stakeholders in Canadian sport points to the importance of strengthening “coordination and communication among governments and key stakeholders; athlete support, coaching and technical leadership; research and innovation in training methods and equipment design; the development of qualified and ethical officials; and athlete talent identification, recruitment and development” (p. 12). This call put forth in the policy document represents government intention to narrowing the ‘pillars of excellence’ (Own the Podium, 2010, cited in Thibault and Babiak, 2013, p. 153) based on a narrow definition of success—winning medals at international competitions (Donnelly, 2010a). To that end, renewed success45 on the international stage, represents an important resource for government to attract additional funding and “shared resources” (Sport Canada, 2012, p. 15) (to be allocated to the training and development of high-performance athletes), as well as more substantial media coverage of Canada’s sport success. For example, Own the Podium, which was created in 2005, was devised as a “national sport technical initiative” (Own the Podium, 2010, cited in Thibault and Babiak, 2013, p. 152) to strengthen Canada’s international rank in Olympic and

45 Donnelly (2010b) has explained that the renewed vision of achieving excellence through a narrowly defined definition of success, in particular equating success at international competition to medals won by athletes, is misleading. For example, despite Canada winning 14 gold medals at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games they only won two medals more than the previous Games in 2006.
Paralympic Games. In other words, the importance of initiatives, such as that of Own the Podium, as Thibault and Babiak (2013) explain, is about government drive to devise strategies investing in athletes and high-performance sports in order to maximize medals won at international competitions. The Own the Podium initiative is directly tied to the Canadian Sport Policy, 2012 objective of enhancing excellence (Thibault and Babiak, 2013). The call for excellence leading up to the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics, saw renewed funding\(^4\) from Sport Canada to ensure Canadian athletes “have the best equipment, information, competitive opportunities and innovative training practices of any country leading to the achievement of their performance goals” (Own the Podium, 2010, cited in Thibault and Babiak, 2013, p. 153). Furthermore, although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is important to note that collaborative efforts to achieve success at international competitions has not been lost among different stakeholder’s with an interest in medals won. In addition to increased federal funding for high-performance athletes and sport, Provincial/Territorial governments have developed funding programs to support their own athletes (e.g., Quest for Gold—Ontario Athlete Assistance Program) as well as non-governmental initiatives (e.g., Canadian Athletes Now Fund and B2ten) and corporate sponsors (e.g. Petro-Canada’s FACE [Fuelling Athlete and Coaching Excellence]) (see Thibault and Babiak, 2013 for an in depth discussion of each of these programs).

Taking all this together, the promotion of ‘athlete development’ therefore underscores the implicit problem that Canada is not achieving enough in sports and the solution is to pursue excellence at the national level in international high-performance sport. The student-athlete is positioned in what one might argue is this political agenda that is committed to achieving podium results to serve Canadian national interests. Subsequently, this reinforces the desire to subject youth’s sport activities to relentless modification. Discourses of (sporting) excellence, development and performance have

\(^4\) Own the Podium funding leading up to the 2010 Winter Vancouver Olympic and Paralympic Games was funded to the tune of $97.5 million (Own the Podium, 2009c, cited in Thibault and Babiak, 2013, p. 153). It is interesting to note that funding following the 2010 Games decreased to $59.2 million (Own the Podium, 2009c, cited in Thibault and Babiak, 2013, p. 152) in the lead up to the 2012 Summer London Olympic and Paralympic Games - perhaps because the Games were being held outside Canada?
begun to take form at the education level, framed as an ideal collaborative effort and solution to the problem of the training and competitive environment which “does not meet the standards required to allow them [student-athletes] to achieve optimal athletic development nor an academic situation which provides balance” (Way et al., 2010, p. 9) in the service of national interests. This is reflected in the rhetoric supported by the Canadian Sport Policy, 2012, as this policy “seeks to strengthen the networks, resources and infrastructure of the sport system” (p. 19). Certainly, a main avenue to do so has been introducing the training and development of elite athletes into the education sector. More broadly the policy contends:

The renewed Policy is a mature and exciting outcome of the original. It is more ambitious in its vision and goals and more reflective of the role sport plays for Canadians and their communities…Sport can be at the heart of community building through the deliberate engagement of new partners on local issues…To realize the goals of the Policy by 2022, commitment will be required to drive its implementation. With the collaboration and combined actions of governments and non-government partners—at the community, provincial/territorial and national levels—Canada will achieve the Policy’s vision, further affirming Canada’s role as a world leader in sport. (Sport Canada, 2012, p. 19)

Further, by directing funds, research and implementation to achieving excellence at the education level47, the government of Canada has put political weight behind a particular idea of excellence. For example, the sports school has started to receive more attention from the Canadian Sport for Life Movement (cf. Way et al., 2010) as a new area of investment as the desire to have an integrated system for the adoption of an athlete development pathway with the education sector gains momentum (Kikulis, 2013). With provincial and territorial commitments to the LTAD model and with education being the responsibility of the provinces and territories, funding for sports schools may be contingent on the initiation and development of programs to support the training of high-performance athletes at the education level. Currently, the importance given to the LTAD model is indicated by Sport Canada’s commitment to ensure compliance among National Sports Organizations (NSOs) in terms of sport initiation and development programs (Kikulis, 2013)—a point of focus within the Canadian Sport Policy, 2012,

47Developments in this area include a research report by the Toronto District School Board reviewing the potential for sports schools in the city of Toronto (cf. Brown, 2009).
where the “emphasis on linkages and partnerships [most importantly with Education and Recreation] is transformational” (p. 16). As sports schools across Canada signal an area of new investment at the Provincial/Territorial levels, this ‘transformational’ collaborative effort to achieving sport excellence may establish precedence over the conditions of funding similar to that occurring at the federal level with NSOs and their respective sport. More specifically, increased funding at the provincial/territorial levels to support Sport Canada’s partnerships with the education sector may result in a broadening of programs that support not only podium performances but, more importantly, the sustainability of high-performance programs through junior development programs (Kikulis, 2013). Thus, excellence, in this sense, is not just an arbitrary concept; it is a concept imbued with specific meaning and power shaping Canadian ideals and ensuing programs aimed at governing young student-athletes’ lives. It is within this socio-historical and political context that school sport, physical education and physical activity continue to be endorsed as policy initiatives because they are imagined to have the capacity not only to achieve key educational objectives, but also the policy objectives of sport excellence focusing on athlete performance and development.

**Question 2: What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the ‘problem’?**

In this section, I now turn to the second question in a ‘What’s the problem represented to be?’ approach to policy analysis to begin thinking about the understanding(s) that underscore the above noted problem representations (Bacchi, 2009). Two thematic assumptions which underlie the representation of the ‘problem’ implied in the policy documents are: a) excellence and individual performance as instrumental in the pursuit of education and sport and b) commitments to investing in the self.

a) **Excellence and individual performance as instrumental in the pursuit of education and sport**

Several assumptions about the relationship between excellence and performance emerge in the policy. Ostensibly, the discourse of excellence, which is so much a part of the policy and institutional texts I analyzed in relation to the development of sports
schools and the achievement expectations of student-athletes who attend them, pervade most documents. Even the stakeholders involved share in it. These programs that have been created to engage in the pursuit of excellence are highly ideological, and the call for excellence has been transformed into a vocabulary for performance incentives (Kidd, 2013). The Canadian Sport Policy, 2012, expresses this assumption when emphasizing that sport excellence, particularly among youth, is achievable through collaborative partnerships with the education and recreation sectors. Specifically, these collaborative efforts are intended to focus on the centralized training of student-athletes whereby achievement of the most effective program management and encouragement of student-athletes to devote as much time as possible to their sport (Kidd, 2013) is made possible.

However, as the Canadian Sport Policy, 2012 illustrates, there is the belief that sports schools will provide the best avenue for student-athletes to train in their respective sport, while at the same time progress in their educational endeavours, furthering this implicit desire for excellence: that is, excellence has been turned into a vocabulary of performance incentives and strict controls (Kidd, 2013). For instance, the administrators and teachers at Hillcrest Collegiate hold a weekly meeting for everyone at the school to recognize the ongoing achievement of student-athletes (see below for texts that point to this from the school including: Hillcrest Collegiate: The Information Package and Hillcrest Collegiate: Student/Parent Handbook). Such an emphasis on achievement, I observed, often reinforced and glorified discipline and teamwork. The messages of performance appraisals often mentioned at these weekly meetings, for all student-athletes to observe, highlights the useful ways in which the call to excellence and individual development are embodied in the instrumental pursuit of education and sport. These kinds of accolades in the school appear to connect with and reinforce policy desires where the pursuit of excellence in sport is linked to academic and developmental benefits for youth:

The education and recreation sectors, under provincial and territorial jurisdictions, play critical roles in sport participation as both providers and partners in its delivery. Educators recognize the many academic and developmental benefits derived from sport participation... Schools play an essential role in increasing and promoting programs that allow participants to develop physical literacy, to learn and practice the fundamentals of sport, and
to participate in sport recreationally or competitively. (Sport Canada, 2012, p. 8)

The growing importance of performance in the pursuit of excellence is further legitimized through encouraging student-athletes to organize their lives around measurable tasks, whether that be in the classroom or the sports arena. For example, much of the academic rhetoric in the school directly coincides with measurable performance appraisals and competitive opportunities. The nature of the day-to-day activities and the meanings with which the student-athlete is encouraged to invest in the pursuit of excellence are shrouded in discourses of performance and development where their everyday activities are increasingly segmented and routinized. Such messages justify the pursuit of excellence and performance as a productive and useful activity, naturalizing, rather than problematizing, the practices of high-performance sport, and the subsequent meaning this holds for academic success. This is clear in the rhetoric found throughout the school’s Student/Parent Handbook:

We believe that learning and excellence in sport and education is best accomplished through a shared responsibility. Together we can! Hillcrest Collegiate provides leadership and support to provide optimal opportunity to allow students to be excellent in both their learning and their sport. (p. 3)

Indeed, the requirement that excellence be produced remains unchallenged in this discourse. It appears that the rhetoric of excellence is justified through discourses of performance, individual development, health, utility and productivity. All these discourses working together serve to govern young people’s lives. According to the Canadian Sport Policy, 2012:

Canadians have identified population health, community building, social development, nation building and civic engagement as areas in which sport can make the greatest contributions to Canadian society over the next ten years. These contributions are significant as Canada faces several challenges: obesity, physical inactivity and related health problems. Ultimately, high quality, intentionally designed sport programming can contribute to the following broad societal outcomes:

**Excellence**: Canadians excel in sport to the extent of their abilities, and excellence is embraced as an aspiration worthy of pursuit in all facets of delivery and practice;
**Enhanced education and skill development:** Canadians gain physical literacy and sport skills that allow them to participate, compete and excel in sport, deriving personal pleasure and pride in their accomplishments and skills that can be transferred to other fields of practice.

The vision reflects the importance of nurturing a culture that develops all aspects of sport participation, is proud of its high performance athletes, and leverages sport for the benefit of its youth and the enhancement of its communities. (ps. 4-5)

The social and economic consequences of sport success achievable through a shared responsibility of institutional commitments that bridge high-performance sport and education policy reinforces the importance of discourses of excellence in the sports school, directly linking youth’s sport and academic success to the social and economic prosperity of the country:

Implicit in the vision is the notion that Canada is a leading sport nation where all Canadians can pursue sport to the extent of their abilities and interests, including performing at the highest competitive levels; and where sport delivers benefits, for increasing numbers, to individual health and well-being, and contributes to socio-economic outcomes…Participation includes all individual sport participants (athletes, coaches, officials, administrators, leaders, educators etc.) organizations and sectors involved in the realization of broader socio-economic outcomes through sport. Excellence is embraced in all contexts and facets of sport delivery and practice, and Canadians participate and excel to the full extent of their abilities. (Sport Canada, 2012, p. 5)

These kinds of discourses place elite young athletes themselves as invested consumers and producers of themselves in the contexts of excellence.

b) **Commitments to investing in the self**

With the proliferation of policy and institutional texts aimed at the student-athlete in the pursuit of excellence, and the subsequent places (e.g., the sports school) through which to realize them demonstrate, the production of a particular kind of subject is encouraged; that is the entrepreneurial subject who invests in themselves and their own futures (Bacchi, 2009). This is evident in the school’s philosophy:

Our students understand themselves and their accomplishments which is reflected in their athletic achievements, physical strength…and mental
perseverance. *Hillcrest Collegiate* promotes the understanding that our students will be able to meet their goals only if the goals that they set are meaningful to them. (p. 4)

This agenda sharply aligns with ideas of success, positioned alongside training, as a worthwhile investment in the future self. In turn, such assumptions focus on youth as agents and entrepreneurs of their own sport lives. This idea of sport as an investment in the self appears to underlie the proposition that student-athletes should incorporate sport into all aspects of their lives, even while at school. Within this policy the discourse of individual adaptability is valued and deployed for youth consumption. As Peter (strength and conditioning coach) explains:

What I’m really looking at is the whole package when I train because I’m looking at the training aspect but the training will reflect the academics because the best players are really good at their academics. So, it’s learning how to put these two together. It’s a really good mix to have the academics together with your sport. I think you’ll have a happier kid who learns to adjust and balance what’s going on in their life outside of school and sport. It’s a stress release and you’re in a school where kids are active and I think it’s really building a foundation for the future. So, now, maybe, in their sport and later on in their job they can handle difficult stuff. It’s up to them to do it and figure it out. After high school it’s up to them to do it...this is not just for now, this is for the future. I’m trying to build a foundation for future success. I’m hoping what they take from here they’ll continue in the future.

Peter’s idea of building a foundation for the future success of student-athletes parallels with a primary goal of the *Canadian Sport Policy, 2012*, and its emphasis on “looking forward” (p. 4) to establish direction “promotion and celebrating excellence in sport” (p. 2), and using sport as a means for present (and future) “personal and social development” (p. 4). In the case of *Hillcrest Collegiate*, youth are told they need to learn how to learn; that is they need to learn how to train, and how to train correctly in order to make the appropriate investment in their future. This emphasis on making youth flexible for their futures aligns with the needs of Sport Canada, and various other institutional objectives, intent on pursuing excellence. With regard to personal development, the *Canadian Sport Policy, 2012*, articulates “an enhanced vision that emphasizes the instrumental value of sport” (p. 22) particularly building upon the 2002 *Canadian Sport Policy’s* focus on personal development and social development inspiring (future and
more inclusive) participation in sport (Sport Canada, 2012). This is to be accomplished through the ongoing development of physical literacy; that is the “development of physical literacy is begun in childhood and improved throughout one’s life. It is both a driver of performance for the competitive (youth) athlete and a foundation for active living and health for everyone” (p. 7). There are clear links with investing in the future and working hard; there is a lifelong commitment to excellence both in sport and outside of sport. Such conceptions “produce subjects who have to think of themselves as entrepreneurs of themselves” (Bacchi, 2009, p. 20) and are imbued with discursive tropes of choice and self-responsibility placing youth at the centre of the process responsible for their present and future career and sport prospects:

Henry (administrator): I’m a firm believer of shaping them for both [academics and athletics]. I want them to be well-rounded people. In how I conduct myself everyday I try to teach them not only the curriculum, but life lessons, life skills. I like to integrate them because at the end of the day, yeah, it would be nice if they could do math or write an essay, but the most important thing is that they would be able to contribute to society and have the life skills that can help them in their future occupations. So, it’s great to have your sport but at the same time I believe it’s vital to have the academic foundation so that they can succeed later.

This lies at the heart of the tensions around discourses of excellence in this context while paradoxically encouraging youth to “bring the future into their present” (Fusco, 2012) by making the necessary (and correct) choices among the possibilities offered to them. In turn, the policy and institutional documents, along with the conceived space(s) of the sports school, produce the subjects it assumes—individuals intent on achieving excellence through specific forms of legitimized ‘work’ as an investment in their own future (and current) success:

Peter (strength and conditioning coach): When I came in this school maybe 5% of these students were showing up for training. Now you gotta’ go to

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48 I would also suggest that those in the education and recreation sectors, such as teachers and coaches, are incited to think of themselves as entrepreneurs of themselves as “they play critical roles in sport participation as both providers and partners in its delivery” (Sport Canada, 2012, p. 8). More specifically, the policy sets in action a hierarchy requiring that those in charge, particularly of youth sport and recreation, adhere to the discursive tropes of excellence, performance and development set out by Sport Canada, and, in turn, pass this on to student-athletes.
95%. You gotta’ study and you gotta’ come to training. So, if you don’t like to study and you don’t like doing your homework or passing your grades, or you don’t like training hard, following our system then this school’s not for you. You just can’t come here and play [your sport]. It doesn’t work like that. You can come here play hockey, play basketball but you have to do well in your academics ‘cause if you don’t do well in your academics guess what? You’re not playing your sport. And we’ve had to get rid of students because of that. They came in here and all they wanted to do was play [their sport] and it doesn’t work like that. So, it’s preparing for the future when you have a strict guideline you need to follow and they need that.

Certainly, the investment in athlete development, alongside sport for youth, together with the desire to connect more strongly with the education sector (Kikulis, 2013), fits with the assumption of building and improving on human capital underpinning these assumptions. The sports school, then, might be understood as a place of salvation (Pronger, 2002) because through engaging in useful work (and the more productively the body and mind are trained) youth accumulate capital from their individual work. Salvation comes from individual’s constant and disciplined self-working (Pronger, 2002):

Diane (teacher): I think the goal overall [at Hillcrest Collegiate] is to get them [student-athletes] to a professional or semi-professional level or to get them a scholarship in university. And even just get the kids to a higher level. Some of the kids never go really far, but it’s getting them involved, it’s getting them more skilled, it’s getting them active and I think it’s more exciting to come to school when you have more than just class. And, you become a stronger person. You become more disciplined in that sense. Being an elite athlete means willing to work hard enough to become the best. Maybe you are not the best right now but you have it in you, the determination, the strength, the work ethic to be the best. I think all those characteristics are encouraged here.

This is problematic not only for the way(s) in which such assumptions and discourses construct the self but also in how it serves taken-for-granted truths around excellence, performance and development. As we see below, for the youth body this work is prescribed, regulated and normalized in very specific ways and requires a great deal of discipline.

**Question 3: What effects are produced by the representation of the problem?**

To reiterate, the explicit problem outlined by the Canadian Sport Policy, 2012, is the commitment to developing sport excellence to achieve future medal success at
international competitions. *Implicit* within this policy desire however is the student-
athlete’s position. When there is a commitment to achieving podium results in the name
of national (Canada) interests, this calls on youth athletes to pursue results and to work on
themselves in very specific and modified ways. What tends to be absent in this narrative
are the competing interests that may exist between Federal and Provincial/Territorial
sport organizations and schools. To recognize the competing problem representations
that exist within any given policy, Bacchi turns attention to three interconnected “kinds of
effects” (Bacchi, 2009, p. 15) that contribute to the development and persistence of the
above-mentioned problem representations. These include: 1) Discursive effects; 2)
Subjectification effects; and 3) Lived effects. Using institutional ethnography, as a
method of inquiry, I investigated the institutional processes that shape these effects, and
examined how they are imbued with narratives of power impacting everyday social
processes.

1) Discursive effects

In a ‘what’s the problem represented to be’ approach to policy analysis, discursive
effects are defined as the resultant effects following from the discursive limits that frame
what can be thought and said within specific problem representations (Bacchi, 2009).
That said, in this section I analyse how specific discursive framings inherent in policies,
such as the *Canadian Sport Policy, 2012*, have been taken up in particular ways by
*Hillcrest Collegiate* which may be said to impose discursive limits on certain individuals.

*Hillcrest Collegiate: The Information Package*

The concept of excellence, as conceived by the Federal and Provincial/Territorial
governments, in collaboration with additional stakeholders, appears to have been taken
up by *Hillcrest Collegiate* and diffused through the policies, spaces and ongoing practices
in the school. More specifically, it is precisely in the implicit problem constructions
around the pursuit of sport excellence and performance, predicated alongside
development, which undergrad the discourse that youth high-performance athletic training
enters the field of education. The school’s *Information Package*, a document given to
new and prospective student-athletes, outlines for students and parents, the school’s pride
in its unique ability to bridge academic and athletic programs. The language used in the information package harkens to the past, present and future ideals of the academy signalling a particular attitude towards sport, physical activity and health and its dissemination and circulation in the lives of students, teachers, coaches and administrative staff. There is an explicit emphasis on educating the whole individual by “producing first-class academic athletes” (p.5) and there is also a commitment “to recognize the need to challenge our students to identify, work through their weaknesses and push them in order to achieve a high level of…success” (p. 6). Moreover, this text demonstrates the school’s investment in excellence and there is suggestion that this can be realized in the school’s programs:

At *Hillcrest Collegiate* we recognize the need to challenge our students to identify, work through their weaknesses and push them in order to achieve a high level of academic success. (p. 6)

*Hillcrest Collegiate* provides sport specific training to all its student-athletes consisting of conditioning, strength training, and fitness geared for their individual sport. (p. 12)

More specifically, *Hillcrest Collegiate’s* program is unique because:

By combining the focus on academics and sport, the faculty at *Hillcrest Collegiate* has created specialized programs that are designed to fit every individual student’s needs…Our professional faculty is comprised of Ontario Certified Teachers, fitness specialists, sport trainers and top level coaches who have designed tailored programs for student-athletes. *Hillcrest Collegiate* develops personal player profiles for all students. We work with each athlete to build a profile that is then made available to coaches and recruiters from universities and colleges throughout North America. *Hillcrest Collegiate* conducts informational trips to Canadian and US universities to showcase our athletes, meet coaches and academic advisors that allow our students the chance to submit their “athletic resume” as well as their “academic resume” directly to the decision-makers on each school’s campus, which could assist them in obtaining academic or athletic scholarships. (p.5)
The promotion of instrumental\textsuperscript{49} (student) athlete development, positioned alongside training, underscores the implicit problems and desire for excellence and international results imagined by Sport Canada and other stakeholders to conceive of a space that could act as a place for the production and maintenance of future high-performance athletes (Fusco, 2009). Implied within these assumptions is that the ‘problem’ to ultimately achieving excellence and international results are the subjects (student-athletes) of policy and curricula and the need for them to focus on and perfect their skill development. Framed alongside discourses of training, and life-long learning, these reproduce the desire to subject youth’s sport worlds, and their bodies, to cultivation and modification, in specific spaces where the profusion of skills can be monitored, measured and maintained under highly rationalized conditions (Fusco, 2009).

Hillcrest Collegiate: Student/Parent Handbook

The Student/Parent Handbook provides a more in-depth look at the school’s commitment to programs aimed at achieving excellence. Although not explicitly mentioned in the text, the focus on excellence and the increasingly instrumentalized and rationalized means by which this is taken up by high-performance sport has been refashioned in the context of this sports school. Well-intentioned desires to develop elite athletes reflects a recent projection and refashioning of sport in Canada to produce a more athlete-centered sports system while maintaining commitment to discourses of excellence expressed in various sport policies (Fusco, 2009; Kidd, 2013). The discursive construction of “excellence in sport” (p. 3), as a shared responsibility by both the school and stakeholders themselves, enables the space of Hillcrest Collegiate to act as a place where such discourses of excellence and performance are distilled into everyday life, and further taken up by the staff, coaches, teachers and student-athletes. For example, such

\textsuperscript{49} When writing about the instrumentalisation of student-athlete development I mean to imply the productive promotion of the training of youth elite athletes in very specific ways. In other words, although Sport Canada, through such policy documents as the Canadian Sport Policy, 2012, takes a broad approach towards achieving excellence in high-performance sport, by drawing on athlete development as a means to do so reframes (youth) development as an instrumental and productive activity. Given that the instrumentalisation of sport is making its way to the education sector (as evidenced with the propagation of sports schools across Canada), the holistic development of youth may be undermined and instead viewed as a means to an end where youth development in sport is primarily seen as progressive in achieving excellence and success in sport.
discourses are implicitly taken up in *Hillcrest Collegiate’s* mission statement: “our mission is to further the development of student-athletes and help them become top-level performers in their sport, life-long learners and career-oriented, respectful individuals” (p.3). This highlights the institutional commitment to investing in the self. Although each sports school across Canada has the autonomy to develop its own programs and services, funding base and student-athlete eligibility requirements, it is important to note that inherent in *Hillcrest Collegiate’s* mission statement is an overall focus on the pursuit of excellence and performance in the name of becoming “top-level performers in their sport”. Here, in this school, youth are assumed to have an interest in producing themselves as agents and entrepreneurs of their own excellence, which aligns with the political rationalities of Canadian sport policy.

In addition to adhering to the school’s mission statement, student-athletes accepted into *Hillcrest Collegiate* are encouraged to follow “the five-P philosophy to character development” (p.4):

- Participate as a leader, student, competitor and active member of your community
- Positive attitude towards yourself and others, and towards challenging situations
- Promote sharing, integrity, modesty and respect
- Perseverance in school, sport, friendships and achieving your goals
- Pride in your work, your accomplishment, your health, your mind and yourself

It is clear from the above philosophy statements that a number of goals are emphasized in addition to the pursuit of excellence including participate, positive, perseverance and personal development. Not surprisingly, in this “unique athletic, health-centered atmosphere” (p. 4), the central focus is to be the pursuit of excellence, “through the building of a tradition of distinction in competition” (p. 5). Moreover, access to the schools’ services and programs is to be given to youth who strive to “be the best [they] can be in academics, athletics and citizenship” (p. 10). Thus, it appears that, particularly in the policies and language used throughout the Parent/Student Handbook, that the school discourses tend to reiterate specific government policies, such as *Canadian Sport Policy, 2012*, which play a leading role in framing the conceived and imagined spaces of the sports school as a place to encourage an enriched athletic environment for elite
athletes by focusing on education in the context of technology, excellence and performance.

As previous critiques of the state’s intentions to provide athletic environments with a primary focus on serving Canadian national interests highlight (Fusco, 2009; Kidd, 2013), it is not new to suggest that high-performance athletes, along with their bodies, are embedded in government desires and discourses of excellence, production and nationalism (cf. Beamish and Ritchie, 2006; Fusco, 2009; Johns and Johns, 2000; Kidd, 1988, 2013; Shogan, 1999; Theberge, 2007). However, what may be new within current discourses and desires centralized around the production of sporting excellence is that these discourses are now integral to particular education spaces, and target youth sport bodies, in new and specific ways. As such, the discursive limits imposed on what can be thought and said within the specific problem representations outlined herein may begin to dominate the everyday lives of staff, coaches, teachers and student-athletes, and subsequently, the ‘work’ that is required of all of them in this space. The space of the sports school then becomes critical as youth’s (sport) bodies can be more readily targeted, regulated and managed through hegemonic (but desired) bodily practices.

Given these possible discursive effects, what is not considered, are the social, emotional and personal affects that arise from the intersections of learning, competition and high-performance sports, as discourses of excellence, production and development, along with the commitment to discipline and regulation, are continually cultivated, expected and desired. How might this affect youth who differently perceive themselves as either students and athletes outside of such discourses of excellence or who are outstanding academically as well as athletically, are viewed as privileged subjects? Furthermore, the reliance on discourses of excellence and production, shapes what is considered legitimate knowledge for athlete development generally, and for enhancing youth’s bodies, physical activity and sport, more specifically. Importantly, this has implications for the forms of training, organization and regulation that are authoritatively promoted and whose bodies ideally ‘fit’ in to this type of work.
As such, it becomes important to pay attention to the commonalities in the discursive limits outlined across all policies that implicitly (re)produce basic doctrines of the body and how desire should unfold (Pronger, 2002). These discursive limits can, in part, be attributed to what authoritative body produces the technological knowledge of sport and the presuppositions it upholds to achieving excellence. The current discourses draw on rhetorics that reproduce certain forms of knowledge that assist in the micropolitical organization and regulation of the everyday life of the school. In other words, the established policy discourses situate the student-athletes’ bodies in a way that makes them available for a type of resource management (for the school, province and Canada), and their value is realized when they participate wholeheartedly. As I show below in the section on subjectification effects, these discourses impress on the body a certain idea of excellence and production achieved via precise ‘work’ mechanisms with a focus on the management of the body through specific disciplinary technologies.

2) Subjectification effects

Put simply, subjectification effects are the ways in which certain subjects are constituted within particular problem representations (Bacchi, 2009). Identifying subjectification effects enacted through the ways in which policies (dis)enable certain social relationships and subject positioning(s) within them, first requires examining the kinds of individuals and practices the discourses, and ensuing problem representations, invite student-athletes to be and adhere to. As Bacchi (2009, p. 14) explains:

Discourses make certain subject positions available. And, when such a position is assumed, a person tends to make sense of the social world from this standpoint, all the while being subjected to the full range of discourses constituting this position. Hence, who we are – how we feel about ourselves and others—is at least to an extent an effect of the subject positions made available in public policies.

Subjectification effects, then, can be said to play a role in the type of work, understood from an institutional ethnography perspective, people are incited to engage in daily. To reiterate, this work is intentional and incorporates the individual’s subjectivity and his/her experience (Smith, 2005). Expanding on the above noted discursive effects, I suggest that Sport Canada and various stakeholders that are connected in explicit and implicit
ways to Canadian athletics, such as *Hillcrest Collegiate*, have conceptualized and perceived sports school spaces and their subjects (teachers, students, coaches etc.) as places where discourses of excellence, production, and development can be organized and measured. This of course plays a role in the subject positions made possible in this space.

**Training and Testing**

As I stated earlier, in the recent iteration of the *Canadian Sport Policy, 2012*, athletes and their performance, in the pursuit of medal success, have become synonymous with excellence. More recently, the drive for medal success has been supported by several federal (Sport Canada) initiatives, most notably *Canadian Sport for Life’s* adoption of an LTAD model, or a systematic approach to athlete development and training. According to Way et al., (2013) in their analysis of sports schools and academies across the country, they found that it is deemed critical to athlete development that such schools take up the LTAD model, “as the majority of training hours will occur while the athlete is attending secondary school (age 13-18)” (p. 9). Centering the narrative on standards required for student-athletes to achieve optimal athletic development while balancing academics, speaks to the technical role of applied sport science, competition and performance that is rationalized in the sports school. Although *Hillcrest Collegiate*’s Parent/Student Handbook does not make explicit mention of the LTAD model, there is still a focus on methodically enhancing athlete training and development, transforming ‘excellence’ into a vocabulary for achieving optimal performance, efficiency and discipline (Kidd, 2013):

At *Hillcrest Collegiate*, our goal is simple: to be the best we can be in academics, athletics and citizenship. Specifically we pledge:

- To provide the highest quality opportunities for all of our student-athletes, including opportunities to practice, train, learn and experience all those associated with a varsity athlete. (Student/Parent Handbook, 2015, p. 10)

Our school has among the “Best and the Brightest” who work together in teams and strive to be the best they can be as they successfully compete. Consequently
our [school] community is rich with expertise and commitment. A community that reaches for excellence! (Student/Parent Handbook, 2015, p. 14)

_Hillcrest Collegiate_ is striving to build a tradition of distinction in competition, in academic and athletic pursuits, and in community involvement…we expect our young people to be successful as a ‘student’ as well as an ‘athlete’. In the pursuit of this distinction, we affirm our commitment to integrity in all that we do. Students will see staff model respect for themselves, for others, and for our school. These are among the many positive values and exemplary behaviour that are expectations of our school community (Student/Parent Handbook, 2015, p. 5)

While the narratives found throughout the Student/Parent Handbook align with notions of distinction and commitment, this is perhaps most evident in the routines and schedules of the sports that take place in this space. For example, there is information in both the Information Package and Student/Parent Handbook outlining the operation of the school’s daily timetable, which all student-athletes are expected to follow. Athletic fitness sessions occur twice daily: before school between 8:30 a.m. - 10:10 a.m.; and after school between 3:15 p.m. - 4:30 p.m., where all students are expected to take part in agility training four times a week. Located on the periphery wall of the student-athlete weight room, there is a timetable with the week’s fitness training schedule which includes a list of warm up drills and a fitness schedule that alternates between days one and three and days two and four (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2 below).
Figure 4.1: Photograph of fitness schedule for days one and two.

Figure 4.2: Photograph of fitness schedule alternating between days one and three and days two and four.
Within policy-based and derived discourses, a clear image of the desired subject emerges. This is the student-athlete who is engaged in governing his/her lifestyle according to the school’s prescriptions of training and who takes pleasure in actively participating in this form of body management. This particular youth subject is rewarded by the prospect of possessing other qualities such as being one of the “healthier, responsible citizens” (Student/Parent Handbook, p. 4; 19). The training timetable acts as a kind of disciplinary tool (Foucault, 1977) allowing for the creation of a productive and effective individual who is encouraged to act in accordance with the desired norms established by school staff (which align with Sport Canada). In a sense, individuals who do not take part in the four training sessions a week are described as lacking ambition and ultimately failing in their pursuit of excellence. Effective use of visual representations of sports clichés throughout the school gymnasium reinforces this (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4).

*Figure 4.3: A main wall in the school gymnasium, a place where the majority of training takes place, is emblazoned with the statement: “Winners Train Losers Complain”.*
What is problematic in these readings is that constructions of the desired productive subject may eventually marginalize those student-athletes who do not (or choose not to) adhere to the desired subject position and the work that is required of them. These kinds of technologies of physical fitness, employed by the school via daily fitness training and visual cues on school walls, write a coherent script for the body, suggesting limited and productive directions for the body and desire within these discourses (Shogan, 1999).

The effective use of panoptic devices (Foucault, 1977; Markula and Pringle, 2006), such as accountability measures employed by the school’s coaches and administrative staff in order to establish performance reviews and records of individual development, can be said to be in line with the imperatives of excellence outlined by Canadian Sport Policy, 2012, and the marketing plan to which the school is committed. One of the main interests of Hillcrest Collegiate, is the marketability of student-athletes to post-secondary schools, coaches and teams:

[Hillcrest Collegiate] is one of the only Canadian schools to emphasize the “MARKETING” of players to the right people as a means to help our athletes to achieve their athletic goals. [Hillcrest Collegiate] is also connected to a huge network of player agents, scouts and elite teams to give our student-athletes the leading edge in getting to the next level. (Information Package, 2015, p. 5)

It is obvious that the value of student-athletes is predicated on the capacity of their bodies, and what it can do within the parameters of discipline and training and codes of
fitness. Here, the “body is measureable” (Pronger, 2002, p. 131). As Fusco (2009, p. 13) in her study on National (Canadian) Sport Centres (NSC’s) explains, “high performance sport, the sport that takes places in NSC spaces, is composed of methods, principles, conditions and norms through which particular types of corporeal practices can be inculcated onto bodies”—this is definitely true of the sports school, a space which appears to be modeled after NSC spaces. Indeed, in these pedagogical sites (Wright, 2009) it might be suggested that it is now possible to place the athletic body into an assemblage of disciplinary mechanisms that seek to normalize and regulate desires, pleasures and actions to support high-performance sport. Thus, the interplay of specific discourses, power relations and the ’making’ of student-athletes at Hillcrest Collegiate shape realities and the construction of identities in very specific ways, which I will demonstrate in the next chapter. Importantly, this has implications for the type of ’work’ that is legitimated and authoritatively promoted in this space, which is effectively and productively engaged in through what I term ’measured development’.

The multiple discourses that are reified through Hillcrest Collegiate’s policies speak to this notion of measured development. The policies all mention concepts—such as “success”, “excellence in sport”, and “participation”—but these discourses are discreetly juxtaposed with those of monitoring, evaluation and efficiency. This form of measured development – development predicated on productivity and examination—produces texts about the body as well as individualized prescriptions to moderate what the body ‘lacks’ (Pronger, 2002). Paraphrasing Pronger (2002), this body text further renders the student-athlete subject to the meanings attached to the proficient body as well as an individualized prescription to fill what the body is deemed to lack. These developments are possible because of the systemic increase in technocratic ideologies (Charles, 1998; Pronger, 2002; Shogan, 1999) that underpin discourses of sport excellence through constant and ongoing monitoring, classification, training and testing.

Such investments in/on the body constitute a program of subjection making athletic bodies in this space available to various disciplinary technologies, as I have highlighted above. As the subjectification effects characteristic of the scheduling, training and testing of student-athletes taking place at Hillcrest Collegiate suggests, there
are “common-sense perceptions” (Fusco, 2009, p. 7), taken from both sport policy and institutional policies, that highlight how such a space is to be perceived. More specifically, the connection between policy and practices at the school work together to (re)produce discourses of excellence in line with the high-performance sport system. The institutional policies, along with stakeholder narratives, place an emphasis on providing a “unique athletic, health centred atmosphere” (Student/Parent Handbook, p. 4), bridging academic, health and athletic programs through its specialized facilities, coaches, trainers, and teachers. This suggests that explicit attention is being paid to the development of efficient and effective spaces and movement in the quest for producing excellence. This desire for excellence, as I illustrate below, has played a role in the symbolic imaginings of the spaces of Hillcrest Collegiate.

Expectations for producing sport excellence are, interestingly, linked with expectations of the architectural layout of the school. In the next section, I demonstrate how sport policy can have ‘subjectification effects’ on the production of space, specifically highlighting how the spatial practice of the school’s hallway, acts as an enclosure in which the production and making of elite athletic bodies, in the name of excellence, is enabled.

Spaces and Places of the School: The Hallway

The meanings attached to the hallway at Hillcrest Collegiate are quite telling; it acts as a constant and centralized reminder of achievement and success and is encountered by many members of the school community on a daily basis. The hallway displays many trophies and plaques, which adorn the walls – all of them markers of excellence.
Figure 4.5: Media clippings memorialized on the walls of the school hallway.

Then there is the placement of sport memorabilia such as signed jerseys from past students with captions reading *HC’s Tenacious Twelve*.

Figure 4.6: *HC’s Tenacious Twelve* are a group of male student-athletes who have competed at some of the highest levels of hockey including playing in the Ontario Hockey League (OHL), the American Hockey League (AHL) and the National Hockey League (NHL).
Completing the displays of excellence are the media postings detailing the benefits of attending a sports school including increased training time and healthy eating (see Figure 4.7).

*Figure 4.7: Healthy eating media post.*

All these signs and texts on the walls, including one about sport and learning (see Figure 4.8) are measurable documentations and constant reminders of how bodies and their proficiency are bound up with place.

*Figure 4.8: Sport and learning media posting.*
The hallway is a valorized space and demonstrated to me how space is (re)produced to do something; in this case it illuminates the way(s) in which athletic bodies and subjects are to be shaped and cultivated in sports school space. In this hallowed space, there is an expectation that everything (and everyone) in the sports school should be working in order to meet discourses of, and desires for, excellence outlined by sport governing bodies, curricula and institutional policies.

The spatial practice of the hallway, situated in and alongside other geographical sites of the school (e.g., the sports field, gymnasium, hockey rinks and classrooms) act as functional sites (Foucault, 1977) to spatially, socially, and politically situate the subjects of the sports school. Imagined as a place where elite sport preparation and the production of athletic bodies could be enabled and contained, the hallway acts as a symbolic site where past and current student-athletes can proudly display their athletic prowess and excellence. It is a place where future student-athletes can be inculcated into the values of the school. This of course is not new. Critical studies in cultural geographies of contemporary youth and schools (see Dillabough and Kennelly, 2010; Gallagher and Fusco, 2006; Raby, 2012; Rail, 2009), hospital geographies (see Atkinson, Lawson and Wiles, 2011; Ferrie, 2010) and sport spaces, (see Fusco, 2009), shed light on how urban imaginaries and moral geographies are symbolically represented in specific youth spaces and are often linked to neoliberal desires to manage the bodies of individuals. The complex material and symbolic dimensions of ideological commitments to excellence and physical development in these spaces, embedded with neoliberalizing discourses such as individualization, personal responsibility, personal choice and accountability, reiterate how power relations are implicated in the production of particular social spaces and on particular social and physical bodies. This includes the ‘lost young people’, described by Dillabough and Kennelly (2010), for whom the city is not just a space for pleasure, but also a site of discursive underpinnings of risk, class and racial inscriptions. As I stated above, this kind of cultivation is not new, and I am suggesting that the sports school, much like other spaces (e.g., the city, hospital, school etc.), that (re)produce particular kinds of subjects is no different. In such a space, useful athletic individuals are subjected to, and are subjects of, the organization of space, surveillance, discourses of excellence, commitment and performance and nationhood. This is an everyday certainty:
continued investment in elite youth athletes have particular effects on their bodies and the school space.

To that end, the materiality of the hallway site, and the symbolic subjectification effects enacted there, provided me with a way to look at these spatial practices as different textual sources, which are embedded with certain dominant discourses. Because of my reading and background, I could not help but see the widespread discourses of excellence circulating in this space as omnipresent and believed that their constant reiteration dominated the day-to-day lives of staff, teachers and student-athletes at the sports school. The hallway as a place then would appear to implicate and centralize space in the making of sports school subjectivities rather than it being peripheral to this process. The hallway in effect plays a disciplinary role, which facilitates a national biopolitical project. This is an ‘art of distribution’ (Foucault, 1977) in which school planning and the architectural layout of the sport administration sites act as productive sites for the disciplining and normalizing (via surveillance, self-monitoring) of subjects. In such a way, these mechanisms are an essential part of the strategies used by sport officials and school administrators to regulate and govern youth’s performance and their bodies in this context.

The hallway’s symbolic organization, while demonstrating displays of pride, could also be understood as an imagined space of surveillance and observation. Recalling McClintock’s (1995) discussion of the auction block used in the selling of black slaves, the importance of “scale” (p. 74) is reiterated in this space. Here the memorabilia, media and trophies are placed on the walls for people to gaze up at and be reminded of what they have not yet achieved. Unlike looking up at the body of the slave however – where there was no desire to be like that body at all – the scale works in the favour of the institutional documents and policies because looking up evokes a desire to be part of the larger high-performance sport system. I would also suggest that the hallway acts as a kind of display.

50 In her analysis of the auction block used in the selling of black slaves, McClintock (1995) discusses the placing of race up for sale as facilitated by body-scale via the control of space or spatial activities. That is, connecting beyond the local, the scale of the body, while on the auction block, serves to demarcate and differentiate black bodies from those not on the auction block, and those places surrounding the auction block.
of technology (i.e., a technology of discipline where discourses of texts and socio-cultural practices combine to symbolically (re)produce the body and school in specific ways) that scales the body through constant documentations of excellence, and the use of intimate, individual stories, all the while displaying the best qualities of top performing athletes. The story that is (re)told about this school space is one of achievement, recognition and celebrating past and present student-athletes. Aptly titled “HC’s Notorious Nine” the display of the school’s jersey (Figure 4.9), along with the many trophies (Figure 4.10), serves as a reminder of the cultivation of excellence and a particular kind of student-athlete who is celebrated in this space.

Figure 4.9: School jerseys
Both Dillabough and Kennelly (2010) and Raby’s (2012) analysis of school corridors align with my understanding of the importance of the corridor space in the sports school. The spatial experience of knowing what values are important (i.e., excellence) construct this specific site and shape how youth understand themselves as members of the sports school. Rachel, mentions how the hallway trophies communicate a particular message to her:

Rachel (Grade-Eleven): It’s all about excellence. High-performance, determination, and just trying your best all the time in sport and school. You see that when you walk in the school with the trophies and stuff. A lot of us here play at the highest level but sometimes that doesn’t mean elite. It’s the kids who work really hard, train as much as they can to make themselves better, and do as well as they can in school.
The knowledge forms that the school hallway elicits are also bound to larger questions of identity, self-surveillance and legitimacy, as Rachel’s narrative highlights, influencing how representations (i.e., as seen with the memorabilia and trophies lining the corridor) effect student-athletes’ understanding of themselves and their place in the school. As Dillabough and Kennelly (2010) suggest, social practices enacted in the school corridor, as well as any associated representations (e.g. the hallway metaphorically represented as a place of excellence and achievement) can serve to organize and divide the space in specific ways, and can provide additional referential acts for classifying oneself and others. They state: “Such representations are durable and inherited, as well as discontinuous and new, and form part of young people’s encounters with the ‘cultural ordinary’ of everyday life” (p. 79). Hillcrest Collegiate’s hallway, and the symbolic power and modes of surveillance that converge on the space of the corridor make up the ‘cultural ordinary of everyday life’ for student-athletes. The way(s) in which the hallway facilitates such subjectification through the control of space not only reasserts how individual student-athletes are disciplined and regulated, but also spatialize the school’s placement within the larger high-performance sport system. As Rachel’s narrative makes clear, student-athletes use the hallway, and its representations as a site to scale the body through all the visual reminders of excellence and mutual surveillance. Thus, experience, knowledge and the (re)production of values through visual representations in the school corridor, spatialize Sport Canada’s mandate of achieving excellence. Indeed, one could argue that the visual display of subjectification create a certain scale of the body through ideological discourses (McClintock, 1995). The scale of the body here is not bound to a hallway, but rather this kind of place acts as a site to render broader social processes of scaling the body in relation to the wider policy and institutional spatial.

51 This perspective, that is my analysis of subjectification effects in the sports school, may be challenged when looked at through a pleasure lens. Certainly, when examining the social significance of sport pleasures (as I do in the next chapter) it may be suggested that this call to excellence that gets written on the body is, in fact, pleasurable, and actively pursued by student-athletes in different ways. As Shogan (1999, p. 14) points out “superb skills just are effects of exacting discipline”. That is, student-athletes cannot gain superb skills without the exacting discipline that this space requires of them and student-athletes may in fact benefit from and desire to be subjected to such disciplinary regimes.
Overall, the layout of a space, such as the hallway, demonstrates the work that is done to insert discourses of excellence, performance and development into the sports school and how it can validate the ideological currency and value of the productive sports body. As Leo (Grade-Nine) suggests:

I’m pretty self-motivated so I think when I look at other students I want to see, okay what are they doing that I’m not? Because let’s say on the ice they’re scoring three goals or something like that, getting points every single game, I like to see what they’re doing that’s good and I like to apply it to myself. And it’s not just when I’m playing. And yeah, when I walk through the hallway, seeing it everyday, every time I leave class, everything on the walls, the trophies it makes me want to work hard. Seeing all that stuff and knowing I’m here to be the best I can be really pushes me.

As noted, *Hillcrest Collegiate*, as a perceived space of athletic excellence, was conceived by sports authorities as well as additional stakeholders as a space, much like a national sport centre that “could guarantee a level of competence and performance from athletes and athletic personnel” (Fusco, 2009, p. 2) who train and work in these spaces. This is certainly tied to the school’s marketing plan and the particular making of student-athletes to whom the school is committed. According to Ray (administrator) the layout of the school parallels the culture of the school:

I knew the facility was a great facility [. . .] Just coming in here I thought when you bring people in here, who are able to see the space, who are passionate like myself and love what they do, I thought it would be an easy journey to change the school to have the culture that we promote. A culture of excellence, hard work, discipline. We train hard, we study hard and we create great human beings no matter what level or where they go from here.

The connection Ray makes between spaces of the school, the body and (sport and institutional) policy reveals his understanding that the school and its athletic bodies are connected to wider social processes and geographic processes, such as the making of elite athletes in the name of excellence. As Ray (administrator) elaborates it is through such an ensemble that *Hillcrest Collegiate* can fashion itself as a place “putting out great product, and the great products are the kids. When the kids get out there physically and academically they are showing the world just great overall young individuals that are having an impact”. Furthermore, I am suggesting, as part of this ensemble, the hallway
(and other spaces) of *Hillcrest Collegiate* enables the scaling of the body, and that these spaces construct discourses, like the national sport centre, constituting “a program of subjection” (Fusco, 2009, p. 18). These reassert how athletic bodies can be named, classified and valued. In other words, with the daily and ongoing movement of individuals in, through and out of, the hallway, all kinds of social arrangements, texts and discourses are strengthened and (re)produced.

3) *Lived effects*

My examination of the discursive and subjectification effects turned my attention towards the possible symbolic impact of material representations. Lived effects, on the other hand, directed my attention to the possible material effects of certain problem representations “that have effects in the real by materially affecting our lives” (Bacchi, 2009, p. 18). Exploring the day-to-day lives of individuals highlights the ways in which policies create problem representations that have real effects in the everyday and takes into account the specific experiences of individuals in particular local (institutional) settings coordinated with, and organized by, work knowledge or practice (Bacchi, 2009; Mykhalovskiy and McCoy, 2002; Smith, 2001). In this section I discuss how administrators, coaches, teachers and student-athletes are inculcated into, and benefit from, the discourses of excellence, always ensuring that such discourses are being achieved. These strategies are loosely focused on routine, scheduling and adherence to training and testing.

**The Importance of Developing (and Adhering to) Schedules**

The daily sport and academic routines that take place in *Hillcrest Collegiate* space(s) are, not surprisingly, indicative of the disciplinary technologies that Foucault (1977) outlines in *Birth of a Prison*, such as scheduling, timetabling, and temporal imperatives. The adoption and ongoing adaptation of schedules and routines is inextricably linked to the maintenance of discipline and speaks to the “character development” (Student/Parent Handbook, 2015, p. 4) that youth are supposed to be engaged in as they closely follow the school’s prescriptions of sport and academic management. As far as *Hillcrest Collegiate* staff are concerned, the daily schedule,
broken down into routinized temporal limits, (see Chapter 3, Methodology for a breakdown of the daily schedule by time) has to be followed by student-athletes each day, always under strict supervision. Staff are asked to maintain and enforce the daily schedule. For example, teachers are held responsible for notifying coaching staff if student-athletes are going to miss daily training as Diane (teacher) explains: “If you’re late to class three days in a row you’re supposed to be pulled off [training] in the morning”. Strength and conditioning coaches oversee the fitness training and attend the daily training sessions to observe the work being done by student-athletes. As one staff member, Ray (administrator), aptly said: “The school works as a well-oiled machine when following the schedule”. Rick, a strength and conditioning coach, further speaks to this point: “I first came in to supervise kids [in the weight room], to make sure they’re doing everything right…if they had questions answer any of them. It’s more supervising when I’m in the gym with the kids. That’s what I’m here to do. To make sure everything is working properly during training time”. The connection between ‘working properly’ to notions of excellence is particularly noteworthy. Taking up Pronger’s (2002) theoretical evaluation of the resourcing of puissance by pouvoir in the technology of physical fitness helped my analysis. At Hillcrest Collegiate desire produces itself as a resource; that is, a useful path to achieving excellence here is primarily through proper work. Thus, the development of paths of desire, such as ‘working properly’, in order to achieve excellence, renders the body an ongoing resource to pouvoir. The strength and conditioning coach is also part of this process through the practice of scheduling and routines.

Danielle: Can you describe your role here?

Peter: Strength and conditioning is for all sports. For example, they [student-athletes] have an hour and half for hockey, basketball, soccer, whatever your sport is, in the morning. That’s more of a technical aspect of the game. With the dry-land program it’s off ice, off field, training. Specifically, you get the athlete to compete stronger, quicker, faster. So for every sport we take the season and break em’ into meso cycles. A meso cycle would be on or off. There’ll be pre-season, in season and off-season training. From there every meso cycle you break into macro which is a four month program. You take the four month program and break it into micro cycle, like 16 weeks. Then you take 16 weeks and break em’ into weekly, daily programs. So, it’s rampin’ em’ up for the playoffs or getting ready for pre-season. It’s a scientific approach we take to getting athletes to the
next level. We work the whole kinetic chain. We work on balance, agility. It’s a new science…by following this type of strict routine we’re basically laying the foundation academically and through sport to get you to the highest level.  

Although Peter does not explicitly speak to the development or following of routine in the specific academic setting, he does connect the production of excellence in sport to academic achievement, which appears to be achievable through the ongoing maintenance and breaking down of time and duration into observable segments in spaces. The breakdown of training cycles, as Peter explains, from meso-macro-micro cycles, connects with the periodization of Sport Canada’s mandate, specifically with the adoption of the Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) strategy in the development and training of high-performance athletes. Referred to specifically as a “made in Canada” (Kikulis, 2013, p. 128) seven stage approach to athlete development, the LTAD model provides a framework connecting the physiological needs of the athlete to various developmental stages or cycles including: growth, maturation and development, trainability and sport system alignment and integration (Sport for Life, 2017). This systematic approach to the development and training of elite athletes coincides with the school’s training requirements:

Peter (strength and conditioning coach): You set goals, now you gotta’ actually work at it. With all the training it’s broken down from a year right down to a daily program. This is what your task has to be. So, basically, the student is dissected to strengthen weaknesses with their sport and with their dry-land training.

The scientific principles of growth and development, outlined by the Long Term Athlete Development model, impact on the appropriate and continuous training of elite athletes at Hillcrest Collegiate. Together, such a system is based on scientific principles of growth,

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52 Of the approximately 80-100 students attending the school the majority of the youth compete with outside clubs. Some of the student-athletes also play on school teams if there are enough players for that particular sport. During my time at Hillcrest Collegiate, I knew of two school teams: the boys’ and girls’ hockey teams. Although administrators pointed out student-athletes who were competing at the national level (e.g. one squash player) I was not given an official breakdown of student-athletes attending the school who play at the provincial and/or national levels. Based on my observations and informal conversations with administrators and teachers at Hillcrest Collegiate the majority of male student-athletes attend the school with hopes of pursuing their sport at the professional level while some student-athletes (i.e., some male and mostly female youth) are interested in pursuing a sports scholarship with an American university via the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) route.
training and competitive preparation (Kikulis, 2013). As such, the focus on the student-athlete’s daily schedule and the regulation of time and space within the sports school must be taken into account when discussing the lived effects of excellence.

The focus on performance created in this disciplined environment is structured around the training of the young bodies through regular weight training, skills sessions and physical conditioning. The importance the school places on training sessions is indicative of a recent move by the managing director and school principal to increase training sessions from three times a week to four times a week ushered in by this rationale: “There’s nothing like someone coming in here and seeing an elite student-athlete sitting with their legs up not training”53. Given this, full participation and regular engagement in scheduled training sessions at Hillcrest Collegiate are viewed as an imperative to sporting success at the elite level and are often seen as indicative of an individual’s character. I overheard in a conversation between a sport and conditioning staff member and a Grade-Ten student, who did not want to participate in fitness training, the trainer saying: “You know, that tells me a lot about the type of person you are”. The same strength and conditioning coach came to me later that day and explained:

53 Although beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is important to acknowledge the debate around the specialization of young bodies in sport. Since the International Olympic Committee Medical Commission’s statement in, Training the elite child athlete (November, 2005), recommended more scientific research be conducted to determine the appropriate parameters in training the elite youth athlete, more attention is being paid to the issue(s) related to the early specialization of youth elite athletes in sport (cf. Baker, Cobby, Fraser-Thomas, 2009). On one hand, while associations between early specialization in sport and athlete development are highlighted as an advantage for young athletes to acquire expertise in their specific sport (Starkes, Helsen and Jack, 2001), other research suggests that heightened early athlete specialization and development is associated with negative consequences affecting athlete rights and welfare (Donnelly, 1997, 2013; Eliasson, 2015; Gould and Carson, 2004; Henry, 2013; Kidd and Donnelly, 2000) including physical and psychological development. Donnelly’s (1993) study on youths’ experiences in high-performance sport, speaks to two interconnected factors legitimating early athlete development: the rationalization of sport and the disappearance of childhood. According to him: “High performance sport has been rationalized to the extent that performance has become more important than the fact that human beings are producing that performance” (Donnelly, 1993, p. 114). In the context of the sports school, this speaks directly to the discourses of performance and excellence found in federal sport policy as well as Hillcrest Collegiate’s institutional policies. The concerns of stakeholders, such as the Canadian governments’ collaborative push to include athlete development and training at the education level, is namely centered on a performance and excellence based discourse “in which the athlete’s ability to perform in athletic terms is enhanced by virtue of their access to educational opportunities” (Henry, 2013, p. 356) as the above discussion makes clear.
You can tell who the serious ones are. They’re all done. Those who haven’t finished fitness testing, they all think it’s a joke. It’s not a choice. It’s mandatory. I’m looking to see if the guys [sic] wanna get tested and if they follow the fitness timetable. This is the structure for that. If you don’t wanna follow the timetable and get tested, you’re going nowhere.

Reflecting on these narratives, I suggest that many school stakeholders imagine themselves, and the work they simultaneously perform, to be integral to the development of these students and the reiteration of school space as an imagined place for working together towards the shared goal of achieving excellence. These spaces and the subjects of them—student-athletes, coaches, trainers and administrative staff—together might be thought of as “one of the great instruments of power” (Foucault, 1991, p. 178) as they mutually co-construct a system of discipline and surveillance diffused throughout social space (Hargreaves, 1986). The sports school, as part of federal and provincial strategies to support high-performance athletes, could be thought of as a type of disciplinary institution within which “secreted a machinery of control that functioned like a microscope of conduct; the fine, analytical divisions that they created formed around men [sic] an apparatus of observation, recording and training”54 (Foucault, 1977, p. 168).

Narratives from the interviews that I conducted in the sports school illustrate the scale of training and discipline that is required in relation to achieving excellence in the sports school. As I have alluded to throughout this chapter, this is further taken up in the school’s policy. For example, a primary goal at Hillcrest Collegiate cited in the Student/Parent Handbook (2015) is their pledge “to provide the highest quality opportunities for all our student-athletes including opportunities to practice, train, learn and experience all those associated with a varsity athlete” (p. 10). There is also a lot of focus on the operations and work of the bodies of the student-athletes in order to achieve “excellence in sport” (Diane, teacher) that the school alludes to. No detail of movement is unimportant or ignored. In relation to the scheduling and routine of training activities in

54 It is important to reiterate that this analysis is not new in the field of Physical Cultural Studies (PCS). Certainly, a number of PCS and sport sociology scholars have taken up Foucault’s work to analyse disciplinary technologies in sport and their ensuing effects on athletes (e.g., Fusco, 2005, 2009, 2012; Johns and Johns 2000; Markula, 2004; Shogan, 1999). What is new however in my analysis is the population under scrutiny; that is the relation between young sports school students and recent desires that connect their experiences to the nation and discourses of excellence through Sport Canada.
particular, it is clear, that there is an attempt to ensure the quality of time used through the insertion of bodies into timetables (see Chapter 3, Methodology for a breakdown of the school’s daily timetable; see also Figures 4.1 and 4.2 above for images of the fitness training schedules). The organization of training schedules and careful intersection of bodies in this thoroughly planned routine are reflective of disciplinary mechanisms of power as described by Foucault (1977). He states: “power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes: in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up” (p. 202). My conversation with Taylor (Grade-Ten student) about his body speaks to Foucault’s notion of being caught up within the systematic alignment of training schedules and planned routines at Hillcrest Collegiate:

[My body] feels the worst when I’m not working out or when I’m not training for like a week because it’s Christmas break and we’re not at school. That’s when I feel the worst. I’ll say to myself ‘Oh, you’re not working, your endurance is going to go down, everything’s going to go down, you’re not going to play well because you’re not training everyday and following a schedule. What happens it you don’t play well?’ You start thinking about all these questions…I get really stressed. On Christmas break when I’m not training and playing I get really stressed. I can’t be going down in my level. I get more stressed. I’d rather be training and playing soccer on the break because if I do bad in one practice I know I have another practice to make it up. If I don’t have practice I’m just doing bad the whole week.

The narratives also reveal that coaches are invested in taking an active role in seeing that the tasks designated by the routines of the school are achieved. This investment is maintained through beliefs in discourses of excellence and notions of ‘elite-ness’, which I discuss below. Ideally, and conceptually, the adoption of timetables, schedules and routines in this space is linked to how all stakeholders in the sports school negotiate their role as professionals and student-athletes in the context of excellence, hard work and elite-ness.

**Hard Work, Achieving Excellence and the Development of Future Citizens**

In this section, I highlight how the adoption of the school’s schedule and routines are further linked to how stakeholders negotiate the lived effects of the work they are
required to perform. In other words, student-athletes’ adherence to their timetables and scheduling reveals the material effects of the implicit problem representation of the pursuit of excellence in the policy and institutional texts discussed in this chapter. For instance, some stakeholders talk about achieving optimal performance in both academics and sport through hard work, which is intimately connected to the discourse of excellence.

Ray (administrator): The word elite means kids that are exceptional. Kids at a younger age get to some levels that kids who are older don’t get to as soon. Elite is kids that can put in two hours a day of hard training and academically are being pushed and that can go to their club in the evening and still perform and not talk about “I’m tired” or “I don’t want to do it.” Elite is for those kids who train here like an animal and they go to their club and they clean house in their club. It’s about hard work. Our kids here are pushed and they want to be up there so they push a little harder. At the end of the day, it comes down to the kid. We just want kids that want hard work.

Matt (coach): We try to make everyone elite. Some are elite students, some are elite athletes. The elite athlete, the guys [sic] who are elite, will work hard at everything they do. When they’re really elite they’ll do whatever it takes. They’ll work hard at whatever drill it is and whenever they’re on the field or ice. Then you’ll have guys [sic] who aren’t elite and they have to work that much harder to just keep up. It’s not as bad as one may think and if you’re a good player it doesn’t matter who you’re on the ice or pitch with. If you work you’ll work hard in anything you do.

Overwhelmingly, narratives of the participants focus on the idea of ‘making it to the next level’ by having an elite attitude towards the work tasks assigned to them daily. One Grade-Ten student, who spoke to me about the increase in weekly training sessions, commented: “Well, yeah, if they [prospective students, parents, scouts etc.] come here and see us doing nothing what will they think of us? They won’t think we’re serious. They won’t think we’re elite.” Schedules, routines and repetition of training, in the sport setting, are, I suggest, part of the economy of excellence and winning that, as I have alluded to previously, idealize and enable the (re)production of a specific type of subject

55 When making reference to the economy of excellence and winning I am referring to the practice in which corporeal capital is acquired by individuals through the disciplinary process of training by which the network of schedules, routines and repetition encourage the management of productivity (see Pronger, 1999, whose analyses of the socio-cultural organization of desire by the competitive structure of sport theorizes that libidinal economies of bodily interactions are required).
and discourse in/of the sports school. Many of the narratives focused on ‘making it to the next level’ are centered on the ideological work that is necessary in order to develop the whole athlete as an efficient citizen of the future.

The adoption and adaptation of schedules and routines are not the only disciplinary technologies used to regulate and govern youth identities and bodies. There are regular assessments applied at the school that help guarantee the workings of disciplinary power (cf. Wheatley, 2005), which are implemented and controlled through a series of observations.

Steve (administrator): I think it’s a great feature to have them tested, to see their progress. You have to have a baseline and we provide that to the parents. So, now, if she’s [sic] getting tested in September and they get their report card in June they’re gonna see well you got three seconds faster in the lap or better shooting accuracy, whatever the case may be.

These assessments allow for regular interventions and corrections. Wheatley (2005) documented how the continuous use of assessments at a cardiac rehab clinic enabled the progressive monitoring of patient adherence to fitness tasks and through these assessments the progress of the body was measured. Likewise, in the sports school, student-athletes are subjected to a series of measures that ensure a specific type of knowledge production regarding the body, its performance health and physicality.

Ray (administrator): I think they’re [assessments] great. I think it’s great for us. It’s great for parents to stay on top of the individual so they can’t slip. If there’s an issue today we don’t wait for six months. I think the parents can appreciate that and here it’s mandatory. So, if they’re [student-athlete] not performing and they’re slipping, we pull them right back and get them back on track.

Both the institution and its stakeholders engage in multiple processes of observation in an effort to make the student-athletes function more productively and efficiently in sport and academic settings. Through such assessments the body is measured, measurements are recorded, calculations are made, and assessments are given (and sent home to be observed by parents). In such circumstances, a way of life is prescribed (Pronger, 2002) for the body. These narratives reveal that hierarchical observations – always imbued with power – inform practices of excellence and through the use of technology (e.g. physical assessments are used to document the physiological capacity of the body which
include timed lap runs, push-ups, pull-ups and hand grip strength tests, to name a few) and discipline, the discourses of good school citizenship, and its contribution to individual development is legitimized. Many of the people that I interviewed spoke about the connection between progressing efficiently, noted by ongoing assessments, and the development of future productive citizens:

Peter (strength and conditioning coach): Being elite means you gotta work hard. It’s really preparing you for the future. You’ve got practices, you’ve got to learn to do your homework, prepare for your games. It’s all preparation for the future and that’s what I tell the parents here. What we’re preparing your kid here is for the sport, academically, really for the future. It’s all preparation. Preparing them for what’s gonna be ahead, what you’re going through as you get older.

Some students also bought into the narratives of the future. For example, one student stated:

Leo (Grade-Nine): If I don’t see an improvement it shows me what I need to work on. So, let’s say I get with the chin-up test, three chin-ups. That shows me that I need to work on my upper body strength. I think it’s an opportunity to get better. Knowing where you need to improve is really important. It’s important for the future. Sport and academics, at least for me, is not so much only about now. It’s about the future and preparing for any obstacles that comes in our way. That’s what they teach us here and I believe that.

Studies in the area of youth and futurity suggest the ubiquitous connection between the idea of young people and the future, constructing youth as in a constant state of transition and becoming (see Black and Walsh, 2015; Castañeda, 2002; Kelly, 2000). The work of schools is often framed as an investment in a better future, both for the youth who are the subjects of the schooling process, and for the society in which they are to become participating citizens and workers (Black and Walsh, 2015). Particularly common among Western societies, such as Canada, is the promotion of neoliberal discourses about young people who are supposed to be taught to be citizens who can navigate life as “intelligent, wise, happy, virtuous, healthy, productive, docile, enterprising, fulfilled, self-esteeming, and empowered” (Rose, 1998, p. 12). As the above policy and institutional texts, framed alongside participant narratives make clear, young people have become central features of these powerful rhetorics and they are central to the social and political making of an imagined utopic future. Indeed, youth-hood has become a productive site through which
adult society expresses its concerns about the kinds of adults and citizens a nation is (re)producing and what kind of people youth will become (Black and Walsh, 2015). Ostensibly, what is important about this connection between youth and futurity is how their futures are understood by youth themselves, and what measures are taken in order to secure their futures. The participants’ statements I have introduced above starkly reflect the individualized rhetoric of choice and self-determination that is part of the discursive trope of active healthy citizenship that is found in sports and school policies and that is taken up in practice by individuals themselves. In the context of the sports school, such discourses of youth or “truth[s] of youth” (Kelly, 2000, p. 307) are often applied to those young people who, through engagement in disciplinary technologies, such as assessments, view quantified improvement as preparation for the future, which includes educational attainment and achievement in sport.

Furthermore, assessments, like other practices, constitute a kind of embodiment of school texts and institutional policies. As Pronger (2002, p. 140) explains: “the act of measuring is itself a textual production” whereby texts are not necessarily solely texts but are also connected to embodiment which in turn create an abundance of texts on the body. For instance, HC hires a number of strength and conditioning coaches to work with student-athletes on a daily basis in order to motivate them to improve in their physical assessments and produce results, as Leo describes above. Similar to Pronger’s (2002) description of a personal trainer, the role of the strength and conditioning coach, in particular, is to produce a series of texts on the student-athlete’s body at every training session and during assessments. These texts are most often verbal, as the strength and conditioning coach describes the techniques to be followed (e.g. explaining what the fitness schedule entails for the day) and the body’s progress (e.g. explaining how the body has improved or areas for improvement), as well as physical when the coach actually helps in the actual conduct of the training. Such adherence to technological approaches to fitness, as seen by the ongoing assessments, measurements and training taking place at Hillcrest Collegiate, construct an “interpretive framework” (Pronger, 2002, p. 141) through which the body is implicated. Such a textual ensemble—that is between texts and embodiment—(re)produces a specific reading and writing of the body and of its future (Pronger, 2002). Focused around the goal of achieving (future)
excellence the daily practices and ideological work taking place at *Hillcrest Collegiate* both inform the discourses of excellence and are informed by those discourses and everyday practices. The space, and investments in it, ensures that this place ‘works’ to cultivate discourses of excellence, performance and development outlined by sport and institutional policy.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have traced how policies have been used as framing devices for the production of excellence in a specific sports school. Drawing on Bacchi’s ‘what’s the problem represented to be?’ approach, my analysis of a selection of Canadian policy reports, institutional policies of *Hillcrest Collegiate* and the narratives of interviewees, were used to understand how ideological commitments to the development of sports academies, embedded with discourses of excellence, performance and development, are taken up in an actual sports school. I aimed to problematize these constructions by identifying and critically exploring the possible underlying assumptions, taken-for-granted truths, dominant values, and their possible material and symbolic effects in such a school space. I have concluded that dominant discourses of excellence imbued as they are with specific meaning(s) of Canadian high-performance end up governing young people’s lives in ways that they may or may not want. Certainly, there is now a substantial literature on the monitoring of bodies within school environments, which has been seen as problematic as the relationship between physical activity, education, sport and the governance of young people’s bodies becomes so intertwined (Evans, Evans and Rich, 2003; Kirk, 2004; Rich, 2010). While such analyses have uncovered the workings of power in school spaces and how the governance of young people’s bodies is taken up by youth themselves, what remains to be understood is how this is taken up by elite youth athletes who attend a sports school. Here, I believe that I have opened up a new site of analysis where these discourses come to fruition through the figure of the student-athlete. Moreover, my analysis above has revealed the discursive, cultural, social, and political

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56 I am not suggesting here that individuals are passive recipients of the intertextual ensemble that Pronger (2002) describes. Rather, as I elaborate in Chapter 5, *Embodied Practices and Pleasures*, the practices of the school, and the productive pleasures individuals find in such an ensemble, chart the lived production of desire for those who read and live within the ensemble (Pronger, 2002).
rhetoric inherent in policies, and how it is (re)produced in, and has implications for, a specific institutionalized space. The synergy between government policies and institutional texts represents a complex, essential reading and writing of the body, and of its future and of its place (Pronger, 2002) within specific historical, institutional and cultural contexts. These contexts have played a role in the development of sports schools, and the ongoing cultivation taking place at this site. The commonalities among policies, in how problems are represented and created in discourse, ultimately give shape to the (re)production of specific prescriptions about the body and how desire for excellence should unfold. While exploring the commonalities among these texts and the hegemonic discourses and knowledge they may create, it is of course important to acknowledge, as I have done so already, that individuals are not simply passive recipients of this power and discipline, but are informed by and benefit from their effects. Living within such dimensions of discipline becomes a way of doing things that athletes choose to apply to themselves and to incorporate into their daily work lives (Dyck, 2012; Shogan, 1999). Certainly, student-athletes find meaning in prescribed practices within proscriptive constraints established in the sports school (Johns and Johns, 2000). As Rachel (Grade-Eleven) explains:

We are assessed more often here. I do like it. It keeps me on track. The fitness testing is awesome just to see how much you’ve improved all throughout the year after you’ve worked so hard. It’s pretty saddening, obviously, if you’ve worked hard throughout the year and don’t get the results, don’t see the improvement. But, I mean, that’s part of being an athlete, right? If you don’t get it you just keep working hard and I know a lot of us aren’t going to be discouraged by that. It just makes us want to work harder.

For Rachel, the ability to do well enough during assessments is connected to the successful disciplining of her body. Ostensibly, it is through the (re)production of disciplined skill that she benefits from the effects of power and discipline. While textual and spatial practices of the sports school may be lauded as opportunities for salvation and self-actualization, as other organizations of space have been shown to be (see Fusco, 2012; Atkinson and Kehler, 2012; Rose, 2007; Smith and Green, 2005; Wheatley, 2005), neoliberal rationalities are shaping the governance, regulation and normalizing of all this sanctioned work and the body is expected and required to perform in order to be
successful. Discursive tropes such as hard work, self-responsibility, performance, development and excellence can make invisible the increasing governmentalities directed at the management of youth’s lives (Fusco, 2012). A continual examination of these emerging discourses has been encouraged (see Kirk, 2006; Rich, 2011; Rich and Evans, 2009; Wright and Harwood, 2009). In the case of the sports school, interrogating these alignments with the production of excellence in sport and institutional policies can extend the literature with respect to youth’s bodies, and it will continue to be important because it represents the increasing incursions into youth’s social and sport lives.

Taken together, the aim of this chapter was to illustrate how a range of policies and texts work to create a framework for the symbolic and material production of desire for excellence, especially for those who are charged with cultivating and taking up a kind of disciplinary way of life that aligns with discourses of excellence. In this chapter, I highlighted that through the working together of government and non-government policies, a specific program for the production of, and desire for, excellence has been developed and managed. In their report, “Sport Schools in Canada: The Future is Here”, the Canadian Sport Centre (Pacific) highlights the recommended roles of both National Sport Organizations (NSOs) and Provincial Sport Organizations (PSOs) in the successful development of sports schools across Canada: “The role of NSOs is to develop sport specific academy models with LTAD based sport technical curriculum; and the role of PSOs is to partner with schools and school districts to support a high quality training environment for student athletes regardless of their LTAD stage” (Way et al., 2010, p. 26). The direct link to the sports school by Federal and Provincial sports bodies further solidifies the establishment of institutionalized space, which has simultaneously produced, and has been produced by, desires for sport excellence. In the next chapter, I will interrogate “the direction that the texts chart for desire” (Pronger, 2002, p. 146).

In Chapter 5, I unpack this embodied desire through an examination of stakeholders and student-athletes’ narratives. What I found was that there is pleasure-making in the context of all the prescribed disciplinary mechanisms that are required to reach elite levels of sporting excellence.
Chapter 5
Embodied Practices and Pleasures

In Chapter 4, *The Production of Excellence*, I used a Bacchian analysis to establish an analytical framework through which to examine the way(s) specific policies have been used as framing devices for the conception of sports schools in Canada, such as *Hillcrest Collegiate (HC)*. My analysis of how discourses are enacted by policies hoped to demonstrate how particular configurations of power/knowledge and disciplinary mechanisms were enacted in the institutionalized space of *HC* in ways that produced discursive, subjectification and lived effects. I argued that the discursive formation of excellence apparent in these policies can be traced back to the governance, regulation and normalization of sanctioned work on the body, which is expected and required to perform in order to be successful. Working together, policies and texts produce a “discourse on the body” (Pronger, 2002, p. 193) through which it can be read, trained and disciplined for particular ends. From this analysis, it became clear that the institutional organization of *Hillcrest Collegiate*, materially and symbolically, impacted on the production of individuals and space, in ways that were deemed appropriate with respect to the norms and behaviours expected in *HC*.

As my previous chapter highlights, I was concerned with many questions regarding discourses, space and subjectivity and how these were articulated in and through policies and everyday texts and narratives. Certainly, the theoretical frameworks that I advanced in my review of the relevant literatures informed the methodological and analytical frameworks that I used to unpack power’s effects in *HC*. Thinking through discourses of excellence, specifically though an institutional ethnography informed by biopedagogical and Foucauldian analysis, allowed me to trace the points of application of disciplinary power, and the amplification of these effects in *Hillcrest Collegiate*. Although I provided my analysis of the sports school and how the staff and the student-athletes are caught up in institutional disciplinary regimes, what is missing from that analysis of structures in the exercise of power and discipline is an analysis of potential agency. In other words, in the previous chapter, through my analysis of the discursive formation of specific texts and narratives, power relations were examined from the
perspective of how they produced and reproduced space(s) and practices of HC with insight into the stakeholders’ construction of power and experience of discipline within this social setting. However, I wanted to probe a little deeper to examine any parallel discourses and practices in the micro-realities of individuals’ everyday lives.

Therefore, in this chapter I want to tell a story about how individuals understand themselves within the HC institution and how they make sense of living within structural contexts of discipline, excellence and technology in their everyday lives. More specifically, I examine how institutional discourses work to chart embodied desire in the spaces of HC, specifically for student-athletes, and attempt to organize their pleasures in ways that may align with neoliberalism. For some individuals, and specifically youth who attend sports schools, their sport pleasures may, in fact, be found within the confines of the very disciplinary and governed spaces they play in. In the context of the sports school, although the forces of pouvoir may be hard at work, there is constant interplay with puissance; that is, the exploration of desire and pleasure as discursive, enabled and embodied (Pringle et al., 2015). It is within the context of these experiences that people come to recognize, conceptualise, understand, and negotiate their desire and pleasure(s) on their own terms.

Given this, in this chapter, I aim to make apparent, as much as I can, what the body feels and does – it is central to my analysis of the complex production of the practices, desires and pleasures in the everyday lives of student-athletes at Hillcrest Collegiate. As my analysis from the previous chapter emphasizes, the everyday nuances of a body’s movements, the feelings that flow through it, the meanings that individuals can attach to their body, and the social context and practices that make certain bodily practices possible, are wholly absent from policy (Lyndley and Youdell, 2016) and policy analysis. Despite the fact that my institutional ethnography demonstrated that texts do affect the embodied and spatial experiences of people at HC, often largely devoid from institutional ethnography is any in-depth ethnographic or phenomenological detail of the everyday lives of student-athletes in whose bodies these discourses are invested. I believe that the juxtaposition of the homogenizing and normalizing of disciplinary mechanisms that are directed by institutional texts enable the symbolic and material
production of desires through bodies and spaces that are the effect of excellence. It is the sustained call to excellence that gets written on the body as pleasurable and is actively pursued, specifically, by student-athletes in different ways.

**Pain is Pleasure; Pleasure is Pain?**

As noted in my review of literature, a large body of scholarly research has focused on the body’s entanglement with physical practices of sport. Less well understood however are the realities of embodied pain and pleasures derived from sports and the feelings, particularly youth, attach to these. The complex relation to pleasure and pain is rarely discussed as a social and cultural practice (Pavlidis and Fullagar, 2015) because the subjective experiences of both are difficult to articulate and understand. I argue here that finding pleasure in the pain of discipline and training can offer a challenge to those theories that only discuss the meanings of pain as destructive and unwanted pain which has detrimental effects on the self (cf. Scarry, 1985; Chandler, 2013). In contrast, I analyze narratives about pain, and its resultant (dis)pleasures, as enabling and productive of disciplined bodies embedded in the everyday practices of *Hillcrest Collegiate*. As Scarry (1985, p. 6) states “there comes to be avenues by which the most radically private experiences begins to enter the realm of public discourse” and it is through such narratives of injury and the body that student-athletes express and imagine their own pain in the context of becoming excellent. In this subsection, I highlight the way pleasure and pain are not distinct or separate entities in the lives of student-athletes at *Hillcrest Collegiate*, but that they are actively intersecting, negotiated and contested.

While the sociological literature on pain and injury generally highlights how athletes avoid and privately manage injury and pain during competition and training (Atkinson, 2008; Young, 2004), this was largely not the case at *Hillcrest Collegiate*. In the context of bodily injury, discourses about pain were often noted as a “natural” (Erin, Grade-Eleven) part of their working sport lives. In fact, over the six months I spent at *Hillcrest Collegiate*, injuries were often talked about by student-athletes and administrative staff as integral to the composition of the elite athlete; ostensibly dealing
with pain and injury on an ongoing basis was something that was “a normal part of being an elite student-athlete” (Ray, administrator).

The acceptance or normalization of pain in sports, especially in elite sport, is not new and has been documented by previous research (Killick, Davenport and Baker, 2012; Nixon, 1993; Sabo, 1989; Young, White, McTeer, 1994). For example, as Safai (2003) explains, a dilemma for both male and female athletes is the inherent culture of risk in sport, which encourages athletes to accept risk-taking by way of submitting their bodies to pain and injury. This discussion leads to the paradox of competitive sport: in order to be considered successful, athletes are encouraged to tolerate pain and injury while submitting themselves oftentimes to debilitating physical, social, economic and emotional consequences resulting from pain and serious injuries (Messner, 1989; Safai, 2003). While I asked my participants about their experience with sport related injury, few talked about their embodied experience of pain:

I’ve had a bunch of injuries – my knee, I’ve had a concussion. It sucks being hurt because you get anxious to get back because everyone is getting to continue what they’re doing and they’re getting better more than I am. It sucks just knowing that they can keep doing workouts, on ice training. It just sucks knowing you can’t do anything. You’re stuck. (Oliver, Grade-Ten)

It sucks [having an injury]. You have to stop and you can’t play your sport. You can’t do the one thing you love so much. You have to wait and you get so pissed off. As soon as you’re back it just feels so good. (Mark, Grade-Ten)

Yeah I have [been injured]. I couldn’t play hockey for like 6 months. Like, I tried but I couldn’t. I was just in so much pain. I had to go to rehab like 5/6 times a week, like constantly. And then eventually, slowly, I started going back on the ice, slowly started getting back into games and practices. And in the gym I couldn’t really do anything. I had to slowly start doing that kind of stuff. It happened like a year a bit ago and even now I’m not the same but I just take it slower than I would have before it happened. I was actually depressed when it [the injury] happened. Like, going from everyday just go, go, go to relaxing was hard. (Christine, Grade-Twelve)

It came as no surprise to me, given my own experience as a competitive athlete, that injuries are managed and experienced by student-athletes in various ways, as the above excerpts show. What I found interesting about these narratives was how student-athletes often completely dismissed or focused less on feelings of pain but instead displayed
anger at themselves for getting injured or anger at the lack of capacity they experienced, and that sport continued without them. These feelings of missing out provoked annoyance (i.e., “it sucks, “you get so pissed off”) and in Christine’s case provoked feelings of depression. Indeed, many spoke of their injuries in disembodied ways—as if the pain that was/is occurring could be compartmentalized (Rinehart, 2015b), paying little attention to the actual presence of pain felt. In other words, despite their arduous schedules and practices (both required during training and competition), in and outside Hillcrest Collegiate, many participants were reluctant to even use the word pain to describe their bodily injuries. This may be because discourses of excellence and discipline can produce idealized representations of the stoic and tough athlete therefore eliciting tolerance of pain among student-athletes.

I broke my finger once. It was about 3-4 years ago. It happened in practice when we were all messing around. I couldn’t play in games but I could still work on my other hand and I didn’t feel that awful ’cause I could still play with my other hand, but I didn’t feel good watching my team play without me. Whenever I would see something I knew I could have done, and maybe somebody else didn’t execute properly, I would be pretty upset. And then when I got back I would be really happy to start playing again. (Bobby, Grade-Seven)

I have been injured. I broke my wrist 2 years ago. Open ice hit. It was horrible and very, very painful but getting hurt wasn’t the worst part. It was the month in the cast when you had to go to every single practice, every single game and watch your team on the ice and feel helpless not being able to contribute. I kept going to physio[therapy]. I worked really hard to get that muscle working again and as soon as I came back it was amazing. The feeling was great to skate again. (Rachel, Grade-Eleven)

The ongoing and continuous experience of pain (e.g. acceptance of injury), and I would also add the dismissal of feelings of pain, appear to be accepted in youth sports (Gard and Meyenn, 2000; Overman, 2014; Pickard, 2007). To that end, when pain resulting from sport injury was mentioned by student-athletes in HC, their feelings about pain were constructed as productive as well as a pleasurable and an essential part of being an elite student-athlete:

I’m learning how there’s the pain-reward thing. You have to endure a lot of physical, not really pain, but really, really tiring and that’s when you start to grow and get stronger and better. (Justin, Grade-Eleven)
Through Justin’s formulation, physical and mental pain ‘gained’ through a “pain-reward” complex are viewed as positive and productive because the body can be trained through pain to “get stronger and better”. The ability to endure the hurt body and the body in pain, becomes a symbolic representation and a material reality of what everyone else (i.e., non-elite student-athletes) is not. It is the disciplined, dedicated, productive, efficient, controlled and self-responsible athlete who endures (Atkinson, 2008; Caudwell, 2015). Describing discomfort, hurt and pain as a “pain-reward” complex is not surprising then and further illustrates how these feelings are constructed as positive and productive. These constructions help explain why a majority of participants conceptualized painful bodily experiences as pleasurable and/or rewarding. In retrospect, throughout the course of my institutional ethnographic participation in the field, even I considered pushing myself through pain to test the limits of my pleasure in training:

Today the strength and conditioning coach asked me to take part in the physical assessments. He wanted to count how many times I was able to do a military style push-up. Before beginning I was unsure of myself – I didn’t train often and my age also didn’t help especially when you’re placed against younger elite athletes. Nevertheless, I started the push-ups and kept going. The sweat beading down my head and back, the heaviness of my arms and the tightness in my chest—looking back now, all these feelings I considered a kind of pleasure. To be successful, that is, as a researcher to successfully fit in at the school, meant that I had to prove myself to everyone there that day. The fleeting feeling of pain while doing push-ups represented to me that I belonged—I know what it is to be an athlete, and I now share this in common with my participants. (Field notes - April 16, 2015)

Through my reflection, I am trying to convey the fact that I understand why the ongoing cultivation of an appropriate ‘elite’ body is significant in HC as it allows athletes to physically, emotionally and culturally find pleasure in pain during training and/or competition, while also signifying an embodied sense of collective and individual belonging.

This pleasure in pain or the pain-reward discourse underlies the rationalization of playing through injury and, subsequently, enjoying the discomforts their bodies felt while training. The following excerpts highlight how athletes justified playing despite their
injured bodies. When I asked these participants whether they had experienced injuries or ever played through an injury they stated:

Taylor (Grade-Ten): Yeah. I pulled my groin, my thigh and lately I’ve got a back injury, like last year, and I was out for like four months, I think. And then it went away. Then in September it came back. I came back and then I had soccer with my school and had a lot of soccer so I started to feel it a lot. It hurt to just walk around. I kind of was out for a couple weeks there so I kept going to physio[therapy] and it kind of went away but I could kind of play through it.

Danielle: Why did you decide to play through that injury?

Taylor (Grade-Ten): I didn’t want to let my team down and I didn’t want to not play. When I’m not playing it gets me depressed. I have nothing to do and I need it. I don’t know I just want to play. I don’t want to let my team down. I don’t want to let myself down or anything.

Danielle: Have you ever been injured?

Leo (Grade-Nine): Nothing major. Just minor. Like, a pulled groin. I have a problem with my butt. I don’t know. It always happens.

I: Do you play through those injuries?

Leo (Grade-Nine): It’s a bit of me, but people usually have to tell me to take time off. I think I just like going on the ice and playing. I can’t help it.

These excerpts reinforce much of the risk rhetoric that adheres to “ideologies of pushing limits, keeping going, and still winning in the face of challenge in the form of pain and injury” (Safai, 2003, p. 135). The student-athletes’ willingness to rationalize playing through injury and continuing to train to the point where their bodies hurt, conceptualizing this hurt ‘as a good kind of hurt’, once again speaks to the normalization of a certain degree of pain and the embodiment of risk in elite young athletes. I am arguing here that these (pain) sensory feelings of the body are not only normalized among

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57 This symbol is used throughout the chapter to separate participant narratives.

58 Not surprisingly, playing or training through sport is a significant cause of injury for girls and boys in Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2017). According to the Government of Canada, “64% of visits to hospital emergency departments among 10-18 year-olds are related to participation in sports, physical activity and recreation” (https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/concussions.html).
student-athletes, but have come to be constructed and experienced as sources of embodied pleasure and pride. When listening to their stories and analyzing their narratives, I realized more and more how pain and feeling hurt, was viewed as constructive especially when it required more application and hard work to overcome injury and feeling tired and to increase the body’s potential:

After doing a couple barbell sets, my arms feel like they’re pasta, and a little lanky and stuff. At the end of the day I feel sore, but in my head I feel great about myself and know I didn’t quit. My body hurts, but it’s a good kind of hurt. (Nathan, Grade-Seven)

While you’re working out you maybe find it’s a burden, and that it’s hard, and you sometimes don’t want to do it. But after you feel like you accomplished something and that you’ve done something to make yourself better so it’s always worth coming back and doing it again. (Bobby, Grade-Seven)

It sounds strange, but when you’re working out and you’re feeling the burn, you’re hurting. Your muscles are so tired. For me, I actually feel really good when I feel the burn because I know I’m doing something right. (Xeno, Grade-Seven)

Thus, a common theme arises when examining the student-athletes’ constructions of injury and pain as socially, physically and emotionally significant; that is, pleasure and pain are not necessarily distinct and separate entities, but on many occasions are blurred (Wellard, 2015). In the athletes’ everyday lives the objective realities of injury and pain subsequently affects how they focus on themselves as individuals in the pursuit of excellence, and demonstrated the pleasure they derive from their day-to-day interactions of the body with pain and injury (Rinehart, 2015b) in the pursuit of their goals. Nathan’s narrative above regarding how his body feels after training sessions is illustrative of this point; the significance of working hard objectively (i.e., at a particular program) aligns with his subjective and sensuous feelings of being ‘sore’ and having a ‘hurt’ body. Thus, pleasure and the sensuous feelings of pain are meaningful in the day-to-day lives of these participants.

Certainly discourses of hard work and excellence are reified in the participants’ narratives and this illustrates how pain and pleasure become bound up with their embodied experiences in ways that are not solely physical or emotional but something
that is, “at the same time, influenced by social discourses as well as the historical and social context of the way in which pleasure or pain can be understood” (Wellard, 2015, p. 200). These experiences are not experienced in a vacuum. Indeed, the administrative staff at Hillcrest Collegiate is key to perpetuating how the body is experienced by student-athletes. In many ways, the trainers’ understanding of injury, and their practices of negotiating with student-athletes often, both explicitly and implicitly, supports student-athletes’ conflation of the positivity of pain and productivity. While trainers do not condone injury and pain tolerance they are wholly immersed in the production of discourses of excellence, and negotiating with (injured) student-athletes (i.e., to play or not to play) within this context (Safai, 2003). When I asked about the protocols in place for dealing with injured students, one trainer stated:

Kids are hurt all the time. It’s part of being an elite student-athlete so it’s not unusual for us to see this as trainers. We develop an entire program that we specifically put in place for individual kids who are injured like experiencing mobility issues or knee problems, back, shoulders. We build programs to get em’ stronger so when you have an injury you’re actually still training. We work around the injury so you’re not taking any time off [from training] because of that injury. Even when injured it’s still about putting in the work. It’s all about working hard. (Peter, strength and conditioning coach)

Obviously while the trainer does not compromise the health of any of the student-athletes, he does articulate a common understanding in elite sport, that tolerating injury and pain are requirements and expected outcomes in the life of a high-performance athlete (Donnelly, 2004; Nixon, 1993, 1994). As I mentioned in Chapter 4, Hillcrest Collegiate has made an institutional commitment to achieving excellence in sport and academics and highlights the importance of fundamental values—such as hard work and self-responsibility—as essential and integral characteristics of the student-athlete identity; unfortunately this is perpetuated in the rhetoric around injury and pain. The proliferation of injury-legitimated norms (Safai, 2003) align with the discourses and practices that symbolically and materially situate injury and pain as a predisposition to their commitment to sport and performance:

As a student-athlete you’re always in pain, you’re always sore. Being a student and being an athlete you’re a little more, I don’t know if the word is stubborn or driven, but you are more than the average person. So you may have an injury and
say ‘I’m going to skate through it or run through it’ and it could be a serious injury, but you don’t want to disappoint. You’re an athlete. That’s how the kids are here. They want to know [about their injuries] and want to get better because they don’t want to impede their performance. So, we try not to have nothing [training programs] when they’re hurt because, you know, your right wrist hurts doesn’t mean you can’t do cardio. Because your ankles hurt doesn’t mean you can’t do core or upper strength or whatever different part of your body. We take it serious because we want to make the kids stronger and so we look at everything and work according to that individual. (Rick, strength and conditioning coach)

These narratives demonstrate that goal-setting and continued training are fundamental to excellent athletic performance whether an athlete is injured or not. Tolerating this is integral for those student-athletes who ‘want to make it to the next level’. The trainers’ focus on performance, strength and hard work, adheres to the total investment in discourses of excellence that characterize sports schools. Obviously, these adults’ discourses and practices are important in the (re)production of the disciplinary space in which student-athletes come to understand their subjective experiences of injury and pain. The participants’ overwhelming articulations of their common desires to tolerate and work through their pain; acceptance of the fact that they will experience exhausted and hurt bodies; and, expressing anger and frustration at their incapacities when injured all demonstrate how this has become naturalized in the student-athlete identity. It also indicates how disciplinary mechanisms (e.g. spaces, coaches, policies) can produce the effect of pain and pleasure on athletes’ bodies in HC. It can be concluded here, then, that pain and pleasure are inextricably tied within the bodily practices of student-athletes (Gard and Meyenn, 2000). By learning how to effectively, efficiently and productively deal with injuries and pain, these student-athletes experience knowledge-power about their bodies and the requirements and expectations of being an elite athlete.

The way(s) in which individuals often think about and take up such discourses of the body with little critical reflection needs to be interrogated. The fact that experiences of bodily pain were often constructed through a positive pleasurable paradigm, speaks of the pervasiveness of these values in elite sport (Donnelly, 2004; Nixon, 1993; Stafford, Alexander and Fry, 2013; Young, 2004). For the student-athletes, *Hillcrest Collegiate* is a space where they are immersed in discourses of excellence, performance and development therefore it is not surprising that their reactions to, and rationalization of,
injury and pain are experienced in this context and through the institutional and
disciplinary mechanisms that produce and reproduce the space of the sports school.
However rather than solely interpreting this pleasure as only the result of non-agentic
effects, I propose here a more complex reading of the dynamics of bodily experiences. It
could be argued that through their experiences of pain as pleasure, student-athletes are
undertaking to “remake their world, to exercise bodily force and different capacities if
only for a while” (Pavlidis and Fullagar, 2015, p. 494). Might it be that precisely when
the productive effects of pleasure are to be found in their painful bodily experiences that
student-athletes are also at that moment exercising power through moving in ways that
has an a/effect on the ways in which they want to push the limits of the self in relation to
painful experiences (Pavlidis and Fullagar, 2015)? Ostensibly, this exercise of power
appears to reaffirm or challenge or resist the culture in which student-athletes are
prescribed to push their physical limits (in training and competitive environments) as a
commitment to their sport, excellence and investment in their student-athlete identity.

Disciplining Pleasure(s)

There exists a large literature about the scientific, technical and disciplinary
technologies involved in the sport disciplines, most notably concerning the production of
high-performance athletes – I reviewed this literature in Chapter 2. As the previous
analysis chapter highlights, I have drawn on some of this literature to understand how
discourses, text and disciplinary technologies, employed at Hillcrest Collegiate, have
combined to produce elite student-athletes. My use of poststructuralist theory to
understand the athletic body in HC space has been largely informed by Foucault’s
concepts of disciplinary power, biopower and discourse which inform how I understand
the institutional processes that shape discursive, subjective and lived effects of sports
school spaces, and how they are imbued with narratives of power impacting everyday
lives. What my findings suggest so far is that such disciplinary regimes are exercised
through institutional discursive practices that have the effect of (re)producing disciplined,
athletic youth’s bodies that are then continually subjected to monitoring and disciplinary
tactics (Shogan, 1999). In Physical Cultural Studies, to suggest that the application of
disciplinary power is used to construct and cultivate adult high-performance athletes is
not a new finding. However, this is not the only finding of this research. If I were only
engaging in my institutional ethnography to do a mapping of these technologies, this would be an error because it would suggest that disciplinary mechanisms, and their effects on bodies and spaces of the sports school are static and “do in fact homogenize and that athletes are unidimensional ‘autotoms’, consumed by their sports” (Shogan, 1999, p.x). Whereas, a significant portion of my analysis is to show how certain pleasures may involve taking up, seeing, understanding the effects of, and, in fact, living through disciplinary apparatuses. Indeed, this means understanding the positivity of power and productive potential of pleasure and desire that are available within discursive and disciplinary regimes.

To that end, one of my primary goals of conducting this research was to explore whether student-athletes experienced embodied sport pleasures. Though multiple forms of such pleasures were present throughout the narratives of my participants (e.g. pleasure in performance, pleasure in succeeding, pleasure in comparison), I have chosen to focus on ‘moving pleasures’ and their performative dimension; that is, moving as action and as a historical event (Larsson and Quennerstedt, 2012). By focusing on the pleasure of movement, I want to highlight the simultaneous production of (sporting) performances, and the practices of discipline therein, in which student-athletes are caught up and actively seek pleasure in dynamic movement. The inherent pleasures involved in physical movement incited many student-athletes to engage in sport in the first place, and put themselves through the rigors of annual physical assessments, daily training, injury and pain. All this serves as a reminder of taking pleasure in self-imposed bodily discipline and an investment in performance and self-discipline. As such, student-athletes’ involvement in the daily grind of sports performance, assessments and training could be seen as a willingness to conform to the disciplinary technologies at work in this production of bodies and space. It also indicates that the student-athlete’s desire to perform at their optimal level may be guided by the pleasures they get in movement and measurement. As described by student-athletes below, there is a pleasure in the actively moving body, especially in the context of training and assessments, which are tied to quantifying bodily improvements:
I think they’re [assessments] a really great way to see a student’s scores in sports and stuff like that. It’s a great way to be mentally tough. If someone beats you it doesn’t really matter. Just keep working and pushing and if you’re working harder than the next person, you’ll always be successful. (Xeno, Grade-Seven)

I like it because I know where I’ve improved and where I have to improve. Athletic testing is more stress for me because I want to do well. (Stella, Grade-Nine)

The ‘stress’ placed on student-athletes as they strive to do well during assessments and training is palpable. However, athletes’ assessments were almost written on their bodies by way of observable improvements and increasing musculature and skill. Despite the stress, the athletes appeared to take much pleasure in the successful disciplining of their bodies, and their abilities to adequately display their (new) physical prowess. As Mark (Grade-Ten) states: “I like them [assessments] because I want to know that I’m improving”. To improve in their overall fitness training, that is, to actively develop their appropriate bodily and technical skills and movements was seen by a majority of participants as a very significant achievement in their daily lives in the sports school. These definitely acted as sources of pleasure:

Physical assessments are fun, I like it, I’m cool with it. I like to do it. I like to know when I improve. (Kate, Grade-Eight)

I like assessments. It’s good so you can see how you improved and what you can do better…I like these challenges so I can see what to improve. That’s when my body feels the best. A day without workouts or training is when my body feels the worst. I might feel not as good ‘cause you feel like you haven’t improved all day so you’re still as bad as you were the last day. (Ethan, Grade-Nine)

From this perspective, what moving means to athletes is decided as they, as movers, engage in (technical, fitness, assessment) movements in particular situations (Larsson and Quennerstedt, 2012). Certainly, I would argue that the specific context in which all these movements take place (i.e., in the sports school) are directly tied to the socio-structural and institutional relations that enable these movements to be performed in this particular space. Trainers and teachers at *Hillcrest Collegiate* also find pleasure in assessing their athletes’ movements and observable bodily improvements and state that physical assessments are one of the ways in which the school is able to hold student-athletes accountable to the goals of excellence that the school communicates:
I think it’s important to constantly assess and if we’re assessing them before school and after school it gives them more of a purpose or else they’d be why should I? If you don’t see that you’re improving you’re not going to want to do it. You would have nothing to be held accountable for. (Diane, teacher)

I think assessments are great. I think it’s great for us to stay on top of the individual so that they can’t slip. If there’s an issue today we work on it today. We don’t wait six months. So, if or when they’re not performing and they’re slipping we pull them right back and get them back on track. (Rick, strength and conditioning coach)

If student-athletes see how the trainers, teachers and coaches take pleasure in conforming to institutionalized disciplinary technologies and discourses of excellence then they may be incited to conform to disciplinary technologies (e.g. the fitness test and constant surveillance) more readily.

The inherent pleasures staff and students take in physical movements in their sports, and while engaging in assessments and training, demonstrate that the space of the sports school is produced by and produces a place in which discourses of excellence are written on the body constantly through the productive pleasures of movement. As the narratives above highlight, trainers and coaches believe that student-athletes’ physical movement pleasures are integral to the discourses of development and achievement. Additionally, the student-athletes spoke about their movement pleasures in relation to comparisons with others in the context of training and testing. Taylor, Nathan and Mark all highlight their pleasure in these procedures.

In soccer I like it [assessments]. I like how they’re comparing me to the guys over there [internationally] so I know how I can play if I ever move out of Canada. I know how good I’d be if I was around them. When I’m on the field it gets me competitive, it gets me going. ‘Oh I need at least three or four or something out of five. I need to get there’. I don’t really get stressed. It’s more me grinding and putting in the hard work. That’s what I like and testing pushes me to do that. (Taylor, Grade-Ten)

Definitely you always want to be the best one [during assessments]. So, I remember one student here, I think beat me by a whole three seconds in the lap time, but I trained harder ‘cause I want to be the best one here and I actually did quite well and beat his time. It made me feel great. (Nathan, Grade-Seven)

[During assessments] you compete against each other. To me it’s a fun competitive way to improve yourself. (Mark, Grade-Ten)
The instrumental pleasures that these young people find in competition, challenge and achievement, to me, further illustrate the ways in which student-athletes are wholly invested in the sports school’s disciplinary technologies and how they make sense of such apparatuses (e.g. the fitness test) as a productive part of their goals. In the case of Hillcrest Collegiate, the movement pleasure(s) student-athletes derive while engaging in training and assessments, appear always connected to measurement, standardized testing and evaluations. In these moments, their bodies are connected to the dominant scientific research paradigm in sport, physical education, and the sport sciences more generally, which prescribe actions to be taken if there is remedial body work to be done. Given this scientific model, scrutinizing movement through prescribed testing can delineate what it means to be a successful and elite mover and how movement is understood to be excellent, or not, in this particular situation. In this way, there is a (re)production of decontextualized and dualistic ways of understanding movement (e.g. fit/not fit, successful/unsuccessful, excellent/poor) (Larsson and Quennerstedt, 2012). Such understanding of movement, however, leaves little room for an agentic understanding of moving pleasure(s). That is, movement is not simply the function of a pre-given subject who performs or prescription that directs movements within a particular setting, although it may seem this way when the moving body is examined through the institutionalized test situation (Larsson and Queenerstedt, 2012). As Nathan (Grade-Seven) points out he felt ‘great’ after beating his colleague. These feelings of pleasure are aligned with the concept of pleasure-power-knowledge (Foucault, 1978) in which athletes come to know themselves as athletically-powerful, disciplined, hard-working, and motivated, and in this identity they find pleasure in knowing that they can dominate their fellow athletes and training sessions, that he equates with improved skill needed to beat his opponents. Thus, to learn or develop excellent abilities or skills may be thought of as agentic and highlights the relationship between power, discipline, agency, ability and desire (Larsson and Quennerstedt, 2012). Positioned within dominant regimes of bodily and discursive practice(s), the athletes’ subjective experiences of pleasurable movement are connected with their desires to move in a specific, technical and skillful way. Larsson and Quennerstedt (2012, p. 288) elaborate on this idea of developing [physical] ability or skill as agentic and a source of moving pleasure for participants.
To move or to move in new ways (i.e., to develop ‘ability’ or ‘skill’), is simultaneously to desire moving (in new ways)—and since moving is also to be somebody, to be able to move (in new ways) is, at the same time, to desire being someone who moves in such and such a way.

When student-athletes embody their desires and actions to perform skills, they exercise power in their sport (Shogan, 1999), and for the student-athletes at Hillcrest Collegiate, the performative dimensions of athletic movement, and the way these are taken up during assessments and training, are inextricably connected to desires to move in powerful and precise ways.

Based on data from interviews and focus groups, I suggest that narratives of improvement, competition and achievement—which all represent a kind of disciplinary pleasure—and the prevalence of these discourses and practices specifically speak to the uses of pleasure in a contemporary sports school. Pleasure saturates the discourses of excellence of the sports school and incites the formation of certain subject positions (i.e., those who take pleasure in pushing themselves to be excellent). Certainly, the body’s movement and how it is assessed, trained and monitored are integral to the student-athlete’s identity, and how they come to experience their subjective embodied pleasure(s) in this neoliberal and socio-political institution. Indeed, as movement pleasures align with individual subjective experiences of the discourses of excellence, and the technologies of how to achieve excellence (e.g. regular physical assessments and training), there is constant reification of corporeal discipline. These kinds of reifications were also embedded with discourses of gender and specific kinds of (gendered) movement discourses were circulating in this space, which impacted on notions of pleasure and the moving body, particularly in the context of assessments and training.

**Tension and Moving (Dis)Pleasures**

All of the discussion in this chapter relates to the embodied pleasures that are inextricably tied to the work that student-athletes perform on a daily basis at Hillcrest Collegiate. Equally situated among these narratives of moving pleasure(s) however is also an ambivalence, from trainers and student-athletes alike, about the manner in which some student-athletes are incited to perform particular kinds of movements during assessments and training. Specifically, the hyper-focus on ability during assessments and
training often did not align with the (narrowly) defined concept of physical literacy the fitness training and testing mechanisms claim to represent. Additionally, the application of fitness testing often created a gendered space that (re)produced limits and possibilities of female sport bodies. This certainly has an impact on female bodies that do not align or fit in to narrowly defined ideas of what constitutes the appropriate female (sport) body from a performative point of view, such as the perception of moving with ease during specific drills\textsuperscript{59}. As Evans (2004, p. 93) explains, ability in physical education, and I would also argue in highly competitive male dominated sports environments, “is recognized, conceptualized, socially configured, nurtured and embodied”. The way in which physical ‘ability’ is constructed and understood in this context becomes problematic for certain bodies (i.e., female bodies and those males who do not precisely fit the dominant norm) as their relation to specific discursive and embodied practices in sport has a bearing on the way in which the body’s ability is recognized and configured through fitness practice. For Evans (2004),

‘Ability’ tends to be characterized as a one-dimensional, static entity one among many fixed or incremental ‘attributions’ (the others being effort, task difficulty, luck). While this has usefully centered attention on the nature of individual decision-making in health and sport, it has little to say about the nature of ‘ability’ as a dynamic sociocultural construct and process. (p. 99)

Taking Evans’ description of the concept ‘ability’ as a dynamic social construct and process highlights how a hyper-focus on sports performance can miss this sense of ability, which often gets lost in biopedagogical understandings of ability by trainers and coaches in the sports school. These (mis)understandings work to configure specific attitudes towards the body and embodied self, without necessarily taking the social context into account. Thinking of this kind was evident at Hillcrest Collegiate in the practices that trainers and coaches engaged in when working with female and male student-athletes. I often observed the separating out of the physically ‘able’ (read: certain males) and ‘less physically able’ (read: female) student-athletes during training sessions.

\textsuperscript{59} In much the same way as this has an impact on female bodies, male youth bodies that do not fit the typical ‘orthodox’ masculine identity (e.g., those bodies read as hyper-muscular and physical) may also be significantly impacted. This would influence how the non-normative male body is managed and navigated in the sports school (see Atkinson and Kehler, 2010, 2012; Wellard, 2009).
In this way, *Hillcrest Collegiate* is reproducing ‘ability’, ostensibly identifying and endorsing individual characteristics of the sport body by virtue of its gendered abilities (Ball, 2003). This finding is not new of course in studies of sport and physical culture where gender, sexism and heterosexism have been systemic and have had great impact on women, girls and non-dominant males participation and performance in sports (Allen, 2014; Dutton, 2014; Hargreaves, 1994). Not surprisingly then I observed how assessments were altered for the female student-athletes where they were required to do “girl push-ups” (Field notes - June 8, 2015).

The discourse and practices of gendered abilities impacted the way physical ability is conceptualized at *Hillcrest Collegiate* and had an influence on the practices of trainers and coaches when working with female student-athletes. When asked about the student-athlete’s feelings toward in school physical assessments and training, the questions elicited interesting responses:

75% of them wanna do it [testing] and wanna see themselves test against themselves. And then there’s that 20% who don’t wanna do it. Especially the girls. If they don’t wanna do it, they don’t wanna do it in front of the boys, maybe ‘cause they feel they’re not as good as the boys. We did a couple tests this morning and they just didn’t try. We have some very gifted athletes here so if the girls just tried they would be right up there with the boys. (Steve, strength and conditioning coach)

Very few girls [take part in training]. I found it hard to motivate them. Most of them actually stay in class and do extra work in class. Some girls don’t go to class or come to the gym while some do. I don’t know if they’re a little intimidated being around the guys or uncomfortable with it or they don’t feel that they need to. Once in a while we’ll get a girl. In the last couple of weeks there was a girl coming in regularly and during the day there was one girl who was doing her own program but that was before the strength and conditioning hours so that was during lunch time. (Rick, strength and conditioning coach)

Although both Steve and Rick acknowledge the absence of female student-athletes’ participation in training sessions and assessments they identify this absence as the result of girls not wanting to try or ‘not being as good as the boys’ – they do not identify the absence as having to do with the possible gendered culture of the school. Equating ability with identity (e.g. it’s inherently female to be ‘intimidated’ by the opposite sex while taking part in physical pursuits) provided validation for the way(s) in which the
female student-athlete is often infantilized in this space. Critically, this has had an impact on the female student-athlete’s desire to move and the displeasure(s) they associate with moving and performing during assessments and training.

Not surprisingly, many of the female student-athletes did not enjoy their experiences during assessments and training; there was little appreciation of embodied pleasure. Most often, the displeasure they felt while participating in fitness testing was the result of the expectations that were set out primarily by coaches and trainers and that were different for male and female student-athletes. Both the space(s) of training and testing acted as sites where the expectation of gendered movements invoked embodied vulnerability as female student-athletes. In these sites they had to constantly negotiate their individual and collective experience (Pavlidis and Fullagar, 2015) regarding affirmations of their physical ‘ability’. As the interview narratives below illustrate, some of the female student-athletes did not echo the positive and pleasurable moments of the moving body experienced by the majority of male athletes during training and assessments. Instead these young women discussed their disengagement, and the overt lack of support they felt from their trainers and/or coaches when they were trying to be physically engaged. These instances had clear implications for how a majority of the female student-athletes interviewed experienced physicality and their moving bodies.

Danielle: Why do you think the ice time isn’t a great experience for you?

Wendy (Grade-Twelve): Trainers didn’t show up. We’d be doing circles. I teach circles. That’s for beginner skaters. I don’t know anybody who would enjoy doing circles for an entire hour and a half. That’s not fun. [Coach] knows that’s not fun. He comes on the ice and just does whatever. He’ll forget pucks for the girls every time he comes and meanwhile we know he’s got pucks because we see them in the car. He just doesn’t care for teaching. There’s some teachers who are meant to teach and he’s just not. Sometimes they put us on with the younger players and we’ll be like “no, we’d rather do it ourselves”. We’d rather be with the goalies than be with the little kids. Like, “no, thank you”. I want a challenge and that’s not challenging. When you’re on the ice you shouldn’t be thinking of what you could be doing off the ice. I could be doing this right now, this right now. That’s when my body feels the worst. When I’m just standing in line because there’s like 40 kids on the ice. It’s like, “ok, next drill?”
Claire (Grade-Ten): We had our own ice at the beginning of the year and everyone was going on and then they made this excuse that no one was going on the ice.

Erin (Grade-Eleven): That pisses me off so much. They just stripped it away from us and then nobody went on. And then they’re like, “we’re not going to give it back to you if no one’s going on”. But we stopped going on because you f’ed it up.

Claire (Grade-Ten): And it’s not just training. Even workouts are like that. All the guys have the gym and then it seems like we’re all stuck on the field, running around. What does that do for us? It does absolutely nothing for my body or any improvement in my skills.

Kate (Grade-Eight): At the beginning of the year we [female athletes] tried but we were always put off to the side kicking the ball to the wall. We weren’t like actually working hard and training. One of the coaches was a bit closer to us. He talked to us and encouraged us, did more things with us. [Coach] he put us on opposite side to the boys. He felt bad but he said “you know you can’t do this, certain drills and shooting”, and we were like “yeah we know”. We just accepted it. Halfway through the year when I came back from the Christmas break I started shooting and the coach was like “oh my God you’ve improved so much” and I was like “yeah you probably shouldn’t have put me off to the side”. Then he started giving me a little bit more to do with the drills but not that much, not like the boys. So, then I got a little bit better. Then I realized [coach] was still pushing me off to the side so I was like “I’m going to do training in the morning”. I did that and then when I came back to soccer, last week, I got involved with what the guys were doing for the entire week. There was no pushing me off to the side because he realized I was actually not that bad. I was pretty decent. Especially with my shooting, I’ve gotten so much better with my shooting.

The sentiments expressed by Wendy, Claire, Erin and Kate demonstrate how Hillcrest Collegiate trainers and coaches are complicit in contributing to the on-going and systemic gendering of sports. In this instance, a covertly masculine literacy arises where “doing the test and being tested in the test are consequently, to a large extent, doing boy” (Larsson and Quennersted, 2012, p. 293). This inherent privileging of more focused instructional times during training obviously affords the male student-athletes more opportunities to improve over their female counterparts, while simultaneously placing the
female student-athlete in a liminal position; that is, one where she is in constant negotiation with trainers and coaches regarding her physical capabilities and their representation and reproduction of her as embodied and physically different. For this reason, many of the female student-athletes at Hillcrest Collegiate remained ambivalent about their sport training and often decided to forego testing.

The above interview excerpts are important as they emphasize the tension and negotiation of being a female student-athlete at Hillcrest Collegiate. From the discourses, practices and experiences with trainers (and male peers), a sense of one’s place in the sports school is learned. For the female student-athlete this means being caught between two equally unpleasant visions of body performativity. On one hand, through discourses of excellence they are taught that by working hard and moving their bodies in certain ways they may achieve recognition. On the other, based on the inherent biological assumptions about gendered physical ability, and where males are expected to outperform most of the females, she learns hers is a marginalized position in this sportscape.

Consuming Nutrition: A Body Pleasure

During the time I spent at Hillcrest Collegiate, I noticed the nuanced way(s) in which food and fluid intake were “implicated as vehicles to reproduce the athletic body” (Ventresca and Brady, 2015, p. 412). More specifically, in the everyday lives of all involved in the sports school, the presence of food—that is, appropriate food and eating choices—was linked to important questions about the connections between the body and performance. While scholars interested in nutrition, exercise sciences and sports medicine, have considered the importance of the place of food in preparing athletes for

60 The notion of liminality was first introduced by anthropologist Victor Turner whose seminal work on ritual looked at the liminal phase of rites of passage (Shore, 1994). Described by Turner as “betwixt-and-between”, liminal phenomena are used to explain ambiguous situations where the “liminal is neither inside nor outside, neither here nor there; partaking in two discrete worlds, liminal entities belong properly within neither” (Shore, 1994, p. 352). For female athletes then, a liminal sportscape is, in many respects, a space where they are part of (through their participation as athletes) yet do not truly belong to (i.e., as females participating in traditionally masculine activities). Being in this liminal sportscape gives participants a unique and often contradictory understanding of these particular sport spaces. As I have noted throughout this dissertation, some of the female athletes’ narratives discuss the importance of assessments during training. For them, the ability to do well enough during assessments is connected to the pleasure they find in succeeding (see Rachel’s narrative on page 204). These narratives however contradict their ambivalence towards training and their decision to oftentimes forego assessments.
arduous training and competition regimens as well as recovery (Daries, 2012; Manroe, Meyer and Thompson, 2009), to date, little attention has been paid to this topic by scholars concerned with physical cultural and sociocultural approaches to the study of sport and physical activity (Brady and Ventresca, 2014; Race, 2012; Ventresca and Brady, 2015). Indeed, the same can be said about research on high-performance athletes and eating disorders (Hughes and Coakley, 1991; Johns, 1998) where the cultural (re)production and political histories of the importance of food in the everyday lives of athletes has largely been left unexplored. According to Ventresca and Brady (2015) this oversight, in large part, rests on the unproblematised notion that athletes are expected to know and undertake specific dietary practices, such as consuming certain foods and drink, to support their athletic bodies and performance. In this section, following Ventresca and Brady’s (2015) assertion that food and eating, in the everyday lives of competitive athletes, are sites through which important connections can be made between sport, the body and athletic performance, I focus on how food and drink are discursively and materially constituted as part of the everyday pleasures of student-athletes at Hillcrest Collegiate. More specifically, I aim to illustrate the mechanisms through which food ideologies connect with everyday experiences of embodiment (cf. Probyn, 2000) by exploring how food and drink are materially and symbolically experienced by athletes.

As I have noted above, as student-athletes have become more familiar with the techniques and associated behaviours designed to prepare them for improved performance, they begin to find great pleasure in adopting specific practices and behaviours. Paying attention to their diet and food intake, which can be used as a means to achieve excellence in their everyday lives, has not been ignored in this context. For the administrators at Hillcrest Collegiate the processes of eating and hydrating are always framed and instituted through a high-performance discourse in which proper food and hydration are viewed as measures of effective preparation in both the classroom and sport realms:

We view education, athletics, and nutrition as integral to their development. In the morning we do great food. A great lunch that I eat myself everyday. I love it. In the afternoon they get a nice snack. It keeps the energy flowing, it keeps them engaged in class because they do have some extra energy coming in and it really
helps them get away from some of the bad foods that they might pack for lunch or high sugar content foods. (Henry, teacher)

It’s not fried food. We have a lot of carbs, we have salad, we have food that’s going to give you energy. Just food that’s going to make a difference in your performance in the class and in your sport. We’re going to feed you after school because we all know what it’s like for kids to leave school and they have to rush home and eat something to get to their game or practice. Me, myself, I’m guilty of feeding my kids sometimes something you don’t want to feed them because timing doesn’t allow you to feed them. So, we’re going to feed them after school and give you some pasta, some carbs get you loaded up with energy to get you on the field, the court, the classroom to do what you do best. (Ray, administrator)

Certainly, in the sports school, eating well and drinking proper fluids have acquired widespread currency and have become part of the everyday language and practice(s) embodied and reproduced through practices of the self.

Yeah, food is very important. If you don’t have those types of nutrients in your body you can’t perform to your potential basically. If you’re not eating the food that you should eat before games, practices, anything it will show with your performance on the ice, on the court, in class whatever. (Xeno, Grade-Seven)

In this respect, what I have termed ‘nutritional legacies’ have become embedded in Hillcrest Collegiate and are evolving as a dynamic zone where the emergence of specific principles of food and hydration align with particular articulations of bodies, technologies of government and geometries of power (Flannery and Mincyte, 2010; Race, 2012). These all articulate that bodies will perform better by adopting and engaging in these practices. As Henry, Ray and Xeno’s narratives highlight, food almost is seen to act as a technology for improved performance. This supports the meanings and discursive formations that underlie the normalization of food consumption as a method of enhancing performance (Ventresca and Brady, 2015). I believe that nutrition’s appeal to discursive, material and symbolic constructions of performance connects to broader understandings of acting upon the self in the pursuit of excellence. In this way, as a technology of power, nutrition is productive. As Coveney (2000) explains, “modern nutrition, then, is a technology of power which objectifies bodies in relation to specific outcomes” (p. 126). Certainly, in this context it is assumed that administrators, teachers and coaches know that eating the right kinds of foods, and staying properly hydrated, will improve individual performance (Ventresca and Brady, 2015).
The story of nutrition here is also a story about the circulation of scientific discourses and principles (Race, 2012) where scientific rationalities are situated alongside discourses of present and future performance.

[It’s] huge. Nutrition plays a role in 70, 80, 90% of their training. The reason is their schedule is so hectic. They’re training three to five times a week with their team. Nutrition, hydration is so big. If you’re not eating properly and hydrating you’re going to overtrain and you’re gonna fall by the end of the season. It’s gonna be hard to make games. So what we do is I try to work with the students and with their nutrition. That’s why in the school here you can’t bring in McDonald’s. We have a chef that brings in high quality nutritional meals. So because their day is very hectic here we supply proper nutrition and hopefully what they’re learning here about proper nutrition they’ll bring that home to the parents. It’s very, very important when you’re at the elite level. Even when you’re weighing a student before they go on the ice to see how much fluid they’re losing. 2% dehydration means your performance will decrease. It’s so important which I don’t think the parents or the students realize how important nutrition is here. Some students are picky with their foods but it’s so important that they’re eating properly. It’s vital for your performance tomorrow. (Peter, strength and conditioning coach)

Such discursive and material practices are further taken up throughout various spaces of the school. Take, for example, the Gatorade advertisement below (see Figure 5.1) found in the girls’ washroom stall and outside the school’s lunchroom with the title: “Are You Hydrated” displaying two urine collection cups, one with a small amount of dark yellow urine and the other with a large amount of pale yellow urine:
The contrasting images of the cups of urine are meant to distinguish between the appropriate amount of fluid intake required for competitive athletes, and what is considered to be sufficient in their everyday performance activities. This advertisement provides an important institutional discourse about how hydration, specifically, articulates with performance enhancement in this space. The idea of being “properly hydrated”, as the advertisement suggests, gives this form of consumption practical logic (Race, 2012) particularly when targeting youth’s bodies. It anticipates new modes of

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61 I cannot say for certain whether this advertisement is also posted in public schools. I would argue however that this image is significant in the space of the sports school because of Gatorade’s link to athletic performance and excellence.
thinking about and relating to food and hydration in the pursuit of excellence and here particularly provides a specific rationale for consuming this energy drink; that is, if you consume this fluid you are guaranteed to improve your athletic performance. Student-athletes also take up this rhetoric as shown in Figure 5.2 below.

*Figure 5.2: Student illustration of the Gatorade emblem. Note the student’s description of the energy drink as “tastes good”, “hydrates”, and “builds muscle”.*

This highlights the problematic way in which spaces are appropriated to reproduce discourses of performance.

Implicit in the message about replacing the appropriate amounts of fluids in one’s body to attain performance success is also a link to discourses of health and the healthful body. Here there is a constant reminder about the importance of fluid intake, and a specific kind of hydration (in the form of energy drinks). As the advertisement implicitly suggests, knowledge about hydration rests on scientific ideas about the body’s optimal health, which renders the consumption of this product an appropriate means to meeting the body’s requirements. The text continues: “Gatorade contains carbohydrates to provide energy and fluid and electrolytes to hydrate in ways that plain water just can’t”. This text aims to produce a ‘reflexive subject’ (Race, 2012, p. 81) concerned with their body’s
health and one who can reflect on how the appropriate consumption of carbohydrates and electrolytes is a means to maintaining the healthy and performance-ready body. The embodiment of health requires that the student-athlete have a subjective experience of hydration as they are incited to pay attention to their urine output as a sign of being hydrated enough. Thus, the practice of consuming Gatorade products is very much connected to broader cultural ideas about hydration, and I would also add eating processes. By paying attention to the state of their (de)hydration (and food intake) as a means to measure effective performance, health becomes an achievement wherein performance enhancement is tied to the management of athletic bodies. As Rachel (Grade-Eleven) explains:

It’s basically your fuel. If I eat poorly it’s clear to me right away. I can feel it. I won’t train right at all to my full potential but definitely it’s so important what you eat before a game, what you eat during the game and what you eat after the game. It’s crucial. Knowing myself, I have to eat a full meal two hours before the game. I need a snack in between periods and I need protein and just a refuel of carbs after the game. It’s also important that I get in enough fluids. Water, Gatorade whatever. If I don’t have enough water I get way too tired. I will start panting. It’s been myself learning about myself.

The epistemological assumptions about food, sport and the body that supports the student’s knowledge are apparent; these assumptions rest on the underlying construction of certain foods, such as protein and carbohydrates, and fluids, such as water or energy drinks, as seemingly natural components in the everyday dietary experience of the athlete. This is further reinforced through various (Canadian) public and governmental agencies (e.g. Coaching Association of Canada, Dietitians of Canada, Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, Eat Right Ontario). For example, the Canadian Paediatric Society has a detailed breakdown of the importance of each food category (protein, carbohydrates and fats) and fluid intake concerning overall sport nutrition for young athletes “to maintain proper growth and optimize performance in athletic endeavours” (Purcell, 2013, https://www.cps.ca/en/documents/position/sport-nutrition-for-young-athletes). Here, we can see the ways in which discourses of performance, framed by appropriate food and hydration intake, can take on a new cluster of meaning, practice and identity. Importantly, what is significant in interview narratives is the articulation of nutrition as more intimately connected with the activities and meanings of bodies. Henry (teacher)
states: “There’s no point in doing everything that they’re [student-athletes] doing if they’re going to be putting garbage in their body because it’s just not going to help them at all”. In this moment, food and fluid intake are reconfigured; they now take the shape of a practice or a skill (Race, 2012). Henry (teacher) elaborates on this point:

We’re trying, as I said, to teach them life-long skills. If I go home everyday and have a burger, fries and pop I’m not going to last too long and if these guys and girls do the same thing they’re not going to be able to compete as well as they could in their sports. So just trying to teach them that nutrition is integral to their development. It’s not just their sport specific training. They really have to take into account what they put into their body and as some people say they really have to treat their body as a temple.

Food and fluid intake have become activities that are undertaken “consciously, deliberately and for the good of the body” (Fixx, 1977, cited in Race, 2012, p. 85). Thus, discourses of performance are accompanied by an emphasis on self-enhancement by transforming the body or “treating the body as a temple”. In this respect, proper food and fluid intake can be located at the juncture where discourses and material practices of performance and self-enhancement converge. It is not simply the avoidance of foods and fluid deemed ‘unhealthy’ but “the optimization of health—its continual enhancement—that constitutes the broad focus of health practice” (Race, 2012, p. 79). As demonstrated through such understandings of nutrition, the knowledge circulating about food as natural and a healthy way to nourish the body are also very much tied to nostalgic visions of “what food used to be” (Henry, teacher). Due to prescriptions about appropriate food and fluid choices, Hillcrest Collegiate changed the school’s policy to ban certain foods classified as ‘junk’ foods. As Henry (teacher) elaborates:

Food isn’t the same anymore; it’s not what it used to be. Everything’s processed, fried or injected with something. As a kid, it makes it hard to choose what’s the best food to be putting in your body. That’s why we have a no junk food policy here. We completely do not allow any sort of junk food, any pop. I was talking to a couple of kids the other day, they’re great kids, but they were drinking Nestea. It might seem innocent; “it’s just iced tea, sir”. Let’s look at the nutrition facts and there’s like 34 grams of sugar on it. So I’m trying to teach them a little bit more about it and the reasons why you should eat this way.

Negotiating the boundary between healthy and unhealthy foods and drinks is problematic. The problem here lies in who decides what is classified as healthy and/or
unhealthy? Certainly, there is much evidence to support the idea that energy drinks, such as Gatorade, are not considered healthy (Reissig et al., 2009; Seifert et al., 2011) yet the school seems to wholly embrace the intake of such drinks. Navigating the boundary of what constitutes healthy and unhealthy food and drink however is not as simple as delineating binaristic thinking about food and fluid (Magdalinski, 2008). As Ventresca and Brady (2015, p. 420) explain:

> It is not simply binaristic thinking about naturalness that informs the mythos of sport and performance enhancers, but it is the uncertainty with which the line between natural and unnatural is drawn that is important. This is because the boundary between natural and unnatural is constantly shifting and permeable in a way that allows new threats to the stability of the dichotomy to be reinterpreted and subsumed by the binary as they emerge. Through the ways in which they materialize in cultures of sport, more and more food categories are positioned within this liminal space between natural and unnatural.

The scrutiny with which student-athletes’ bodies are monitored and regulated at the school via specific food practices, enact a discursive and material production of the eating subject (Coveney, 2000; Lockie, 2002) reinventing the boundary through which certain food and drink are considered healthy. This suggests a specific form of governing directed towards the food-body relationship and the regulation of the consumption of nutritional pleasure in this space.

> The institutional discursive and material constitution of food—indeed, the assumption that bodies will perform better by adopting new regimes of self-practice which involves eating and drinking in specific ways—aligns with the constant production

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62 In my interviews with school staff it was noted that Hillcrest Collegiate has a number of partnerships with various companies including Gatorade. According to Henry (teacher):

> …basically they [Gatorade] provide us with some of their goods in exchange for advertising Gatorade [products]...I like them [partnerships]. If it helps the school, if it helps the kids getting a free product, if it helps Gatorade or whoever we’re partnering with, then it’s great if it has mutual benefits.

Although spoken of positively by Henry, the growth of partnerships between schools and commercial enterprises, have brought consumerism to the forefront of young people’s lives. As Norris (2011) explains, when corporations “go to schools” (p. 43), youth become subjected to market forces. Although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss in depth the impact of consumerism on education, the presence of Gatorade advertisements throughout Hillcrest Collegiate, as well as additional school-business partnerships, speaks to the extent to which commercial forces are present in the sports school.
of ‘what counts as knowledge’, which continually frames how individuals approach the world (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008). At Hillcrest Collegiate, the creation of ‘truths’ and ‘norms’ about relationships to food become conditioned in very particular ways treating the body as a ‘docile’ consumer of this knowledge and the food and drink it purports to be important for performance.

Simply viewing the body in this context however fails to take in to account the link between the materialities of food and the ideologies of eating and, of course, connections to young peoples’ everyday pleasurable experiences. The materiality of food comes to matter in ways not necessarily bound exclusively to meanings impressed on bodies by discourses (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008). Certainly, the material and phenomenological pleasures food can offer, and ways that athletes may be agents in this process, play a part in determining whether student-athletes find in the food choices that they are confronted with on a daily basis while at school, pleasurable at all.

A majority of the student-athletes that I interviewed detailed the importance of food in their everyday routines as a significant part of taking care of the body:

Leo (Grade-Nine): I think I’ve learned that it’s very important that you take care of your body. I think I learned that over the years here at Hillcrest Collegiate. You need to take care of your body. It’s just that simple. You can’t function if you don’t take care of yourself.

Danielle: So, taking care of the body. What does that mean for you?

Leo (Grade-Nine): To me, I think it means eating properly. So, if I eat like McDonald’s or KFC or something like that I’m not doing well. It’s not good for me. If I eat well, more protein or whatever, it helps me develop properly.

Taylor (Grade-Ten): Yeah, it’s very important. You don’t want to have a good workout and then go home and eat chips. You want to eat healthy and stay healthy because food contributes to how you perform. You want your vitamins, your vegetables, your protein. You don’t want to be eating fast food and stuff. And they tell you, you need to eat good things. At lunch they’ll give you food that’s good for you not junk.

The student-athletes’ narratives suggest that they have made connections between the material reality of their bodily experiences of food and the school’s institutional texts and
discourses about food. Both Leo and Taylor discuss eating the appropriate foods, such as proteins and vegetables, while staying away from foods classified as ‘junk’ with the explicit intent of enhancing athletic performance. The pleasures they have embodied about eating are not only relevant to their performance but are also significant to their ‘pleasures of knowing’ (Foucault, 1990) about these foods. Although writing about how we have come to desire the act of knowing sexuality, Foucault’s analysis is relevant here. Foucault (1990, p. 71) writes,

We have at least invented a different kind of pleasure: pleasure in truth of pleasure, the pleasure of knowing the truth, of discovering and exploring it, the fascination of seeing it and telling it, of captivating and capturing others by it, of confiding it in secret, of luring it out in the open—the specific pleasure of the true discourse on pleasure.

In the sports school, the student-athlete’s pleasure of knowing manifests in their desire to make sense of the bodily practices they are actively engaging in, and the apparent ‘truths’ about how their physical activity is maintained. The evaluation of foods and drinks, their component nutrients, and the perceived nutritional benefits they may derive from these, are very much connected to a kind of consuming pleasure that is palpable in this place.

I like the way I choose to eat. It’s very important to me to be successful as a student and athlete. You have to eat certain foods and always be drinking water. Food is so important because you can train and be on the ice doing your sport everyday but if you’re eating junk all the time, your outside looks good but on the inside it’s not good. (Christine, Grade-Twelve)

Through my observations of how institutional discourses and practices circulated about consuming specific foods, an analysis of the material pleasures that student-athletes derive from engaging in such practices was possible. Christine’s acceptance and recognition of the process of eating—what it takes to act and look the part of a student-athlete through the consumption of appropriate foods and drinks—demonstrates her agency within this process; after all she explains this process as her choice. As agentic subjects, for the most, part student-athletes recognize and act in the interests of their

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Scrinis’ (2008, 2013) analysis of the recent cultural shifts in how food is widely understood defines ‘nutritionism’ as a fairly recent phenomenon whereby how we think about food is becoming ever more reducible into its nutrient component parts.
performative successes and appropriate nutritional consumption plays an important role in this process. For Mark (Grade-Ten) there’s more to being a successful student-athlete than simply looking the part. It’s as much about diligently working on what you put in to your body as about one’s specific body aesthetic. He stated: “If you’re an athlete, you’re working out, and you’re going to McDonalds and downing burgers, it’s not good. Just working out isn’t going to do anything for you or your performance”. Purposefully done, student-athletes self-regulate their daily intake of suitable foods and fluids as a measure of their effective preparation for the classroom and for the field/ice:

Oh yeah, 100% food is important. If you’re eating garbage it shows. You’ll feel it and when you go to training, it’ll show. It’ll show. 100%. It helps with schooling. It helps with everything. If you’re eating bad foods you will feel it. You’ll feel drowsy, you’ll feel groggy. It’s just not a good feeling on you. (Wendy, Grade-Twelve)

As a measure of their effective preparation, it is important to note that specific food choices are not simply the result of something imposed on student-athletes, through the school’s various disciplinary techniques and/or governmental strategies, for example. Rather, assessing their body’s needs, food selection, preparation and consumption has become a goal that is embraced by autonomous subjects (Race, 2012). Just as significantly, (consuming) pleasures are reconstituted in the process. They are no longer limited to how the body looks on the outside, but they now incorporate all the students’ desires to optimize the body and their sensuous experiences of ‘feeling good’ as a result of what is put inside the body. They become more and more knowledgeable about what they needed to ingest in order to maintain great performative success, and this desire played a role in their interpretation of athletic food culture and consumption. Despite the different student-athletes’ various iterations of what they thought to be appropriate foods and fluids and their importance in their everyday lives, they almost all understood their athletic identities as directly related to their bodies, and what they put in them, thus demonstrating a particular corporeal management of their bodies. Although some of the student-athletes expressed a degree of aesthetic satisfaction in the appearance of their bodies, the majority of them engaged in the regulation of their bodies – through training, testing and nutrition – in order to achieve long-term opportunities and success within
their sport and in the classroom. To them, these were the foundations of what it meant to be a student-athlete.

**Becoming Student-Athletes**

During a school lunch with student-athletes, I asked how they first became involved in competitive sport. More than a few of the student-athletes at the table recounted having been enrolled by their mother or father in one or two sports at a young age, without much, if any, discussion between them. Others recounted having to push for parental support to join a team or club after gaining interest from friends, cousins and older siblings who played. Beyond their mere interest in pursuing sport at an elite level, all of the student-athletes sitting with me that day acknowledged the great “sacrifices” (Mark, Grade-Ten) parents made investing in their child’s sport—from the time it took out of their daily lives to attend games and practices, to the finances spent on ensuring their son and/or daughter had the best equipment and was receiving the proper training.
As the student-athletes explained to me, to work their way up the competitive ranks in whatever sport they pursue, the reliance on the adults in their lives is quite profound and that their parents made such sacrifices for their children was certainly “not to be taken-for granted” (Jack, Grade-Ten). In fact, to my surprise, Oliver (Grade-Ten) quite empathically stressed to me his commitment to competitive sport over the years has been because he wanted to “pay back his parents for all that they sacrificed for him”. Thus, for Oliver, and the other student-athletes who agreed with his statement, sport, and the educational endeavours they engaged in that allowed for the pursuit of excellence in sport, was being pursued with those adults in mind. This particular discussion concerning the perceived role between adults and youth in their pursuit of excellence generated some important questions for me about the identity adopted by student-athletes. I wrote in my field notes:

The discussion today about the role of parental sacrifice in the making of their child’s athletic success was quite interesting to me. For student-athletes the investment that parents made over the years in their sport careers has played an influential role for them continuing to push themselves competitively and move up the rankings in their sport. I appreciate the ongoing role parents play in their child’s sport lives, but certainly these student-athletes play more intricate parts in developing their own identities as students and athletes than the discussion today alluded to. What does this mean regarding their sport practices and relationships cultivated in this institutional context, a place where many of the student-athletes have been encouraged by their parents to attend? (Field notes - June 19, 2015)

As my field note suggests, I believe that becoming a student-athlete is quite complex and along with all the other sport practices and relationships that have been discussed above about what makes up the appropriate student and athlete, it is important to note that the student-athlete’s life is intricately conjoined to adults’ lives not only beyond the school but also within the school. For Leo (Grade-Nine) his relationship with adults within Hillcrest Collegiate is one that fosters success through his hard work:

The coaches, they want us to get better. The trainers they also want us to get better. So do the teachers and all the staff here. They really care. That’s part of why I work hard.

The desire to “work hard” in order to be successful is imagined by Leo as something that adults measure in their assessments of youth “getting better” in both their academics and
training. For Leo this adult supervision and “care” helps him prepare for what is expected of the student-athlete. The notion of working hard as a commitment to the adults in their lives is often one where youth have to navigate their play(ful) endeavours and their work.

When Stella (Grade-Nine) was asked what she valued about the on-ice training sessions at Hillcrest Collegiate she spoke of her role as a student-athlete negotiating work and play:

I like training so much better. Coming to this school I’ve improved so much. I played house league so I went to BB which was lucky ‘cause they were missing players and then I went right to AA. That was my first year at Hillcrest Collegiate. At the end of the year I made AA and that was like huge. You can’t really go from BB to AA from house league the year before so this school helped me so much. It definitely was all the hard work I put in during the morning training sessions. Sure, sometimes I’m super tired. But that’s what it means to be a student-athlete, right? I do like when we sometimes get to scrimmage during training. It lets us play around for a bit and not be so serious. But, I also don’t want to waste any of the training time. My coach told me my puck control could be stronger so I need those drills in the morning to help me improve that. Playing around isn’t really going to help me with that.

For Stella, much of her identity as a student-athlete was encompassed in what I describe as an embodied desire to do work. On the ice this meant pushing her body to the limit, engaging in forced instruction rather than play in the form of scrimmage, and participating in repetitive drills. Despite finding enjoyment while scrimmaging, a certain tension between playing and doing serious work arises in training and practice sessions (Dyck, 2012). A similar narrative with Rachel (Grade-Eleven) also arose when asked about what being a student-athlete means to her:

I personally love it. I’m not just a student. I’m not just an athlete. I’m a student-athlete and I love that. I’ve always been an active kid so being able to pursue something this high level it’s just been amazing. Working hard in both my sport and in the class, it’s just part of my personality now. Sure, sometimes I would like to just relax and actually feel that there’s time in the day to do other things. Sometimes you feel like you’re just going through the motions and you don’t have enough time to rest but I wouldn’t change it. Honestly, as much as it would be nice to take a break sometimes I don’t know what I would do. I wouldn’t feel like myself. I love putting in the hard work at school and in training and feeling productive.
For Rachel, her identity as a student and an athlete was also tied to the key values perpetuated and sustained among members of Hillcrest Collegiate, particularly around negotiations of play and work. The distinction between striving to do well in the classroom and playing a sport well, rather than “just joking around” was observed in the classroom and on the sport pitch, and further taken up by teachers and coaches at the school. As James (Grade-Seven) explained to me: “If we’re not working hard in class or on the ice they [teachers, coaches etc.] think we’re goofs” (Field Notes – February 18, 2015). For Stella and Rachel, their identities as a student and athlete oscillated between motifs of work and play (Dyck, 2012). As the interview narratives of the student-athletes highlight, these young athletes, especially in the context of the private sports school, where parents pay for both their sport and academic endeavours, are expected to enjoy and appreciate the opportunities afforded to them. They are expected to engage in sport while at school, to be with their friends, and to experience the embodied pleasures of competitive play, both inside and outside the classroom. At the same time, they also assume the expectations that they are required to through submitting themselves to all the regimes of bodily discipline, reflected in the institutions’ call to excellence and productions of an ideal athletic and academic character. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the desire for excellence enabled through bodily disciplinary mechanisms were key values sustained and enforced amongst members of Hillcrest Collegiate. This desire both discursively and materialized through the space of the sports school has played an important role in how these young individuals construct and negotiate their identities as both students and athletes, as well as how this identity construction is perpetuated and reflected in the production of an ideal student-athlete character promoted by coaches, teachers and administrative staff. Certainly, part of identifying as a student-athlete is also identifying with the skills attained through their experiences and understanding of their environment, including that of all the actors involved and reacting accordingly.

Many of the youth interviewed, spoke of performing the role of elite student-athlete and how that was endorsed by the institutional values that the school promoted. This meant creating, adopting and maintaining the ‘proper’ identity in this space, one that aligned with performing both an academic and sport role successfully. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, among Hillcrest Collegiate’s many institutional commitments to
achieving excellence in sport and academics, the importance of fundamental values—such as hard work and self-responsibility—constitute integral characteristics of the student-athlete identity. For youth attending this particular sports school, to be considered an elite student and athlete, one must display a passion for sport and academic training through dedication, acceptance of the school’s institutional values and maintenance of a competitive attitude so as to be the “best they can be” (Diane, teacher), and, of course, a willingness to follow the rules and regulations established by the school.

The goal for student-athletes is to get them to the highest level possible. That means following the school’s mandate and rules. I explain that to parents and kids right at the beginning. Don’t waste your money and people’s time if your kid doesn’t want to buy in to our culture. If you don’t want to be a student-athlete, if you don’t want to be pushed academically, physically, you don’t want to eat right, we have to tell you over and over about eating, it’s not like you’re two years old, you’re 14 and we have to tell you about wearing the school colours, the school clothes, conduct, carry yourself. There are some people, some parents and some kids where this wasn’t a good fit for them and that’s okay. Different strokes for different folks. If it’s not a good fit it’s not a good fit and we leave it at that. But they have to go by our culture and what we do here. They have to be pushed academically and physically and if you’re not we ask you to leave the school or don’t even come to the school. We want you to be a part of the school. We want you to walk around where someone speaks to you and they say, ‘wow that was a nice young lady or that was a nice young man I wonder what school they went to? Oh, they went to Hillcrest Collegiate’. So, that’s where we want you. We don’t want you out there swearing. We don’t want you out there conducting yourself in not a great manner. So we try to instil these cultures in you and you carry them on, move on in your future and carry them on in your kids and so on. We’re putting out great product, and the great products are the kids. When the kids get out there physically and academically and just great overall young individuals that are making an impact in life. (Ray, administrator)

As Ray suggests, adult administrators of the school are clearly in control in terms of their institutional authority and the maintenance of specific values associated with attending Hillcrest Collegiate. However, I argue here that the sports school landscape and cultural milieu are produced dialogically; that is, student-athletes are as much co-producers of this space as adults are. The student-athletes’ narratives suggest to me that they have developed a keen sense of self-awareness through a process of interacting with others—other student-athletes and adults—at school. Their understandings of their school environment and what is required of them to be student-athletes has provoked their own
initiatives to take up the institutional values (or not) of the school. The rhetoric of the hard work required to achieve future success, in sport and academics, has enabled some student-athletes to maximize physical and academic opportunities for themselves. The student-athletes play an important role in who decides what they want from these experiences, how they give meaning to such experiences and how these meanings change for any given student-athlete (Dyck, 2012). Importantly, I would suggest as “social actors in their own right” (Dyck, 2012, p. 102), student-athletes complicate particular discourses circulating in this space with their own agendas, cultures and histories. Nevertheless, while the majority of student-athletes took up the institutional discourses, there was also some ambivalence about the constant emphasis the school placed on working hard.

Taylor (Grade-Ten), a new student-athlete attending Hillcrest Collegiate spoke of the difficulties that arose for him while trying to meet the school’s expectations via the daily disciplinary mechanisms he was expected to perform.

I’m still kind of new here so it’s been a big adjustment. I’m coming from a public school where you don’t have all this energy being spent on training everyday. Working hard. That’s part of the motto of the school. To always work hard in whatever you do. You really have to be focused in the class and on the field here or you’ll get called out. Your social time goes down. After school you can’t really go out with your friends or parties. You’re always training and stuff but I guess it’s alright at times. It can be really stressful, but I guess it’s more from me and being competitive with other people. A mixture of all of that. Me, because I put pressure on myself. If I want to get to the next level I need to play every day, I need to work hard in class. If I’m not working hard how am I supposed to get there?

Although Taylor’s narrative highlights the tension of performing the role of student and athlete in this space, he nevertheless spoke to me about the importance of actively participating in training sessions and professionalism in the classroom as these values would help him “get to the next level”. Contradictory narratives like Taylor’s were not uncommon among many of the student-athletes I interviewed. This suggests that despite the internalization of the various disciplinary mechanisms at work in Hillcrest Collegiate, and their complicity in perpetuating these disciplinary mechanisms, student-athletes were also cognizant of the intrusion of how the specific values of the sports school can
significantly impact on their personal lives. Many of the student-athletes expressed
resentment towards the amount of training hours they were expected to do, the types of
drills required during assessments, and the sacrifices that had to be made in order to ‘get
to the next level’ as an elite student-athlete. However, at the same time as the student-
athletes seemed resentful, they also justified these sacrifices as the kinds of compromises
that needed to be made in order for them to realize their sport and academic goals. Thus,
their narratives emphasized how they were actively involved in managing their identities
so as to ensure that the necessary values, characteristics and norms required of them were
being met, upheld and surpassed. Ostensibly, this was a necessary part of living and
succeeding in the role of an elite student and athlete within the confines of neoliberalist
discourses of responsibility—and as I have suggested previously, many of the student-
athletes found great pleasure in enacting their responsibilities.

By presenting the student-athlete’s understanding of what it means to be a student
and athlete at Hillcrest Collegiate it is possible to see how they are actively involved in
co-constructing a desired identity in this space. Here, as I have argued, a particular type
of embodied desire is being perpetuated – a disciplinary “production of desire in which
participants write their own narrative” producing a discourse on/of the body through
which it can be read (Pronger, 2012, p. 193). The desire to be subject to sports school
disciplinary regimes in the making of their identity as students and athletes highlights the
productive power of pleasure and the contradictory forces of submission and agency such
that:

A disciplined athlete is someone who submits him/herself to the power of a
particular way of knowing/behaving in order to participate in that power to
become more effective in applying it and thus to gain satisfaction and rewards

School discourses and interview narratives have revealed the interplay of the body and its
socio-cultural context in the production of school sport identities, as well as the range of
disciplinary practices to which adults and student-athletes have subjected themselves to
and ultimately embody. For student-athletes particularly, there is a complex process of
identity formation, there is the agency of athletes, the meanings they attribute to their
(sport) lives in the school organization and the dynamics of the social relationships they
navigate. It is in their experience(s) and in their co-constructing of their roles as student-athletes and the negotiation of these identities, which has shaped, and continues to shape, their identities as a student and athlete.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, *Embodied Practices and Pleasures*, I have illustrated how subjects, interpellated by a fluid network of discourses, frame stories of embodied pleasure that are embedded in mechanisms of corporeal regulation in different ways. There are contradictions that emerge among these discourses—through finding pleasure in pain, discipline and consumption—that all subjects negotiate their truths and the practices they produce (Adams, 2007). More specifically, the central theme in my analysis of embodied pleasures enacted in this sports school has demonstrated its productive power in the constitution of desiring subjects (Pringle, 2009; Pronger, 2002). Given the institutional discourses at the federal and provincial levels and those of the school, I have argued that the operations of power in the making of day-to-day life at Hillcrest Collegiate perpetuate the embodiment of disciplinary technologies. Certainly, the subjects and the space are subject to, and, in turn, (re)produce authoritative, resourceful discourses and material practices of the body and bodily pleasures. These all write a coherent text for the resourcing of puissance by pouvoir\(^6\) (Pronger, 2002). It is not surprising that the majority of the student-athletes interviewed (and the adults in charge of them) problematically fail to question the normalizing and performative effects of disciplinary power. This is evident in their discussions about adherence to physical preparation via specific training, movement and eating routines. If my analysis stopped here however it would obscure the dynamics of pouvoir and puissance, passing off the agency of individuals as merely unstructured and uncertain when living within such disciplinary technologies. Instead, I have attempted to argue that living within such dimensions of discipline and pleasure becomes a way of doing things that athletes (and adults) choose to apply to themselves and to incorporate into their daily work lives (Dyck, 2012; Shogan, 1999). It would also fail to acknowledge that these student-athletes

\(^{64}\) To re-iterate, Pronger (2002) draws on Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) work regarding the energy of power both as puissance, which is capable of transcendence, and as pouvoir, which is available to exploitation by technological approaches.
are young and are not often (if at all) taught to question or challenge themselves as subjects of investment by government and schools. Exploring disciplinary power and the productive potential of embodied pleasures shows how student-athletes manage to navigate and find meaning in prescribed practices within proscriptive constraints established at the sports school (Johns and Johns, 2000). Similar to Foucault’s (1977) understanding of the way(s) in which power may shape and enable action, embodied pleasures are part of a constitutive process through which subjects come to see themselves and make sense of their world and their place within it. These young athletes are thus confronted with “complex mechanisms of power that act as an ‘agency of discipline’ and ‘a productive manufacturer of truth’ providing both freedom and stricture in the process” (Miller, 1993 cited in Johns and Johns, 2000, p. 231). Their pleasurable experiences are thus constituted in this agency and enacted in the discursive and material practices that are produced and reproduced in this sports school space.

During the interviews I came to understand that the (re)production of disciplinary technologies in the sports school was also an exploration of the process of embodied practices and pleasure within this unique space. Corporeal pleasures found in socio-cultural relations, conformity and specific body practices, enable and/or challenge the discursive formations of excellence. I have illustrated how student-athletes, trainers, teachers and administrators establish meaning regarding the nuances of the body’s movements and practices in the sports school, and how each one of these groups has agency in such meaning-making processes. The aim of my analysis was not to romanticize embodied pleasures (Pringle, 2009) and practices, but to reveal the social and spatial significance of the complex, diverse and fluid character of sporting desires and pleasures, which constitute these student-athletes’ worlds. Such manifestations of desire as productive, that is the productive affirmation of pleasure to be found in such technologies, is a desire for subjection. As Pronger (2002) argued in his theory of the body, which draws on Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) concepts of puissance and pouvoir, in spite of the resourcing of puissance by pouvoir in the technology of physical fitness, “we are moving in the sphere of puissance, regardless of our technological take on it”, (p. 233). It is living within the disciplinary technologies and networks of pouvoir, that student-athletes contradictorily find the potential (puissance) for embodied pleasure.
Examining the productive and pleasurable aspects of student-athlete embodiment provides a way for me to account for the fluidity of identity formation I was observing in the school, while at the same time always remaining cognizant of the complex dimensions of power and pleasure under such disciplinary technologies, aspects that are often negated in biopedagogical approaches to the body. In this regard, the juxtaposition of the everyday student-athletes’ experiences regarding the pleasurable aspects of their lives at Hillcrest Collegiate as part and parcel of the disciplinary technologies at work there, is meant to demonstrate the ways in which student-athletes defy homogenization, as they are always making possible alternative ways to examine socio-cultural articulations between sport and (neoliberal) pleasure(s).
Chapter 6
Conclusion

The purpose of my dissertation was to shed light on a physical cultural practice that has received little academic attention – the sociological, educational and cultural life of a sports school. To re-iterate, the aim of my study, which I stated in the introduction of my work, was two-fold:

- Through an analysis of specialized initiatives, such as policy reports and institutional documents, I seek to explore how these initiatives intersect in the space of a sports school and how youth’s bodies and health are produced through institutional, social, cultural and political practices.

- Through my study of a sports school space I seek to understand how these macro social processes (i.e., policies) affect the everyday micro realities of individuals involved in the space (i.e., how policies impact on experiences).

To do so, I engaged in a detailed institutional ethnography of Hillcrest Collegiate – an ethnographic study that examined the space, everyday lives and experiences of student-athletes and staff in a sports school as an effect of those sports policies. I have constructed an account of the school through which I was able to consider their collective stories as they came to recount, recognize, conceptualize, understand and negotiate their identities, desire and pleasure(s) as sports school participants. Using a critical ethnographic approach informed by theories of power, subjectivity and the body, I worked to interrogate how youth and other stakeholders (e.g. teachers, coaches etc.) construct and (re)produce the body continually through their institution’s commitment to excellence, high-performance sport, education and health.

As I moved into my examination of the discursive strategies employed by various policies used in the everyday worlds at Hillcrest Collegiate, I realized that the sports school world was complex – from policies to everyday life in a sports school, there were multiple and overlapping synergies between performance, pleasure-making, prescribed disciplinary mechanisms and elite levels of sporting excellence. My departure point was to examine the discursive formation of excellence that emerges through a range of specialized policy initiatives pertaining to Hillcrest Collegiate (and I would add sports
schools generally) and how they are used to (re)produce a way of thinking about youth participation in elite sport and physical activity. The pursuit and practice of discourses of excellence has often failed to address the complexity of context and meaning making of sport in youths’ lives (Wright et al., 2003) and I hoped that my institutional ethnography would demonstrate how excellence is taken up by teachers, coaches and students at a sports school is not straightforward but overlaid with discipline, desire and dedication. Certainly, as I saw with Hillcrest Collegiate, the sports school is a site inundated by a matrix of discourses—institutional discourses (e.g. Sport Canada policy statements, institutional documents), bodily discourses (e.g. management of the body through disciplinary technologies) as well as normalization of injury discourses (e.g. injury as a pain-reward complex), to name a few. I have concluded that these discourses frame stories of pleasure and desire that connect with mechanisms of corporeal regulation and institutional organization in different ways. For example, throughout this dissertation, my institutional ethnographic data revealed how the juxtaposition of the homogenizing and normalizing disciplinary mechanisms of high-performance sport and training directed at the sports school, which were apparent in various texts (e.g. policies, training manuals, posters), produced and reproduced a framework for the symbolic and material production of desire, especially for those who are dedicated enough take up disciplinary ways of life (e.g. student-athlete) in accordance with the overarching discourses of excellence. Discourses of excellence, which are so much a part of the sport policies and institutional texts in relation to the development of the sports school and the achievement expectations of student-athletes who attend them, pervade most documents. Certainly, the ethos and practices of Hillcrest Collegiate exemplified this and all the stakeholders (i.e., coaches, athletes, staff) involved share in, and perpetuate, it. But what else did this ethos, and the practices it produced, do, and how did it do it (Kulz, 2017)?

In Chapter 1, Introduction, I introduced the study and provided an overview of my interest in this research. From all my reading and research work to date, I had become aware about how specific policies came to be used to influence how the body is described, evaluated and governed in the context of education, sport and public health contexts. This led to my interest in the increasing role that sports schools might play in the broader system of elite sport education in Canada; a topic of inquiry that remains
largely outside (and unknown to) the general public concerns about education, and has also remained outside the research interests of many sport scholars to date, despite sports schools’ reputations for producing sport excellence in many countries (see Radtke and Coalter, 2007). Moreover, the paucity of sociological attention paid to youth themselves in their description of experiences in youth sports (Messner and Musto, 2014) further encouraged me to examine the sports school. This dissertation is my contribution to showing ‘where the kids are’ and opening up a physical cultural space to study a sports school—which stands at the nexus of education, sport and public health policies—and where body politics, high-performance and health knowledge(s) are constructed, negotiated and resisted.

In Chapter 2, I reviewed literatures that spanned different subject areas including: public policy and education studies, schooling and neoliberalism, and the sociology of childhood in order to demonstrate the contexts for studying youth, schooling and power, as well as government policy and sport structures. The theoretical frameworks that were most influential to me have been post-structural critiques of the body and identities, and relations of power, all which encouraged me to think critically about biopedagogy, subjectivity, desire, pleasure(s) and constructions of (young) people’s lives in a sports school. Ultimately, the literatures I reviewed provoked me to consider what has been written about, and what gaps remained, in the already extensive literatures on youth sport policy, children and youth’s bodies, and neoliberal governmentality in sport. I believe that my interrogation of the sports school as a biopedagogical site in conjunction with my turn towards concepts of pleasure and desire in youth sport (and in the context of a sports school) is timely and fills a gap in the literature and makes my research unique and well placed to extend the literatures across interdisciplinary fields of study.

In Chapter 3, Methodology, I illustrated how the theories I have used for this research have influenced the methodological choices I made in the field in order to extrapolate the connections among bodies, discourses and the workings of power and pleasure(s) in a sports school. Moreover, I discussed my methodological framework that took institutional and spatial ethnography as its starting point to explore the sports school as an institutional site for the (re)production of bodies and discourse of excellence. My
methodological approach to this research drew on multiple methods of data collection: 1) Text analysis; 2) Participant observation; and 3) Interviews in order to develop a deeper understanding of the institutional, social, physical and spatial world of the sports school.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I pursued the analytical framework through which to explore my research questions and the way(s) specific policies have been used as a framing device for particular configurations of power/knowledge in this space, and how individuals ultimately come to define and understand themselves as produced by the characteristics of Hillcrest Collegiate. As I explained in my methodological chapter, I made the decision to turn to the work of Dorothy Smith (1987, 2005, 2006) and other scholars to think of the power of texts as working from people’s everyday experiences of institutional forms in order to discover how the forms of organizing power and agency may rely on, determine, enable and/or constrain people’s everyday activities (Bacchi, 2000, 2009; Pronger, 2002; Smith, 2005). What I was especially interested in were questions about: What kind of subjectivity is incited by the circulating discourses of excellence in sports school spaces and how do such formations ultimately give shape to the (re)production of specific prescriptions about the body and how desire for excellence should unfold? Furthermore, what are the implicit ways that pleasure and practices of power are linked and bound up with ways of living within such disciplinary technologies and spaces? As I have suggested in my analysis of the texts and interview narratives, the (re)production of disciplinary technologies, framed by discourses of excellence in the sports school, enabled the manifestation of desire as a productive force; that is, the productive affirmation of pleasure to be found in such technologies, is a desire for subjection (Pronger, 2002; Shogan, 1999). This desire for subjection has also been articulated in both Shogan’s (1999) work on high-performance athletes and Pronger’s (2002) theories on the technology of physical fitness. To re-iterate, as Pronger (2002) argued in his theory of the body, in spite of the resourcing of puissance by pouvoir in the technologies of physical fitness, “we are moving in the sphere of puissance, regardless of our technological take on it” (p. 233). It is living within the disciplinary technologies and networks of pouvoir, that student-athletes contradictorily find the potential (puissance) for pleasure. These discursive practices were intimately bound up with bodily practices and I came to understand that the (re)production of disciplinary technologies in the sports
school was also an exploration of embodied practices and pleasures. I suggest that the corporeal pleasures found in socio-cultural relations between school stakeholders, conformity and specific body practices (e.g. training, assessment, testing), enable and/or challenge the discursive formations of excellence and desire for subjection. To that end, in this chapter, I will: 1) revisit the main arguments I have made and what I consider their importance to be; 2) reflect on my work and suggest what future research might look like regarding the sports school as a site of sociological inquiry; and 3) offer some of my concluding thoughts about my dissertation.

**Main Arguments and Implications**

The focus is always on the social, understood as the coordinating of people’s actual activities, their work in the generous sense. In institutional settings, texts are integral and ubiquitous in how people’s work is concerted. (Smith, 2005, pp. 211-212)

Using Smith’s notion of texts as my starting point, it was important to incorporate a study of institutional (e.g. Sport Canada, Federal government etc.) texts into my ethnography of the sports school. As I have illustrated throughout this dissertation, texts are not inert; in fact, people’s everyday actions and experiences of institutional processes are so often mediated by texts. In my tracing of how policies come to shape the production of excellence in a sports school, I demonstrated how government and non-government policies provide clues to the inscription and prescription practices of the ongoing production of, and desire for, excellence within the space of Hillcrest Collegiate. This is most notably seen in three effects enacted in the sports school: discursive effects (e.g. how discursive framings inherent in policies, such as the Canadian Sport Policy, 2012, have been taken up in particular ways by/in the school); subjectification effects (e.g. the way this space has been conceptualized and perceived as a place where discourses of excellence can be measured); and lived effects (e.g. the resultant material effects of problem representations and how these come to play a role in the subject positions and embodied practices made possible in this space). I suggest that dominant discourses of excellence imbued as they are with specific meaning(s) of Canadian high-performance result in a particular governance of young people’s lives in ways that they may or may
not want. The school’s mandate is to invest in the physical body and in doing so makes the student-athlete body available and subjected to various disciplinary technologies. Results and performance at events become a particularly strong organizing mechanism in the successful disciplining of students’ athletic bodies towards an imagined future (excellent and elite) self (Kulz, 2017); a self that becomes more and more amenable and flexible to performance demands (Shogan, 1999). Hillcrest Collegiate’s structure, predicated on advancing personal (athletic) development through very specific forms of ‘work’, requires a great deal of discipline. And, it is not just the student-athletes who take up such disciplinary practices; other school stakeholders such as teachers, coaches and trainers come to inhabit similar disciplinary spaces, offering justifications and goals for enduring these expectations and demands of a sports school “in the service of imagined future gains” (Kulz, 2017, p. 172). After my analysis of Sport Canada documents, it can be argued that these expectations and demands are externally produced through these policies and the discourses of excellence exemplified therein. Student-athletes, specifically, learn to perform, get tested, and compete endlessly, and, most importantly, they learn to find meaning in prescribed practices within proscriptive constraints established in the sports school. As Rachel (Grade-Eleven) explained in Chapter 4, perhaps it is through the (re)production of disciplined skill that student-athletes benefit from the effects of power and discipline. Again, Shogan’s (1999) work on the production of high-performance athletes supports this finding. Although my research is focused on young athletes, similar to Shogan, who discussed adult performers (i.e., adult elite athletes), I have demonstrated similar practices and processes happen with younger athletes as well. As Shogan (1999, p. 14) points out “superb skills just are effects of exacting discipline”. That is, student-athletes cannot gain superb skills without the rigorous discipline and governance that the sports school requires of them and student-athletes may in fact benefit from their subjection, and desire to be subjected, to such disciplinary regimes. Additionally, as I show in Chapter 5, student-athletes continually

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65 Certainly, on one hand it could be suggested that these student-athletes have ‘signed up’ for this kind of governance and are in fact seeking out such discipline. On the other, as narratives from my participants suggest, there are times when student-athletes find displeasure in the disciplinary technologies they engaged in, such as the hyper-focus on ability during assessments, and the creation of gendered space(s) during training and fitness testing.
justified their ‘work’ and disciplinary procedures because it helped them achieve results (Kulz, 2017), which they actively found pleasure in the space of the sports school.

The myriad stories I heard from participants echoed how they – athletes, teachers, trainers, coaches – as subjects in and of this space come to frame their everyday activities, embedded in mechanisms of corporeal surveillance and regulation, as pleasurable. The framing of their embodied pleasures through performance, fitness, assessments, and/or skills demonstrated its (i.e., pleasure’s) productive power in the constitution of desiring subjects (Pringle, 2009; Pronger, 2002). Certainly, there are paradoxes that arise among these discourses. While the culture of the sports school involves living within disciplinary apparatuses—apparatuses that may in fact limit the body’s potentiality, paradoxically, living within these disciplinary technologies and networks of pouvoir, can open youth up to the potential (puissance) for a range of embodied pleasures, even if this potential is quickly harnessed by the forces of pouvoir. This is perhaps best seen when student-athletes adamantly discussed finding pleasure in pain, discipline and consumption. Certainly, the body’s movement and how it is assessed, trained and monitored are integral to the student-athlete’s identity and subjectivity, and to how they come to experience their subjective embodied pleasure(s) in this neoliberalized and socio-political institution. This is where student-athletes understand what it means to be a student and athlete. They are expected to learn to experience the embodied pleasures of competitive play while also submitting themselves to all the regimes of bodily discipline, which are demanded in institutions’ (e.g. Sport Canada, the sports school) calls to excellence in the production of an ideal athletic and academic identity. As I argue, the fluid dynamics of the concepts of pouvoir and puissance could be used to show how student-athletes, and others, manage to navigate and find meaning for themselves and their practices in this institutionalized space. What my research makes clear is that living within such spaces of discipline and pleasure becomes a way of enacting discourse and practices that athletes (and adults) continually choose to apply to themselves and to incorporate into their daily ‘work’ lives (Dyck, 2012; Shogan, 1999). For me, this is the crux of the productivity of power and producing potential of pleasure - this enables the very space of the sports school to exist.
Reflections and Future Directions

In this study, I have engaged with the sports school as a site of sociological investigation to highlight the significance of connections among places of everyday life, professionalized practices and policy-making. More importantly, I believe that I have illustrated how the interplay of specific discourses, power relations and the ‘making’ of student-athletes at Hillcrest Collegiate shape constructions of (dis)pleasurable realities and subjectivities of student-athletes (and others) in very specific ways. In my study, I did talk about gender and young women’s taking up or rejection of discourses of excellence and assessment etc. However, missing from my analysis is any sustained or critical investigation of how discourses of whiteness, class, (dis)ability, racialization and sexuality might be embedded in policies or practices of excellence and performance in these spaces. Indeed, intersectional systems of oppression and their effects on how non-normative bodies are read and (re)produced in this space will be an important line of future inquiry. The coupling of high level sports activities and specific educational goals may exacerbate systemic normative and dominant ideologies and, consequently, may have particular impact for how these student-athletes learn about sport, health, their bodies and social norms in ways that are not yet realized. Future research into institutional discourses and the framing of pleasure(s), in the sports school, should take whiteness, class, (dis)ability, racialization and sexuality in any study of power, subjectivity, pleasure and agency in spaces like sports schools into account. It is important that future inquiries question how we come to know who we are and how this knowledge may be raced, sexed, ableist and classed, as well as “embodied, engendered and embedded in a material context of space and place” (Duncan, 1996, p. 1).

How youth come to know themselves through the practices of the sports school, I would suggest after spending so much time there, is not that much different to how youth come to know themselves generally because they are all discursively, spatially and “contingently positioned and materialized as racialized subjects, classed subjects, dis/abled subjects, heterosexualized gendered subjects and the numerous intersections possible at a given historical juncture” (MacNeill and Rail, 2010, p. 180-181). Paying attention to these intersections will provide a further understanding and insightful
analyses for future explorations of the productive and pleasurable space(s) of a sports school and the multiple possible understandings, relationships and ways of being active (MacNeill and Rail, 2010).

In my study, there is an absence of parents’ voices. I have considered how parental co-constructions of a sports school, and their own investments in their elite athletic children, might be a significant component of this unique physical cultural space. I thought about how parents might impact on how this space is imagined, organized and experienced by their own children and others at the school. However, I made the decision not to talk with parents after I was told by both students and staff that parents only play a minor role in the everyday occurrences of the sports school. Parents of course pay for their children to attend these schools so their understanding and experiences of such a space are not irrelevant. Parents’ ideas and understanding of the school’s disciplinary approaches to sport in the name of excellence and high-performance may help shape the way their children come to recognize, conceptualize, understand and negotiate their desire and pleasure(s) as sports school participants. Certainly, parental interest in physical activity, health, and the institutionalization of sport in education spaces has paved the way for the proliferation of sports schools across much of the country (Canada), as Way et al.’s (2010) analysis of sports schools in Canada has concluded. With the growing demand for private sports schools in particular, it remains to be seen whether parents, as financial consumers of these spaces, begin to play a more and more influential role in school policies and practices. Future research might consider a more complete adult matrix or figuration that surrounds the child in the sports school

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66 Tuition ranges from $15,500 to $27,000 per academic year.

67 The consumer demand relationship cannot be ignored in this context. These schools may be part of the neoliberal demand for service providers and also may be emerging as specific commodities as parents, realizing that public school systems may be failing their child, begin to opt for opportunities for a different kind of school experience for their child.

68 Coined by Elias (1978, 1994) the sports school figuration can be said to represent a “complex web of social interdependencies involving ‘players’ located at a number of levels” (Atkinson and Young, 2005, p. 339). Thus, the sports school figuration consists of more than those key stakeholders situationally and directly involved in this space but rather has members operating at various levels including school boards, Sport Canada etc.
space in order to extend analyses into how adultist macro social processes affect the everyday micro realities of children’s lives.

Finally, given that my research took place at one specific private sports school in Toronto, Ontario (Canada), findings may not necessarily be generalized to all student-athletes who attend other sports academies. Given my commitment to post-structuralism and my understanding that people are multiply positioned in physical culture, I presume that there would be different perspectives and experiences found among student-athletes who attend a private or public sports school other than Hillcrest Collegiate. Many of these schools may have unique and distinctive discourses, practices and pedagogies. Take, for example, the vision statement of Bill Crothers Secondary School, a public high school in Ontario:

Bill Crothers Secondary School (BCSS)...links excellence in education and athletics with a commitment to healthy, active living for all students. (http://www.yrdsb.ca/schools/billcrothers.ss/info/Pages/Mission-and-Value.aspx)

Although the vision statement is similar to that of Hillcrest Collegiate, wherein the school is imagined as a site of academic and sport excellence, Bill Crothers Secondary School has a different approach to sport training in comparison to the approach(es) used at Hillcrest Collegiate. The secondary school offers three distinct sport options for their student-athletes: 1. High-performance; 2. Competitive for Life; and 3. Active for Life (see Bill Crothers Athletics http://www.yrdsb.ca/schools/billcrothers.ss/athletics/Pages/default.aspx for an in-depth description of each stream). By offering three different sport streams within the school, the skill levels of the student-athletes attending BCSS may differ substantially among groups. A student-athlete in the high performance stream is most likely to “have serious aspirations to train and compete at the next level” (http://www.yrdsb.ca/schools/billcrothers.ss/athletics/Pages/default.aspx) whereas a student-athlete in the Active for Life stream primarily “embraces healthy active living as a lifestyle” (http://www.yrdsb.ca/schools/billcrothers.ss/athletics/Pages/default.aspx). Moreover, student-athletes in the competitive stream are not able to compete in their
primary sport while attending Bill Crothers Secondary School\textsuperscript{69}. The institutional power relations at work in the making of student-athletes at BCSS may differ from what I observed at Hillcrest Collegiate. Thus, examining the similarities and/or differences in the discourse and practices of excellence, performance and (neoliberal) pleasures across specialized school settings, such as sports schools and/or specialist academies (e.g. arts based schools that include aspects of physical activity such as training in dance and movement), could also be explored in future studies.

**Concluding Thoughts**

In my dissertation research, I did not initially think that I would spend so much time contemplating pleasure. I thought, given my theoretical training in poststructuralism, neoliberalism and Foucauldian theories of (bio)power and disciplinary technologies that I would find very clear-cut stories about how student-athletes at Hillcrest Collegiate are existing within matrixes of adult domination. Through my analysis of discourses and practices at a sports school I first saw power relations from the perspective of how they produced and reproduced space(s) and bodies in the micro-realities of individuals’ everyday lives. I wanted to interrogate how individuals understood themselves within an institutional space like a sports school and how they made sense of living within structural contexts and constraints of discipline, excellence, and performance. Yet, it is within the context of these experiences that young people, in particular, come to recognize, conceptualise, understand, and negotiate their desire and pleasure(s) sometimes on other people’s (coaches, teachers, trainers) terms and sometimes on their own terms.

I have demonstrated that students’ enrolment and sports participation in Hillcrest Collegiate did create an individual and shared investment in the discourses of excellence and performance, and in the disciplinary techniques governing the space where learning

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{69} Student-athletes in the competitive stream at BCSS compete in the traditional high school competition model. Given the eligibility for competition by-laws set out by the Ontario Federation School Athletic Association, they are not able to compete in their primary sport because they will be engaged in competition at the high school level (for further information refer to By-Law 5, Section 4, Subsection (1) of the Ontario Federation School Athletic Association’s By-Laws http://www.ofsaa.on.ca/sites/default/files/bylaws_sept_2013.pdf)\
\end{itemize}
and competition take place. Students’ subjection to their own governance did create a productive force (e.g. athleticism, elitism, physical power and skill), but they took pleasure (mostly) in this subjection, which I have shown throughout this dissertation. Stepping outside the context of the sports school, if these young people are given more opportunities to recognize their own agency, would they choose to experience pleasure in these ways? What is the place of pleasure in their lives outside the sports school? Perhaps they experience as much pleasure in stillness, rest and relaxation than they do through their elite sport? These might be important questions to consider for the future.

The fact that the student-athletes could construct pleasures in ways that meant something to them demonstrates that pleasures are not wholly determined by neoliberal, biopedagogical and disciplinary constraints, and confirms findings from other research and literature that has examined pleasure. I believe that my research can contribute uniquely to the academic literature on pleasure and sport/physical education/health (Booth, 2009; Coveney and Bunton, 2003; Downward and Dawson, 2016; Gard and Meyenn, 2000; Gerdin and Pringle, 2017; Maguire, 2011; Pringle et al., 2015; Twietmeyer, 2012; Wellard, 2012, 2013) because it moves beyond merely seeing people’s lives as wholly determined by neoliberal structural constraints to recognizing people’s agency and their embodied desires and pleasures. My study speaks to the need to continue the work to unpack young people’s embodied desires and pleasures in the realm of sport, education, physical activity and health.

I first engaged in this work because I wanted to make a contribution to showing ‘where the kids are’ and in opening up a physical cultural space to study a sports school, which stands at the nexus of education, sport and public health policies, and where body politics, high-performance and health knowledge(s) are constructed, negotiated and resisted, young people’s experiences became my central focus. Taking young people’s realities in this particular sport institution into account, as well as the social processes that form around their lives has important implications for the field of sport sociology and Physical Cultural Studies. While I have included the voices and perspectives of adults in the school, I have centred this work around that of young people and their voices and experiences (Dillabough and Kennelly, 2010; Raby, 2012), and I believe that my study contributes to a growing area of research on youth and sport (Azzarito and Macdonald,
2016; Dagkas and Burrows, 2016; Harvey and Light, 2013; Parker and Vinson, 2013). I have attempted to move beyond only superficial interpretations of youth in sport to a deeper research engagement in the world of children and sport (Dyck, 2012; Messner and Musto, 2014) by engaging student-athletes in my research as active, meaning-making agents whose daily lives are integral to, and integrated in, a sports school context.

As a new parent, it is becoming more and more important to me that my findings illustrate that young people are legitimate participants in creating the cultures of their classrooms and sportscapes. It is my hope that this research will extend future critical approaches to understanding the workings of institutional power in young people’s lives. Furthermore, while desire and pleasure can be organized through adultist cultures of excellence and performance, I believe that I have illustrated that young people can be agents in how they experience and embody desire and pleasures not only in the sport realm, but throughout other aspects of their social lives. It is into these contexts that I hope to introduce my children to sport and physical activity and teach them about the pleasures to be gained through physical culture.
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Appendices
Appendix A: School Email

Researcher: Danielle DiCarlo, Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, University of Toronto
Research funded by: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Dear __________________,

My name is Danielle DiCarlo and I am a fourth year PhD candidate at the University of Toronto in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education. I initially came across [name of school] a few years ago when I began my PhD studies. As a former competitive hockey player, I have always been interested in learning about sports schools personally, and now as a researcher I am hoping to study them in order to address gaps in current theories and literatures. Indeed, there is little written about sports schools in the Canadian context, which has encouraged me to pursue this as a research topic.

Given the current paucity of research on Canadian sports schools as well as on elite-student athletes, I believe there are compelling reasons to conduct this research. The purpose of the proposed exploratory research is to develop a theoretically and empirically grounded account of the everyday life in a sports school. With this in mind I am interested in particularly exploring: 1) What kinds of physical and sports training practices occur in this space; 2) What are links between the sports school and Federal/Provincial sport policy; 3) How the space of Canadian sports schools is experienced by different ‘stakeholders’ (e.g., teachers, coaches, student-athletes, parents, directors etc.); and 4) What does the space of a sports school look like? I hope to achieve these research objectives through an analysis of policy documents and field research. Using a range of qualitative research methods such as institutional ethnography and participant observation, I aim to understand the everyday processes and practices that affect such spaces and the everyday lives of the people who play, train and work these landscapes.

I would like to ask your permission to visit your school in order to introduce my research study. My study is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and has been approved by the Health Sciences Research Ethics Board (REB) (Office of Research Ethics) at the University of Toronto. My focus will be on an examination of the everyday life of a sports school. If you agree to allow me to carry out my research in your school, I plan to immerse myself in the life of your school as a participant observer (i.e., I will volunteer my services at the school as a tutor or assistant coach for example, which will facilitate my data collection and field note writing). This type of research method is known as ‘ethnography’. This involves observations of the daily activities and routines of a school, observing how student-athletes, coaches, teachers, director/principal interact in this space, and images of the space of the school. All these things are critical for building a ‘thick description’ of life in a sports school. Usually, a researcher conducting an ethnography spends approximately six months (2-3
days a week) in the research site. Obviously, this will be at your discretion but you should know that during this time I will cause minimal disruption in the everyday life of your school.

Data collected and analyzed can be used to inform sports schools across Canada about their practices. Moreover, the data collected during my ethnography (observations, field notes) at your school will be analyzed and the findings will be written up as part of my PhD dissertation. I would be happy to keep you informed of the study through providing a research summary/report, which would include relevant findings. For more information regarding the study and collection of data parameters, find attached to this email: a) Information Letter to Schools; b) Information Letter to Staff, Parents and Students; and c) Oral Consent Script for your purview.

I hope to begin my participant observation in early January 2015 and terminate in June with specific dates and times to be determined. If you have any questions, comments or feedback I welcome your interest in my research. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Danielle DiCarlo, MSc
PhD Candidate, Exercise Sciences

Caroline Fusco, PhD
Associate Professor
Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education
University of Toronto
Appendix B: Information Letter to School

Researcher: Danielle DiCarlo, Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, University of Toronto
Research funded by: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Dear ________________.

Background
I have received permission from the University of Toronto’s Ethics Review Office to conduct a study on specialist sports schools.

A recent report, endorsed by Federal, Provincial and Territorial ministers entitled, Canadian Sport Policy, 2012, reflected governments’ desires to increase policy initiatives that link the importance of physical education in schools to “increasing and promoting programs that allow participants to learn and practice the fundamentals of sport, and to participate in sport recreationally and competitively” (SIRC, p.8., 2012). An increased focus on sport has led to the development of specialist Canadian sports schools (i.e., schools where student-athletes are able to complete their education while at the same time given the opportunity to participate intensively in sport). However, we do not know much about these schools or the impact of these schools on stakeholders’ (e.g., coaches, teachers, students) everyday lives within the Canadian education systems.

Given the current political climate and paucity of research on Canadian sports schools as well as on elite-student athletes, I believe there are compelling reasons to conduct this research. The purpose of the proposed research is to engage in an exploratory study of sport schools. This exploratory study will investigate the everyday cultural practices of a sports school, and how the space of Canadian sports school is experienced by different ‘stakeholders’ (e.g., teachers, coaches, student-athletes, parents, directors etc.).

Measures/Instrument/Procedures:
1) I propose to immerse myself as a participant observer in your school. Data collection will involve participant observation over approximately six months of the daily activities and routines of your school. I will explain the methods that I intend to use and ask whether I can attend the school for at least three days at different times (e.g., at times when students are present and times when students are not present such as before or after classes), attend organized sport functions (such as various team practices and games) and observe coaching and classroom teaching. The focus during this stage of data collection will be on observing daily life in the institution and developing an understanding of the experiences of ‘stakeholders’ (e.g., student-athletes, coaches, teachers, director/principal etc.) in this space and photographing the space when the school is closed to students and staff. I am also happy to volunteer my services at the school (e.g., as a tutor, assistant coach etc.) to facilitate the participant observation process, though if I do so, I will not be introducing new activities or change existing forms of activity.
This participant observation period will be critical for me to familiarize myself with the research site and build a ‘thick description’ of your school.

2) Insertion of the researcher into the sports school setting will occur once institutional consent is gained. Following this, I would like to visit the school site (Visit 1, 1 day) in order to meet with you to go over the consent form, explain what consent involves (e.g., background information about the study, confidentiality etc.) and to give out information sheets about the study and distribute the consent form. I would like to return to the school on a second occasion (Visit 2, 1 day) that is convenient for you. In this second visit, I will collect the institutional consent form. Data collection would begin with subsequent visits to the school (over approximately six months).

3) There is very little likelihood that participant observation will lead to the disclosure of sensitive information, as observation will focus primarily on the spaces and places of the school, therefore the research risk is low. Participants will experience no risk greater than can be expected in the regular procedures of their daily activities in school. As director/principal of the sport school, you will be asked to sign a consent form to mitigate the power involved in the research and to increase your understanding of research and the study. A final written summary of the study will be made available to you.

Confidentiality:
Although at this time there will be no direct face-to-face data collection (i.e., interviews) conducted with anyone in the school, at a later date, if it is deemed necessary to supplement the rich participant observation data, I may want to conduct interviews with stakeholders (e.g., students, directors, coaches etc.). **If such interviews are necessary a supplementary application for interviews will be submitted to the University of Toronto’s REB and I will inform you of my intention to recruit for this kind of data collection.** Participant observation, photography (and interviews should they be conducted at a later date) will employ standard principles of protection, including the right to refuse, withdraw or stop participating in the research study. A number of steps will be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of the research and the reports; all participant and institutional information will be anonymised. Every precaution will be taken to ensure that confidentiality of the participants’ and institutions’ information, as well as any reports generated from the date, will be protected (e.g., all personal and institutional identifiers will be removed from notes and a subject code will be assigned to protect confidentiality. The resultant “clean” notes will be used in any subsequent analysis). Any photographs taken in the school that contain images of people will be altered using Adobe Photoshop, and identifying information, will removed or blurred. Any photographs that cannot be altered will be destroyed. Any published material based on any data collected will have all identifying details (names of locations, names of participants) changed, and pseudonyms or codes will be assigned. All data collected – observation notes and photographs (**and interviews should they be conducted at a later date**)— will be stored in a secure and locked filing cabinet in my office in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education at the University of Toronto, on a password-protected file on the Investigator’s personal computer. Only I will have access to the
original data, although I will discuss my findings with my doctoral supervisor (Dr. Caroline Fusco, Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, University of Toronto). Notes and photographs will be stored for five years after the research is completed (September 2019). When this time period has elapsed the material will be erased and destroyed. The coded data will be kept for another five years after publication of the results of the study. When this time period has elapsed, the material will be erased and destroyed. Participants will be informed of the data security procedures and the plans for retaining data in the informed consent process.

At this time I would like to seek your permission to have your school be involved in this study. If you are willing to take part in this study, please read and sign the permission form. I would also like to request, if possible, to post advertising flyers about the project on the school notice boards. These advertisements will inform students, teachers, staff, coaches and parents about the study. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail or at the number below.

Sincerely,

Danielle DiCarlo
Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education
University of Toronto
Appendix C: School Permission Agreement Form

Researcher: Danielle DiCarlo, Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, University of Toronto

Research funded by: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

I, ______________________, (principal’s/director’s name) consent to have Danielle DiCarlo (Investigator) come to _______ school to introduce and engage in a participant observation for this study. I understand that this research has been reviewed and approved by the University of Toronto’s Research Ethic Board. I agree to participate in this study and to have Danielle DiCarlo collect data for the study from this location. I understand that the research will be conducted at ______________________ (School) for approximately 6 months.

Name (please print): ______________________ Signature: ______________________

Date: ______________________

Contact Information:
Telephone:
E-mail:
Appendix D: Information Letter to Staff, Parents and Students

Who am I and what do I want to do? I am Danielle DiCarlo from the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, University of Toronto. I want to learn about sports schools because not much has been written about Canadian sports schools.

What is this project about and what will happen during the study? The study is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and is about the everyday life of a sports school. I am going to immerse myself in your school. Data collection will involve observing school life over approximately six months. I am likely to be in the school for at least three days a week at different times (e.g., at times when students are present and times when students are not present such as before or after classes), attend organized sport functions (such as various team practices and games) and observe coaching and classroom teaching. I will be photographing the space when the school is closed to students and staff. I may also volunteer my services at the school (e.g., as a tutor, assistant coach etc.) to facilitate my data collection.

Who is being asked to take part? ___________________________ school has been invited to take part in the study, which has been reviewed and approved by the University of Toronto’s Research Ethics Board and has been approved by the principal/director of ___________________________ school. Although at this time there will be no direct face-to-face data collection (i.e., interviews) conducted with anyone in the school, at a later date, if it is deemed necessary to supplement the rich participant observation data, I may want to conduct interviews with stakeholders (e.g., students, directors, coaches etc.). If such interviews are necessary a supplementary application for interviews will be submitted to the University of Toronto’s REB and I will inform you of my intention to recruit for this kind of data collection.

What are the risks and benefits of the study? There are no known harms associated with participation in the study. You do not have to participate in this research, and nobody will be upset if you decide not to participate in the study. The study will employ standard principles of protection, including the right to refuse, withdraw or stop participating in the research study. It is important to learn about sports schools because there is currently no research in Canada that has examined this type of school. From this research we may learn things about sports schools that will help academic fields of study and government policy about sports schools.
Appendix E: Staff Informed Consent Form

Investigator: Danielle DiCarlo (Ph.D. Candidate, Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, University of Toronto)
Supervisor: Caroline Fusco (Associate Professor, Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, University of Toronto)

I, _____________________ (please print your name), agree to take part in the study examining the daily practices of a sports school. As a volunteer in this study, I acknowledge that the information letter details the interview process and handling of research data. I also acknowledge that any questions I have asked have been answered satisfactorily and that I have received contact information if I have any concerns or questions arising subsequent to the interview process.

I understand the interview will take approximately 60 minutes. I understand that I may refuse to answer any questions and that I may stop the interview at any time without any negative consequences. I understand that confidentiality and privacy issues will be adhered to at all times and that only the researcher and the supervisor will have access to the initial research data. Once the data is collected, I understand that any personal identification will be removed and my anonymity will be protected. Any comments I make that may lead to my identification will also be disguised to prevent my personal identity from being known.

I understand what this study involves and agree to participate.

___________________________                         _________
(Signature)                                                               (Date)
Appendix F: Parental/Guardian Informed Consent Form

Please read the following and if you agree to your son or daughter participating in this research project please sign below.

• This research study is designed to learn more about my experiences as a student-athlete attending a sports school and the daily practices that take place at ______________________ (school).
• My child will be participating in a tape-recorded group interview with peers or individual interview with the researcher. The group interview or the individual interview will take approximately 60 minutes and will be conducted at school.
• My child’s participation in this research study is strictly voluntary and he/she may leave the focus group interview or one-on-one interview at any time without any negative repercussions. My child may decline to answer any questions in the interview.
• My child’s participation is completely voluntary and will not impact his/her academic standing or sports training at ______________________ (school).
• My child will not be identified during any written publications or oral communications derived from this research.
• The interview gathered in the group interview will be kept in strict confidence by the researcher.
• I understand that the researcher has a legal obligation to report any suspicious behavior that may suggest acts of child abuse or neglect.
• Only the researcher, Danielle DiCarlo, and her supervisor, Dr. Caroline Fusco, will have direct access to the information shared during interviews.

I, ___________________________ (please print your name), have read the above information and consent for my child, ___________________________ (please print child’s name), to participate in the research study.

___________________________                         ______________________  
(Parent/Guardian Signature)                              (Date)
Appendix G: Student-Athlete Assent Form

University Research Study
Investigator: Danielle DiCarlo, Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education, University of Toronto
Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

You’re invited to participate in a research study about your opinions and experiences as a student-athlete.

Purpose of Research:
I am interested in learning about the everyday life of a sports school from the perspectives of student-athletes, parents, teachers, trainers, and the managing director. I will ask student-athletes about both their academic and sport experiences at the school, and ask adults about what they think about sports schools too.

• You can participate in a tape-recorded focus group interview with other interested student-athletes or choose to be interviewed on your own

• The interview will be conducted at ________ (school) when it is convenient for you (e.g. before school, lunch, after school).

• Your participation in this research study is strictly voluntary and you may leave the focus group interview or stop the one-on-one interview at any time without any negative consequences. Your identity and personal information will be concealed and not written down throughout the study.

• Participation in this study will not impact your participation in your classes, your grades or your sport training at ________ (school). Only the researcher, Danielle DiCarlo, and her supervisor, Dr. Caroline Fusco, will have access to the information shared within the focus group or the individual interviews.

• If you discuss information that may lead the researchers to suspect child abuse or neglect, the researchers have a legal responsibility to report this information.

• If you have any questions or concerns you contact me by email at danielle.dicarlo@mail.utoronto.ca

• To volunteer to participate in this research study, you will have to complete and return the attached personal consent form and the student assent form to the interview.
University Research Study  
Investigator: Danielle DiCarlo, Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education, University of Toronto  
Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

I understand that:  
• This research study is designed to learn more about my experiences as a student-athlete attending a sports school and the daily practices that take place at __________________________ (school).  
• I will be participating in a group interview with my classmates or I will be taking part in a one-on-one interview with the researcher.  
• If taking part in the focus group, I will respect and value the opinions of others within the group and I will treat what others say with respect and not talk about what they say after the interview.  
• The group interview or the individual interview will take approximately 60 minutes and will be conducted at school.  
• The group/individual interview will be tape-recorded.  
• My participation in this study will not affect my grades or sport training at school  
• I understand that only the researcher, Danielle DiCarlo, and her supervisor, Dr. Caroline Fusco, will have direct access to the information shared in the interview.  
• I understand that the researcher has a legal obligation to report any suspicious behavior that may suggest acts of child abuse or neglect.  
• The information I share will be kept in a locked cabinet at the university by the researcher.  
• I will be assigned a pseudo name. My real name will never be included in any written documents or oral discussions of the research study after the interview.

Please circle one or more of the following. I WOULD BE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN:

All female group interview  
All male group interview  
Mixed male and female group interview  
Individual interview

STUDENT CONSENT:  

YES, I, ____________________________ (please print your name) do consent to participating in this focus group/one-on-one interview.  

_________________________ (signature required) ______________________ (date)
Appendix H: Youth Interview Guide

INTRODUCTION
1. Tell me a little bit about yourself.
2. When did you first become involved in sport?

THE SPORTS SCHOOL EXPERIENCE
3. How did you first learn about sports schools?
4. When did you start attending [name of school]?
   a. How did you get into [name of school]?
   b. Why did you decide to come to [name of school]?
   c. What was your experience like at your previous sports school (similarities/differences)-caret
5. Why attend at sports school?
6. Describe a typical day for you at [name of school].
7. What is your experience (likes/dislikes) like at [name of school]?
   a. Classes
   b. Training
   c. Friends
8. What is your role here?
9. Do you see yourself as an athlete? What does this mean to you?
   a. How does this make you feel about your body (athletic, vulnerable, scared or afraid)-caret
10. What does the word ‘elite’ mean to you?
11. How do you handle being a student AND an athlete here?
12. Can you tell me some things you like and dislike about being a student-athlete who attends a sports school?
   a. Successes
   b. Failures
13. What are your goals after [name of school]?

SURVEILLANCE
14. Is your performance (academic and athletic) as a student athlete monitored?
   a. How?
   b. By who?
   c. How does this impact your experience as a student athlete?
15. Do you monitor other student’s (athletic and academic) progress?

THE BODY
16. Have you ever been injured?
17. Tell me about your experience being injured and how that plays out at [name of school].
   a. Experience of injury and pain
18. Besides developing physical skills what are you learning about the body?
   a. What are you learning about other people and other bodies?
19. How important is food here? (relate to the body and healthy active living)
20. How important is hygiene here?
21. Is there anything else you would like to discuss?
Appendix I: Teacher Interview Guide

INTRODUCTION
1. Tell me a little bit about yourself.
2. How did you get involved with [name of school]?

SCHOOL EXPERIENCE
3. What is the aim of [name of school]? 
   a. How has the school changed over time?
   b. What is similar/different to other sport schools and public schools in general?
   c. What is the goal for student athletes here?
4. Describe a typical day here.
5. How would you describe the culture of [name of school]?
6. What is your role here?
7. Where do student-athletes end up after their time here?
   a. Are student athletes shaped for future sport careers
8. What does the word ‘elite’ mean to you?
9. Does food play a role here?

PEDAGOGY (TENSIONS)
10. What is the role of education here?
11. What are the attitudes of the students towards their education?
12. What are the attitudes of parents towards their child’s education?
13. What are the attitudes of parents towards their child’s sport participation?
14. Why is the school popular among international students?
   a. Diversity in curriculum (inclusivity, racism, body image etc.)
15. Are there special arrangements for student athletes here when it comes to their academic performance?
16. Are there special arrangements for student athletes here when it comes to their athletic performance?
17. Do student athletes face any problems at school?
   a. High turnover
18. How do the student athletes cope with athletic and school work?
19. Do teachers face any problems at school?

SURVEILLANCE
20. Is the performance of students monitored?
   a. By who?
   b. Why?
   c. How?

POST-SCRIPT
21. How do you see the future of sports schools?
22. Is there anything else you would like to discuss?
Appendix J: School Administrator Interview Guide

INTRODUCTION
1. Tell me a little bit about yourself.
2. How did you first get involved with [name of school]?
3. What is your role here?

DAILY PRACTICES OF SPORTS SCHOOL
4. What is the aim of [name of school]?
   a. How has the school changed over time? Why has it changed in this way?
   b. What is similar/different to other sport schools and public schools in general?
   c. Do you draw inspiration from other sports schools?
   d. What is the goal for student athletes here?
5. How would you describe the culture of [name of school]?
6. How would you describe the structure of the school?
   a. Training
   b. Education
   c. Different programs offered
7. What draws parents and their children to this school?
8. How are student-athletes initially selected?
   a. Is there a screening process?
   b. How do student athletes come to learn about [name of school]?
9. Where does funding come from?
   a. Government, national sport organizations
   b. SPONSORSHIP

EDUCATION/ATHLETICS
10. What is the role of education here?
11. What are the attitudes of the students towards their education?
12. What are the attitudes of parents towards their child’s education?
13. What are the attitudes of parents towards their child’s sport participation?
14. Why is the school popular among international students?
   a. Diversity in curriculum
15. How involved are parents?
16. Are there special arrangements for student athletes here when it comes to their academic performance?
17. Are there special arrangements for students athletes here when it comes to their athletic performance?
18. Do student athletes face any problems here?
19. High turnover
20. How do the student athletes cope with athletics and school work?
21. Do teachers face any problems at school?
22. Where do student-athletes end up after their time here?
23. Are student athletes shaped for future sport careers?
24. What does the word ‘elite’ mean to you?

SURVEILLANCE
25. Is the performance of students monitored?
   a. By who?
   b. Why?
   c. How?

BODY
26. Do students learn about the body and healthy living here?
27. Does food play a role here?
28. How important is [name of school] to the overall (physical and mental) growth and development of student-athletes?
29. Is there anything else you would like to discuss?
Appendix K: Coach/Trainer Interview Guide

INTRODUCTION
1. Tell me a little bit about yourself.
2. How did you get involved with [name of school]?

SCHOOL EXPERIENCE
3. What is the aim of [name of school]?
   a. How has the school changed over time?
   b. What is similar/different to other sport schools and public schools in general?
   c. What is the goal for student athletes here?
4. Describe a typical day here.
5. How would you describe the culture of [name of school]?
6. What is your role here?
7. Describe a typical day here.
8. What does training consist of?
9. What are the attitudes of students towards training?
10. What are the attitudes of parents towards child's training?
11. Is there co-operation between training at [name of school] and the student athletes sport teams?
12. What happens to student-athlete who aren’t progressing?
13. Are there special arrangements for students athletes here when it comes to their athletic performance?
14. Where do student-athletes end up after their time here?
   a. Are student athletes shaped for future sport careers?

SURVEILLANCE
15. Is the performance of students monitored?
   a. By who?
   b. Why?
   c. How?

BODY
16. Do students learn about the body and healthy living here?
17. Does food play a role here?
18. How important is [name of school] to the overall (physical and mental) growth and development of student-athletes?
19. Is there anything else you would like to discuss?