

The Female Apologetic within Canadian Women's Rugby: Exploring Level of
Competition, Racial Identity and Sexual Orientation

By

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Abstract

Female apologetic behaviour in sport includes any behaviour by female athletes that emphasizes a female athlete's femininity. This behaviour is in response to the masculine and/or lesbian stereotypes associated with female sport participation. This thesis analyzed the female apologetic within Canadian women's rugby. Attention was paid to the relationship of level of competition, racial identity, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status with female apologetic behaviours. In-depth interviews with nine Canadian, female rugby players from various levels of competition, races and sexual orientations were conducted to explore these negotiations. Judith Butler's idea of gender performativity was used as a research lens. The participants stated that they did not currently engage in any apologetic behaviour, and it was found that level of rugby, race, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status did not impact female apologetic behaviours. Rugby was found to be a safe place for the participants to perform resistant versions of femininity.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Susan Bordo (1993) explains femininity as a socially constructed concept that defines how women should look and act and what they should value. Although there may be multiple acceptable femininities with regards to one's situational context (culture, location, time period, race, class, sexual orientation, etc.) (Chow, 1999), Lenskyj (1994) argues that there is one correct version of femininity, which is termed hegemonic femininity. This femininity has been defined by the white, heterosexual, middle to high class cohort of women (Ussher, 1997) and includes traits such as submissiveness, dependency, concern over physical appearance, emotional ability and so on (Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, & Vogel, 1970). It is hegemonic femininity that Judith Butler (1990) argues women must perform to be considered real women and avoid the consequences of not doing so.

The same may be said for masculinity, men and hegemonic masculinity. The social construction of sport has been a space where hegemonic masculinity is defined (Connell, 1987; Messner, 2002). Sport has long been dominated by the male sex in nearly every aspect of the game: participation rates, administration, refereeing, coaching, and so on. It makes sense, then, that sport participation came to be associated with masculine traits, such as: aggression, strength, power, dominance and violence – all traits of hegemonic masculinity.

Moreover, it follows that women who participate in sport run the risk of being labeled with these masculine traits, especially if they play male-dominated or typically masculine-associated sports. Previous literature demonstrates that this labeling has occurred since women began their sporting pursuits (Griffin, 1992; Hall, 2002, Morrow

& Wamsley, 2005). A simple explanation of a phenomenon that has emerged in response to this association (between female athletes and masculine traits) is a tendency for female athletes to 'apologize' for their involvement in sport by overemphasizing their femininity (Felshin, 1974). The term 'female apologetic' refers to any behaviours that female athletes engage in to negate or negotiate the negative stereotypes associated with their involvement in sport by embodying the traditional, or hegemonic, heterosexual notion of femininity. It also can refer to any practices society and the media engage in to emphasize this form of femininity in female athletes (Ellison, 2002).

Female apologetic behaviour in the sport of rugby, specifically, is an interesting topic for several reasons. Rugby is played in 117 countries by more than 5 million people, although predominately by men; a recent report found that in the major rugby playing nations of the world the ratio of male to female players was almost 38: 1 (Chadwick, Semens, Schwarz & Zhang, 2010). Across nations, this ratio varied from approximately 3:1 (USA) to nearly 415:1 (Argentina) (Chadwick et al., 2010). Men and women play rugby by the same set of rules, and the only variations are for different age levels and different modifications on the game (e.g. 7's rugby, rugby league). The dictionary definition of rugby is:

a form of football [soccer], played between two teams of 15 members each, that differs from soccer in freedom to carry the ball, block with the hands and arms, and tackle, and is characterized chiefly by continuous action and prohibition against the use of substitute players. (Rugby, n.d.)

Moreover, in rugby the ball may only be passed laterally or backwards, the ball may only move forward by kicking it or carrying it, and players may not wear any items containing rigid material (International Rugby Board, 2012a).

Rugby is characterized as a typically masculine sport due to its high degree of physicality (Kane & Snyder, 1989). As Yeats (1995) explains, media coverage of men's professional rugby "depict and glorify a defiant, unreconstructed form of masculinity, the kind of tough, hegemonic masculinity that brooks no opposition to the celebration of male supremacy through the aggressive body-in-action" (p. 38). Like football and hockey, rugby promotes and celebrates the orthodox masculine concepts of domination through direct physical force, toughness and violent bodily contact. The nature of the sport requires participants to tackle, hit, grab, push and generally attempt to control others through using their bodies. These bodily actions do not align with the socially accepted actions that women are expected to perform. The actions in rugby can result in bruised, battered, dirty and sometimes bloody bodies; this deviates from how society outlines the way in which female bodies should look. The masculinity of rugby, in both participation rates and nature, creates a unique environment to study female apologetic behaviour.

The purpose of this study is to expand the knowledge surrounding female apologetic behaviour among female rugby players. More specifically, I intend to explore how level of competition, racial identity and sexual orientation interact with female apologetic behaviour in Canadian women's rugby. My intent is that this study will produce an immediate deeper understanding of the experiences of apologetic behaviours of my research participants and will contribute to understanding the extent that women who play a masculine sport engage in female apologetic behaviour.

This study is necessary for several reasons. Many studies have found that the female apologetic is still very present in today's society (Clasen, 2001; Daniels, 1992, 2002; Davis-Delano, Pollock, & Vose, 2009; Messner 1988; Proudfoot, 2009), but there have been a few studies that show otherwise (Theberge, 1993; White & Neverson, 2002; Festle, 1996; Broad, 2001; Enke, 2005). These results point to how gender norms and how people negotiate them, especially female athletes, are constantly shifting; therefore more research is needed to understand how the female apologetic is understood by female athletes today.

Female apologetic behaviour has been studied in many sports, including rugby, although compared with other popular sports in Canada and the USA, women's rugby remains relatively under-researched (not just in regards to the female apologetic). One example of this is found in the latest 50-page issue of statistics on women's sports and fitness facts in the USA. In this report, there is not a single statistic or study included that referred to female rugby players (Women's Sports Foundation, 2009). Women's rugby should be explored further because it has been largely under-investigated.

Although there has been research done pertaining to the female apologetic and female rugby players, this study varies from previous research. Many of the studies done with female rugby players, which investigate apologetic behaviours, have been done as ethnographies (Broad, 2001; Chase, 2006; Gill, 2007; Ezzel, 2009) or interviews with members of a single team (Carle & Nauright, 1999; Chu, Leberman, Howe & Bachor, 2003; Fallon & Jome, 2007). Shockley (2005) looked at female rugby players from a variety of teams that play at various levels, although this study used surveys to collect data so garnered more superficial results than in-depth interviews would uncover. Russell

(2004) also studied female rugby players from various teams at varying levels using interviews, but this study was done in the UK and the main focus of the study was on body satisfaction rather than apologetic behaviour.

This study provides novel information because it differs in three main ways from previous studies done on the similar topic of female rugby players and the female apologetic. To begin, none of these studies have used Canadian athletes, except for Daniels (2002) who used female, Canadian university-aged athletes from various sports and focused on “femininity and presentation of self through body adornment” (p. 1). Canada has a unique culture, one that has not been analyzed sufficiently within the female rugby context. There have been studies done with Canadian, female rugby players, such as research conducted by O’Hanley (1998) and Pettersen (2002), but neither study addressed apologetic behaviours of these athletes. Secondly, this study intentionally recruited participants from three distinct skill/competition levels and includes athletes from more than one team playing in various leagues nationally and internationally. Including participants from different levels allows me to explore the possibility that level of competition impacts apologetic behaviour. Finally, the studies done with female rugby players have generally lacked racial diversity so while recruiting participants I ensured racial diversity and sexual orientation diversity were maintained. As a female rugby player myself, I intentionally designed this study to gain rich insight into the female apologetic in Canadian rugby by using in-depth, semi-structured interviews with women rugby players. To increase the comfort of the participants and ensure they felt a rapport with the interviewer, I recruited my current and previous teammates to participate in this study as research subjects.

It is important to intentionally analyze different levels of competition not only because this has not been done before, but also because it could provide important information on sustaining participation in women's rugby. If it is found that as the level of competition increases so do apologetic behaviours, this then could indicate a barrier to involvement in higher competition levels of women's rugby. Judith Butler's ideas surrounding gender performance may offer insight into how the level of rugby could affect apologetic behaviour. Anita Brady (2010) explains, "for Butler, gender performativity operates through the same constitutive logic of repetition and citation, and it is on these two functions that the efficacy of any performance of gender depends" (p. 6). From this perspective, it is possible to formulate a prediction surrounding prevalence of apologetic behaviours and level of competition. Those female rugby players that are playing rugby at the highest level of competition are doing so often, or, in other words, repetitively. It is fair to assume that for these athletes, being a rugby player is a key component of their identity. Their repetitive performances of masculine activities through their rugby participation, and their strong identification with the sport, may cause them to feel a necessity to engage in female apologetic behaviours to ensure their femininity and embodiment of the proper gender role that matches societal expectations. The lower level players may not feel as much pressure because they are only occasionally performing socially deemed masculine activities.

It is also important to bring racial identity into my analysis of the female apologetic because this factor has been vastly ignored in the previous literature. As most of the previous literature on women's rugby has noted, rugby participation is dominated by white, middle-class women (Broad, 2001; Chase, 2006; Ezzel, 2009; Fallon & Jome,

2007; Russell, 2004; Shockley, 2005). Other studies have simply ignored the participants' race completely (Chu, Leberman, Howe & Bachor, 2003; Gill, 2007). Racial identity may be a key component in how female rugby players deal with some of the stereotypes associated with playing rugby. Normative femininity is a white, middle-class, heterosexual femininity so it is interesting to investigate how non-white (and non-heterosexual) women navigate their rugby participation. Including women from various ethnic backgrounds is important because it has been found that girls of colour tend to be one of the most disadvantaged populations in sport because they are affected by both gender and racial inequities (Sabo & Veliz, 2008).

Finally, I included participants of different sexual orientations in this study. Due to the lesbian stigma associated with women's rugby, it is critical to analyze the experiences of female rugby players of different sexual orientations. In sport in its simplest form, the lesbian stigma is the idea that, "sports are masculine; therefore, women in sport are masculine; therefore, women in sport are lesbians" (Brownsworth, 1991, p. 37 as cited in Sartore & Cunningham, 2009, p. 294). As Griffin (1998) describes in her book, *Strong Women, Deep Closets: Lesbians and Homophobia in Sport* (1998), in sport "femininity however is a code word for heterosexuality" (p. 68). She explains that female athletes and sporting organizations use three criteria to disassociate themselves from the 'lesbian boogeywoman:' "(1) visibility of [heterosexual] relationships, (2) [feminine] appearance and demeanour, and (3) attitudes and actions about lesbians in sport" (Griffin, 1998, p. 68). Clearly, the relationship between gender performance and sexual orientation produces apologetic behaviours in women's sport. Labeling athletic women as lesbians

could be viewed as a method to reinforce the “belief in ‘natural’ differences between men and women that legitimate gender inequalities” (Ezzel, 2009, p. 115).

This lesbian stereotype in rugby has consistently been found in the research (Broad, 2001; Carle & Nauright, 1999; Chase, 2006; Ezzel, 2009; Shockley, 2005). Deliberately looking at how women with various sexual orientations respond to this stigma may lead to a better understanding of apologetic behaviours in women’s rugby. Seeking to understand gender role negotiations amongst female athletes is important because sport can be a site of resistance to normative, heterosexual gender roles.

Sport research in general is a justifiable activity as sport participation has repeatedly been shown to produce psychological, physiological and sociological benefits, all of which contribute to healthier individuals. The health benefits of physical activity are unquestionable; a reduced risk of stroke, various cancers, cardiovascular disease and coronary heart disease, prevention of diabetes mellitus type 2, as well as greater longevity (Blair & Brodney, 1999; Blair, Kohl, Paffenbarger, Clark, Cooper, & Gibbons, 1989; Gill & Cooper, 2008; Helmrich, Ragland, Leung & Paffenbarger, 1991; Paffenbarger, Hyde, Hsieh & Wing, 1986). There are many health benefits specific to female participation in sport and exercise, such as: lower chance of unintended pregnancy, 60% reduced risk of breast cancer, reduced chance of osteoporosis, experience higher levels of self-esteem and body image, and lower levels of depression (Bernstein, Henderson, Hanish, Sullivan-Halley & Ross, 1994; Colton & Gore, 1991; Kulig, Brener & McManus, 2003; Miller, Sabo, Melnick, Farrell & Barnes, 2000; Sabo, Miller, Farrell, Barner & Melnick, 1998; Teegarden et al., 1996; Tiggemann, 2001; Wyshak & Frisch, 2000).

The literature cited above demonstrates some health benefits attributed to physical activity, although some female athletes continue to experience a tension between developing masculine traits through their sporting pursuits and a desire to maintain those traits associated with hegemonic femininity (Wright & Clarke, 1999; Young, 1997). This paradoxical environment can pressure female athletes into engaging in unhealthy practices, such as excessive exercising, disordered eating and training through injuries (Duquin, 1994; Johns, 1996; Krane, Greenleaf, & Snow, 1997). If women did not feel these paradoxical pressures, they would be more likely to garner the benefits that sport participant can provide (Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar, & Kauer, 2004). Until this paradoxical tension is understood, females will continue to be outnumbered by males in many sports, and those who do participate will not be able to reap the full benefits that sport has the potential to provide. Continuing to understand this phenomenon is of especial importance in rugby as women's rugby is a rapidly growing sport, particularly in North America.

The International Rugby Board has a Women's Development program and the manager of this program, Susan Carty, explains this growth: "With over 200,000 registered women currently playing the Game in over 100 countries around the world, the qualification process reflects the significant and sustained growth we have experienced in recent years in the Women's Game" (International Rugby Board, 2012b). In 1982, the first-ever international women's rugby game was played by the Netherlands and France; since then there have been six Women's Rugby World Cup (WRWC) tournaments, as well as a plethora of other national and international level women's competitions in both 15's and sevens rugby (Richards, 2010). The most recent Women's Rugby World Cup,

held in 2010 in England, included 12 teams, over 30,000 spectators, live worldwide streaming, half a million TV viewers for the final match, and was broadcast in 124 countries (Women's Rugby World Cup, 2011). Within Canada, women's sport has continuously been expanding since it began, with female rugby showing some of the highest increases over time (O'Hanley, 1998).

Even given the rapid growth of women's rugby, there is a relative lack of material analyzing female rugby players' experiences and how they negotiate their participation in this hyper-masculine, collision sport. Due to this gap in the literature, and because apologetic behaviour in women's rugby appears to be a transient and variable phenomenon, researchers do not yet have a firm grasp on this phenomenon. Some apologetic behaviour, as described above, may be detrimental to athletes' health. It is for these reasons that the research explained in the subsequent chapters of this thesis is valuable and warranted.

Chapter II: Literature Review

The notion that female athletes engage in apologetic behaviour in response to their sport participation was first identified academically in 1974 (Felshin, 1974), although this tendency has existed for many years prior to this (as will be evident in the history portion of this chapter). Felshin summarized the rationale behind this behaviour as follows:

Each woman in sport is a social anomaly when sport is seen as the idealized socialization of masculine traits and the ideals of femininity preclude these qualities. Because women cannot be excluded from sport and have chosen not to reject sport, apologetics develop to account for their sport involvement in the face of its social unacceptability. (p. 36)

Felshin (1974) explained that some female athletes feel the need to apologize for their participation in sport by emphasizing their femininity. This necessity is felt as a result of the masculine associations of their sport participation.

In this chapter, I review literature surrounding the female apologetic in women's sport in an attempt to contextualize this behaviour and examine if it presents itself in the same manner as it did when first identified. In this exploration, I used multiple combinations of the following terms (in no particular order) on online database searches of both scholarly and media based material: women's sport; female apologetic; media representations; stereotypes; race; women's rugby; gender roles; women's sport; race; racial identity; class; socio-economic status; sexuality; gender; unapologetic; hegemonic; masculinity; femininity; lesbian; stigma. I begin the review of literature with defining what female apologetic behaviour is, continue by exploring the history and development

of this behaviour, and then review the literature that addresses media representations of the female apologetic. I then turn my focus to studies that have explored female apologetic behaviour on women's rugby teams and conclude by looking at studies that include race, female sport and/or female apologetic behaviours.

Defining the Female Apologetic

Emphasizing femininity reinforces females' inferior status to males' by highlighting typically feminine traits (such as frailty and docility) and ensures that they remain desirable to men (Connell, 1987). Female athletes have been found to emphasize their femininity in various ways, including: looking feminine by wearing sexy clothing, minimizing muscular development and moving in feminine ways, emphasizing their participation in stereotypical feminine activities, talking about and spending time with boyfriends, emphasizing males' superiority at sports, being inclusive of heterosexual and/or very feminine female athletes while excluding lesbian and/or more masculine female athletes, avoiding being seen with and especially touching other women in public, and avoiding talking about lesbianism and/or hiding their own sexuality (Adams, Schmitke, & Franklin, 2005; Berlage, 1987; Blinde & Taub, 1992a; 1992b; Cooky & McDonald, 2005; Cox & Thompson, 2000; Del Rey, 1977, Ezzell, 2009; Felshin, 1974; George, 2005; Griffin, 1998; Halpert, 1997; Kolnes, 1995; Lowe, 1998; Wughalter, 1978). Segments of society, and the media in particular, exacerbate this phenomenon by often focusing on female athletes' feminine body features and stereotypical gender roles, rather than their sport performance and athleticism (Ellison, 2002).

In 1978, Wughalter defined the apologetic as an unconscious reaction learned by female athletes that is used as a defense mechanism against social criticism. Wughalter (1978) argued that these apologetic behaviours occur both in the sporting context (actually on the sporting court, field or ice), as well as away from the sporting context. The in-sport context apologetic patterns were most easily identified in physical appearance, such as: tight clothing, jewellery, hair ribbons, etc. A common out-of-sport context apologetic behaviour was to lessen the importance of their sporting competition and athletic ability (Wughalter, 1978). Rohrbaugh (1979) agreed that women engage in these apologetic behaviours in response to their involvement in sport. It was common for media coverage at this time to place female athletes in either a domestic role or a family context, especially with their children (Myers, 1978). Despite the evidence of a pervasive feminine apologetic, Graydon (1983) pointed out that there was a shift in the dominant notion of what it was to be a female insofar as female bodies were becoming more accepted as possessing qualities, such as skill, strength and power.

History and Development of the Female Apologetic

Since the first Olympic Games in Greece, there have been efforts to exclude women from sport participation; at the ancient Games, women caught watching the male competition ran the risk of being put to death (Griffin, 1992). Women's involvement in sport has grown dramatically since the ancient Olympic Games, but there remain obstacles to women's sport participation. One of these obstacles is the pressure on female athletes to display apologetic behaviours in response to their involvement in the male-dominated domain of sport.

Since women in North America began participating in organized and publicized sport, they demonstrated behaviours that correspond to the term female apologetic (even if the term was not coined until 1974). From the late nineteenth century, when bicycling became a craze for both men and women, society's focus on female cyclists had little to nothing to do with the athletic feat of bicycling. Instead, the focus was on the appearance of the female cyclist and how bicycling and exercise in general could affect their function as females, which during this period was child bearing and rearing (Hall, 2002; Morrow & Wamsley, 2005). Morrow and Wamsley (2005) make note of how important the role of the bicycle was for Canadian women in the late 1800s:

Historians have noted the impact of the safety bicycle, in its drop-frame format for females, on the physical emancipation of women by relieving the conventions of cumbersome dress to allow women to become more involved in leisure, sport, and recreation pursuits. (Hall, 1968; Hall, 2002; Lenskyj, 1986 as cited in Morrow & Wamsley, 2005, p. 50)

These historians are referring to the shorter skirts, split skirts, and controversial bloomers that the bicycling women of the period would wear. The bloomers received criticisms from the public eye as they were against the normative, female dress at the time, although eventually became accepted, thus changing dress norms and allowing women more freedom in their attire (Hall, 2002).

Although female participation in sport grew, the concern over female athletes' appearances remained; a Canadian example is the famous Edmonton Commercial Graduates Women's basketball team. This team competed from 1915 – 1940; they played against both men's and women's teams in Canada and Europe, and won the vast majority

of their games. All team members had to adhere to a ‘code of femininity’ that was instated by the Grads’ male coach, Percy Page. This requirement entailed always acting and dressing like a lady, which included refraining from drinking, swearing, smoking and chewing gum (Hall, 2002; Morrow & Wamsley, 2005). Percy Page stated that his players must be “ladies first, basketball players second” (Hall, 2002, p. 91). This statement reflects the mentality surrounding female athletes in Canada through the early 20th century.

If women did not embody the type of emphasized femininity required by Page, they were labeled ‘mannish’ because of their sport participation, which led to rumours about these women having a non-heterosexual interest. The “heterosexual failure” assumption surfaced in North America in the 1930 and by the 1950s, this lesbian athlete stereotype was well established (Cahn, 1993, p. 334). This stereotype placed more pressure on female athletes to take on the feminine apologetic stance towards their sport participation because femininity and heterosexuality were viewed as synonymous (Cahn, 1993). Today, the lesbian athlete stereotype still exists (Proudfoot, 2009) and there has even been evidence of perceptions of conversion to lesbianism by playing sports (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1983 as cited in Knight & Giuliano, 2003).

The Female Apologetic and the Media

Ellison’s (2002) analysis of four Canadian advertisements from 1950, 1970, 1992 and 2002 featuring prominent female athletes of the time demonstrates an example of some progression in the media’s portrayal of women in sport. It is no surprise that the athlete used in 1950 was Barbara Ann Scott, who sports reporters considered the epitome

of femininity (Morrow & Wamsley, 2005), but even still the ad portrayed her as both an athlete (skater) and housewife. Skier Nancy Greene also embodies this dual role, as athlete and housewife, in her advertisement from 1970. This observation illustrates the idea that “women athletes are always framed by their status both as athletes and as women” (Clarke & Clarke, 1982 as cited in Hargreaves, 1982, p. 67). The duality in Silken Laumann’s ad from 1992 shows some improvement as she is not shown as an athlete and housewife, but rather as an athlete and an expert computer user. However, one interpretation of the advertisement can be that IBM computers are so easy to use even a woman can do it. Finally, Catrina LeMay Doan’s ad from 2002 shows her in her actual sporting attire (a speed skating unitard with the hood on) in a racing position, yet her wedding ring is shown prominently on her left hand and she is wearing make-up (Ellison, 2002). Ellison highlights the improvements made from the 1950s when Barbra Ann Scott was portrayed as a dishwasher, but demonstrates the female apologetic theme is still common throughout the advertisements.

Theberge (2001) has commented that although female athleticism is increasingly celebrated, those athletes who wish to be marketed must still be feminine and pretty in the ‘out of sport’ context. One example of the emphasized normative femininity in female athletes by the media is Hayley Wickenheiser, a Canadian, female ice hockey player who is arguably one of the best in the world. On the ice, Wickenheiser is a physical player who has competed for the National women’s team and for a men’s professional team in Europe, but off the ice the focus is on her role of a wife and a mother (Helstein, 2010). Helstein comments on the notable commercial Wickenheiser was in:

Perhaps most famously, this is evident in her commercial endorsing Hamburger Helper, which features her explaining that the product allows her to be an athlete without impeding her ability and obligation to be a good wife and mother by cooking for and attending to the needs of her family. (p. 246)

This commercial exemplified female apologetic behaviour as it highlights Wickenheiser's gender-appropriate roles as mother and wife, rather than her sporting ability.

Sailors, Teetzel and Weaving (2012) address the sexualization of female athletes in the media through analysis of media portrayals of women's Olympic beach volleyball. They argue that female Olympic beach volleyball players are represented by the media as either or both mothers or sexual objects. Ellison (2002) and Helstein (2010) argued that media emphasizes the mother role for female athletes, but neither author discussed the sexualization of female athletes; however, the sexualization of female athletes by the media has been documented in academia (Bernstein, 2002; Duncan & Messner, 1998; Kane & Lenskyj, 1998). Through examination of the recent uniform modifications in women's Olympic beach volleyball (essentially bikinis), how the media portrays these athletes, and how these athletes portray themselves Sailors, Teetzel and Weaving (2012) conclude that "women are still confined to two acceptable roles, sex object or mother, both of which trivialize their athletic abilities and inherent value" (p. 471). Their conclusions suggest that women are subject to apologetic behaviours through policy and media and demonstrate it themselves.

Current Findings about the Female Apologetic

Exploring other recent studies about female apologetic behaviour in sport will aid in understanding this complex and dynamic phenomenon. Many recent studies point to the conclusion that the female apologetic is still present today (e.g. Clasen, 2001; Daniels, 1992, 2002; Davis-Delano, Pollock, & Vose, 2009; Messner 1988; Proudfoot, 2009). Clasen (2001) explains that this phenomenon remains in current U.S. sports because masculine/feminine dualism is so influential. This dualism means that if an athlete is masculine, he/she is not feminine; this leads to female athletes prioritizing their femininity over their athletic ability because athletic ability is still viewed as masculine.

According to Daniels (2002) the threat of female athletes being viewed as non-feminine still exists, regardless of what sport the athlete plays. She argues that women athletes continue to be reminded that they are female first, athlete second. Daniels drew these conclusions after analyzing female Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) athletes' extent of and motivation behind any piercings or tattoos. These body adornments, as well as other displays of femininity while playing sport, such as painted fingernails, long or styled hair, make-up, hair ribbons, and jewelry, have been used to display apologetic behaviours by female athletes since women's participation in organized sport (Daniels, 2002). Daniels (2002) concluded that there was some indication that athletes self-survey their femininity through adorning their bodies. This is understandable as the female athletic body is seen as non-congruent with the ideal feminine female body (Messner, 1988; Daniels, 1992).

The lesbian athlete stereotype, which has been established since the 1950s, and the feminine apologetic response were found to exist in the current society (Knight &

Giuliano, 2003). Knight and Giuliano (2003) found that heterosexual athletes (male and female) were seen as more similar to the ideal man/woman, more physically attractive, and viewed as more respectable than athletes who had an ambiguous sexual orientation (by description in a fictitious newspaper article about an Olympic athlete). Their finding supports the notion that heterosexuality remains the accepted sexual orientation in the current North American society.

Another recent study analyzed the apologetic behaviour of American female athletes from three different collegiate sports, basketball, soccer and softball, and found that most athletes (73%) engaged in apologetic techniques occasionally or few apologetic techniques more regularly. The common apologetic behaviours highlighted in this study included apologizing for aggression, identifying themselves as heterosexual, and making efforts to look feminine (Davis-Delano, Pollock, & Vose, 2009).

A study in 2002 provided some contrasting results to previous studies showing that many of the female athlete participants challenged the dominant notion of femininity. These female athletes did not view being strong, tough, muscular or physically aggressive to be violating any social norm. They did not feel as though their embodiment of these traits disrupted what it meant to be feminine (White & Neverson, 2002). Other literature that has found non-apologetic behaviour in female athletes includes studies by: Festle (1996) who argued that apologetic behaviours no longer exist during actual athletic participation; Broad (2001) who found that women rugby participants challenged the dominant gender norms; and Enke (2005) who found that women basketball participants did not belittle their athleticism or emphasize their femininity. These results point to how

gender norms and how people negotiate them, especially female athletes, are constantly shifting.

Overall, the prevalence of the female apologetic within women's sports has generally decreased over the century, although it has not disappeared completely. An analysis of the literature indicates that the extent to which women athletes engage in apologetic behaviour varies greatly. A prime example of this is how Ezzell (2009) found a high level of unapologetic behaviour on one women's rugby team and a high level of apologetic behaviour on another women's rugby team, in part as a reaction to the behaviour of the unapologetic team.

Female Apologetic within Women's Rugby

There have been several other female apologetic studies that focus on the sport of rugby. Examining the literature on female apologetic behaviour within women's rugby demonstrates the prevalence and types of this behaviour currently in the sport. It also shows which groups of people have been included and those who have been excluded from research.

Carle and Nauright (1999) conducted a case study of women's rugby culture in Brisbane, Australia in an effort to comprehend why women are playing the sport. All of the team members, the team coach, a few officials and some of the club's men's team members were interviewed over a two-year period. Conclusions from this study highlight the obstacles and negative reactions women face for playing a 'man's sport' in Australia, although the female rugby players were quick to point out that the positives of playing outweigh the negatives. The authors concluded that although the female rugby players

were pushing gender-appropriate boundaries simply by their participation in rugby, how they performed their gender roles (both on and off the pitch) still conformed to heteronormative expectations.

Broad (2001) conducted an ethnographical study in the early 1990s that involved observing a women's rugby club team in the Western United States for two years. The women in the study challenged heteronormativity through creating a sex-positive and fluid, 'in your face,' and gender-transgressive environment. In other words, Broad found that these women behaved 'unapologetically' rather than displaying the commonly found female apologetic behaviour by female athletes. She concluded that the unapologetic behaviour "parallel some forms of queer resistance" (p. 199). Broad concluded that more research needed to be performed in an effort to discover if there were more cases of queer resistance in sport.

Chu, Leberman, Howe & Bachor (2003) conducted a study with members of New Zealand's Black Ferns women's rugby team. They performed 23 semi-structured interviews during the 1999 Tri-Nations tournament. The focus of this study was less on female apologetic behaviour and more about the Black Ferns' experiences as female rugby players in New Zealand. In later chapters, these participants' experiences will be compared with the experiences of the participants in the current study.

Russell (2004) also did not focus so much on female apologetic behaviour as she did on body satisfaction, although the behaviour was brought up often. This study was done with Australian, female rugby players, cricketers, and netballers. In total, 30 semi-structured interviews were performed (10 athletes from each sport). The athletes had positive perceptions of their bodies, but not in all contexts. Similar to reasons for

displaying female apologetic behaviour (fear of being perceived as a lesbian, desire to display a heterosexual body type), the women changed their body perceptions in out-of-sport contexts.

Shockley (2005) used surveys to gather information from various women's rugby teams in the Southern United States. Through analysis of these surveys it was found that overall these women were proud of their involvement in the rough, aggressive sport of rugby and did not demonstrate female apologetic behaviour. The female rugby players in this study readily rejected non-rugby players' stereotypes and attempted to educate them on their rugby culture, one that is creating an alternative femininity than that of the typical 'southern woman.'

Chase's (2006) study was an ethnography that included players from four teams from four different Midwestern states who participated in in-depth interviews. Chase used Foucault's ideas about discipline, power and docile bodies to frame the study and analyze the data and results. The women in this study did not demonstrate apologetic behaviour and were comfortable displaying non-normative versions of femininity. Chase notes that although the women were 'undisciplined' (in Foucault's terms) in terms of femininity, they were disciplined in terms of following the script of competitive sport.

In 2007, Fallon and Jome published a study describing their interviews with 11 non-college female rugby players from the eastern United States. The participants perceived numerous conflicting expectations for their gender-role behaviour. Nine of the eleven participants adopted adaptive gender-role behaviours, recognizing when and where more feminine and more masculine gender-role expectations occurred. Six of the respondents reported that some rugby players engage in apologetic behaviours by

emphasizing their femininity through appearance or flirtation with men in an attempt to “counteract the negative stereotypes of women rugby players as short, fat, unattractive, or lesbian” (p. 318).

Gill (2007) investigated a women’s rugby team on the English-Scottish border’s negotiation of femininity, with particular attention paid to violence. These women embraced an alternative form of femininity through their willingness to be in violent situations on and off the pitch. The female rugby players faced “marginalisation, sexual harassment and stigmatism” (p. 425). Gill also analyzed the team’s rugby songs and concluded that the shocking, sexual songs these women sang worked to renegotiate gender norms.

As the above studies demonstrate, female apologetic behaviour is not a static phenomenon. The studies found a range of apologetic, non-apologetic and unapologetic behaviours within their participants. The studies were conducted in several different countries, including Australia, New Zealand, the UK, and the USA, but none address Canadian athletes. As stated in Chapter I, these studies primarily included white, middle-class women or did not address race and social class at all. The current study will address the concepts of race and class, thus a review of literature that examines the influences of race and class on women’s sport involvement is necessary. During second wave feminism, the exclusion of women of various races, abilities, ages, sexualities and classes in women’s studies came to a forefront (Cassidy, Lord & Mandell, 1995). Since then, many studies have examined how diversities interact with women’s sport involvement.

Racial and Socioeconomic Influences

Knoppers and McDonald (2010) reviewed 75 empirical research articles all with the common topic of gender and sport (primarily dealing with girls/women). They found that:

The majority of these papers seemed to implicitly assume certain universal characteristics (American, White, heterosexual) of participants while explicitly assuming (and searching for) difference across gender and/or athletic status with an occasional use of socioeconomic status and/or race/ethnicity/nationality of participants as independent variables as well. (Knoppers & McDonald, 2010, p. 312)

They note that these implications may work to reinforce the assumption of white, heterosexual men and women as the norm.

In addition, McKay and Johnson (2008) argue that when African American athletes are covered by media sources, they are often hyper-sexualized and compared to animals. In their article, McKay and Johnson use the Williams sisters (Venus and Serena – American tennis players) to highlight their argument, stating that both athletes have been subjected to pornographic eroticism. In particular, media coverage of Serena Williams has focused on her buttocks and tennis attire:

Cartoonists would have been hard pressed to create Serena. First there was the body - all bosom, bottom and muscle. In her skintight faux leather bodysuit she gave Lara Croft a run for her money. (The great kinkster cartoonist Robert Crumb told me that she was his ideal woman; his idea of heaven was to be given a piggyback by Serena). (Hattenstone, 2007)

The *Telegraph's* sports journalist Sue Mott has written about the Williams sisters on numerous occasions, often likening them to animals. In 2000, she described them as “players of Amazonian physique and piranha mentality” (Mott, 2000) and in a 2007 article attributed part of Venus Williams’ Wimbledon win to the fact that “Venus can chase from side to side like a cheetah on the run” (Mott, 2007). McKay and Johnson (2008) conclude that African American athletes face hardships in “combating heteronormative ideologies of male superiority and unquestioned racism” (p. 500).

Walseth (2008) examined sport club involvement by young women with an immigrant background specifically looking at how social capital (social networks, intercultural knowledge, community, democracy, etc.) is bridged between immigrant and non-immigrant women. She found that the sports clubs did little to bond the different groups of women. In Walseth and Fasting’s (2004) study it was found that African women experienced more racism in sport than Asian women. They also discovered that Muslim women experienced cultural/religious difficulties in terms of sport participations.

Hamzeh and Oliver (2012) also discuss the barriers Muslim women face in terms of sport participation. Palmer and Masters (2010) explored Maori women’s experiences as athletes; they found that these women faced both racism and sexism in their athletic endeavours. These studies demonstrate a few examples of how women who do not fit into the hegemonic white, middle-class, heterosexual femininity face additional barriers to sport participation, thus adding to the importance of including these types of women in scholarship.

The concept of race is included in the present study; therefore it is important to explore the literature surrounding race and the female apologetic in women’s sport and

how these concepts interact. In relation to female apologetic behaviour, Rao and Overman (1984) replicated a study done by Snyder and Kivlin (1977) using Black female athletes instead of white female athletes; after comparing both sets of data the researchers found that the Black female athletes in their study demonstrated less female apologetic behaviours than the white female athletes in the former study. Hart (1971) concluded that Black women can feel comfortable and competent in sport without negating their femininity. In addition, in Stevens, Kumanyika and Keil's (1994) study of elderly black and white women, the black women were about two and a half times (2.5 and 2.7 respectively) as likely to be satisfied with their weight and consider themselves attractive. The findings noted here may point to potential differences in apologetic behaviours based on the 'race' with which a female athlete identifies. Influential sports activist Harry Edwards (1973), who was a key organizer of the black-gloved human rights salute by Tommie Smith and John Carlos on the podium at the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City, has made such a claim, remarking about the greater acceptance of the athlete role for women in the 'black society.' If women feel more accepted in this athlete role, it follows that they may not feel as much pressure to 'apologize' for their involvement in sport.

Another factor that has been shown to have an effect on sport participation is socioeconomic status or class. It has been found that individuals who are of a lower socioeconomic status spend less time doing physical activity and participating in organized sport (Bengoechea, Sabiston, Ahmed, & Farnoush, 2010; Gidlow, Johnston, Crone, Ellis, & James, 2006). One of the reasons for this discrepancy is due to the costs that are associated with sport participation (Holt, Cunningham, Sehn, Spence, Newton, &

Ball, 2009). Although there has been no scholarship on female apologetic behaviours and class, the above findings demonstrate that one's socioeconomic status does have a relationship with sport participation in general.

Summary

In summary, this review of literature has defined what female apologetic in women's sport is and its history and development in North America. It also highlighted current studies done on female apologetic behaviour in sport with particular attention paid to those done with rugby. Finally, it reviewed studies that analyzed the relationship race and class had on female apologetic behaviour and sport participation and experience. In conclusion, the definition of female apologetic behaviour that Felshin (1974) first identified is very similar to the apologetic seen today. Although, how and how often this apologetic is performed has varied throughout the past century and is dependent upon many social factors, thus it is a dynamic and variable phenomenon that must continue to be studied.

This review of the literature on the female apologetic in women's sport generally, and women's rugby specifically, establishes the gaps in the literature that this study can contribute to filling. Firstly, there has not been a study done solely with Canadian female rugby players and female apologetic behaviours; the current study fills this gap. In addition, much of the relevant literature lacks analysis of how social classifications may influence apologetic behaviours; the present study seeks out diversity in sexual orientation and racial identity and examines what influence these have on apologetic behaviours. It also examines the potential effects of socioeconomic status. Finally, none

of the studies summarized above explored a relationship between female apologetic behaviours and the level of competition in women's rugby; again, this study seeks to fill this gap.

Chapter III: Methods and Methodology

As a female rugby player, it made sense to take an interpretivist approach to this research study. The interpretive paradigm posits that reality is constructed by subjective perception. Researchers who agree with this paradigm are interested in social constructions of reality (Angen, 2000). Through my participation in rugby over the years, I have developed my own interpretations and opinions surrounding female sport and the female apologetic. I do not believe it is possible for me to ‘bracket out’ (Creswell, 2007) my own biases and perceptions. Instead, I recognize my inextricable situation within the rugby world and have made my biases explicit and kept them in consideration as I conducted this study. In interpretivist research, the researcher and participant are linked, which works well as I knew all but one of my participants on a personal level prior to beginning my research.

Methodology

The specific methodology I used is hermeneutic phenomenology. This methodology can be best understood if the two terms are first separated and defined. Koch (1995) explained.

Hermeneutics invites its participants into an ongoing conversation...but do not provide a methodology. Understanding occurs through a fusion of horizons, which is a dialectic between the pre-understandings of the research process, the interpretive framework and the sources of information. (p. 835)

Hermeneutic research consists of a researcher interpreting the texts of his/her research topic. Koch (1995) hints at the idea of a ‘hermeneutic circle’ in her reference to an

ongoing conversation. This means that the researcher and participants are gaining an understanding of knowledge through a circular movement; it is not linear. There is a continual relationship between interpretation and understanding (Gadamer, 1997).

A phenomenon is an observable experience, and phenomenological research aims to study a given phenomenon. According to Creswell (2007), a phenomenological study “describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon” (p. 57). Similar to hermeneutics, this type of research is interested in exploring the participants’ interpretations of the phenomenon and not just the phenomenon itself.

Combining hermeneutics and phenomenology, hermeneutic phenomenology is produced. This is defined as “research as oriented toward lived experience (phenomenology) and interpreting the “texts” of life (hermeneutics)” (van Manen, 1990, p. 4 as cited in Creswell, 2007). Gadamer (1997) states that the goal of hermeneutic phenomenology is to “reveal a totality of meaning in all its relations” (p. 471). Just like all research methodologies, hermeneutic phenomenology has certain assumptions and implications associated with it, which relate to ontological and epistemological beliefs. Hermeneutic phenomenology assumes relativist ontology and a constructivist epistemology. Relativists believe that multiple realities exist and that realities are dependent upon one’s experiences, beliefs and history. Reality is constructed by individuals through social meanings and experiences, thus the existence of multiple realities. In relation to sport, this means that athletes may experience the same sporting event differently such that the experiences and interpretations of the sporting event differ from athlete to athlete. A constructivist epistemology acknowledges that researchers

construct knowledge, and in hermeneutic phenomenology this knowledge is constructed by the researcher's interpretations of the data. Another assumption of this type of research is that experiences are conscious (Creswell, 2007). As I have studied the experiences of female rugby players, I have assumed that their experiences are conscious and they are able to tell me about them. This methodological approach also assumes that those lived experiences can be studied, coded and themed (Creswell, 2007). Using this approach, I assumed these same things.

The methodology fits my research question for several reasons. This research involves human subjects, who I believe are qualitatively unique, so I did not think it would be appropriate for me to use the research models that have been developed for the physical sciences. A qualitative, interpretivist approach fit better because it recognizes the multiple realities that exist due to this uniqueness of each person. In other words, because each person is unique with his/her own experiences, backgrounds, beliefs, and so on, he/she has his/her own interpretations of his/her reality and constructs multiple realities.

The purpose of my research also fits this methodology. My research purpose was to gain an understanding of how the participants produce rugby and more specifically their experiences with and opinions of the phenomenon of the female apologetic in women's rugby as well as women's sport. I used in-depth interviews to generate my data, which I then interpreted. I had an ongoing relationship with my participants throughout the research process to ensure a co-construction of knowledge. The ongoing relationship with my participants began at the first point of contact – their interest in the study. Each participant's experiences coupled with my own and the interview questions produced the

actual interview transcripts. These experiences were not just related to rugby, but also having the specific social identities with which each participant and I identified. My research question was best addressed using a hermeneutic phenomenology framework because I studied a phenomenon through interpreting the texts of my interviews while constantly being in contact with my participants for feedback.

I utilised Butlerian theory (Judith Butler) to frame my research project, particularly when analyzing how gender was constructed and interpreted by the participants. Our society still has a binary concept of gender; females are to act feminine and males are to act masculine, therefore what is masculine is also by default what is *not* feminine (Clasen, 2001). What is considered to be feminine and masculine has been, and continues to be, acted out by individuals. As Judith Butler (1988) explains “For both Beauvoir and Merleau-Ponty, the body is understood to be an active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities” (p. 521). In other words, the historical and cultural contexts dictate how one should perform their gender identity. Gender is performative and “is an act which has been rehearsed” (Butler, 1988, p. 526) to fit the prescribed role of either masculine or feminine. Butler quotes Simone de Beauvoir’s famous exclamation “one is not born, but, rather, becomes a woman,” in explaining, “she is appropriating and reinterpreting this doctrine of constituting acts from the phenomenological tradition” (Butler, 1988, p. 519). This means that gender is in no way natural; rather it is an embodying performance of whatever the social law dictates. Judith Butler explains this prescriptive gender performance well in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990):

Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality... In other words, acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core, an illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality. (p. 136)

This ‘obligatory frame of heterosexuality,’ along with the cultural and historical contexts, prescribe how bodies should externalize their seemingly ‘natural’ gender.

The ‘obligatory frame of heterosexuality,’ also identified by Butler (1990) as the heterosexual matrix, is a main factor in gender identity. Gender performativity is closely linked with sexuality performativity. Due to this linkage, if one’s gender identity or one’s performance of masculinity or femininity is non-normative, then one’s sexual identity is also called into question; one polices the other and, often, this is the case in female sport. As Brownsworth (1991) was quoted previously: “sports are masculine; therefore, women in sport are masculine; therefore, women in sport are lesbians” (p. 37 as cited in Sartore & Cunningham, 2009, p. 294). Femininity has been identified as a code word for heterosexuality (Griffin, 1998). Managing this lesbian stigma is an ongoing concern in women’s rugby. For example, Shockley (2005) found that when non-rugby players encountered female rugby players, many believed that all female rugby players were lesbians.

According to Althusser, “people who don’t conform to expectations of gender are accused of not being ‘real women’ or ‘real men’” (Chinn, 1977, p. 298). One’s embodying of a ‘proper’ gender role ensures his/her identity as a subject: “We are interpellated into gender from birth – the words ‘It’s a girl’, are in fact a command and a threat: “Be a girl; if you want to be a real subject with a real identity, act out girliness” (Chinn, 1977, p. 299). Simply by naming someone as one gender or the other, it results in a script for them to follow, and as they do, it reinforces this script as normative. Butler (1993) explains “the naming is at once the setting of a boundary, and also the repeated inculcation of a norm” (p. 8). It is obvious that there are immense pressures to conform to the in-bounds gender role and that there are real consequences for those who do not. Yet, as is evident in women’s rugby, there are people and spaces that defy these roles.

People who occupy space outside of this boundary, although resistive to the norm, cannot ever be completely exterior to its power. For Butler (1993):

the paradox of subjectivation (assujettissement) is precisely that the subject who would resist such norms is itself enabled, if not produced, by such norms.

Although this constitutive constraint does not foreclose the possibility of agency, it does locate agency as a reiterative or rearticulatory practice, immanent to power, and not a relation of external opposition to power. (p. 15)

By resisting a norm or stepping outside of a boundary, one must acknowledge the norm and/or boundary and, in fact, help to reproduce it by reinforcing the line between normative and non-normative. It also must be noted that this person has still been produced by the norm through the definition of being non-normative.

Getting bruised and battered through using one's body aggressively, physically, and forcefully does not fit with the prescription to 'act out girlness.' Rugby is a unique female sport, because it is one of the few full-contact, collision sports for women. There is also an exclusive culture that is associated with the sport of rugby, which adds to its uniqueness:

Rugby, however, differs from almost all other women's sports because it is full-contact and aggressive. Rugby players also believe that their sport is different. They experience rugby not just as a sporting activity, but as a culture that provides them with a network of friends across the country and a social life that revolves around post game parties with competitors. (Shockley, 2005, p. 152)

Not only do female rugby players step beyond the boundary of acceptable femininity during game play, but there is also the potential for deviant gender performance during the socials and post-game celebrations.

Judith Butler's concept of repetitive gender performativity helped to intelligibly frame my research project. This ideology also aided in how I analyzed the data constructed with my participants. Butler's ideas of a heterosexual matrix and prescriptive gender roles align well with the rationale for my study described in Chapter I. There was a potential for resistant behaviour patterns to be discovered among my participants, which could have eventually led to a shift in the concepts of what is normative for gender and sexual identities.

Gender and sexual identities do not exist in a vacuum. Just as gender performativity and sexuality performativity are inextricably linked, so too are all our

social identities; gender, race, sexuality, and class are all, to some extent, intertwined.

Davis (2008) discusses the importance of intersectionality in feminist studies, stating:

Today, it is unimaginable that a women's studies program would only focus on gender... It is bon ton for women's studies professors to ask their undergraduate and graduate students to reconsider the topics of their research in the light of multiple differences. (p. 68)

Thus, it is also important to conceptualize race and social class in my study.

I took a stance on race similar to that of Bettez (2010) and Frankenburg (1993). As Bettez (2010) states: "race is socially constructed, yet it is real in its consequences" (p. 144). Frankenburg (1993) elaborates that this socially constructed category is "one linked to relations of power and processes of struggle and one whose meaning changes over time" (p. 11). It is important to discuss the social constructions of race and racial difference in this study because of their real effects in the world.

It should be noted that my understandings of gender, race and sexuality as described above were used to frame my research project. These are the theories by which I approached the topics and analyzed the data, although I did not express my interpretations of these social constructions to my participants throughout the research process. This was so the participants' conceptions of the discussed social constructions were not marred by my own conceptions.

Finally, my own experiences as a white, female, lesbian, middle-class rugby player had an undeniable influence on this research project. I approached the topics at hand with a unique perspective due to my societal, cultural and historical context that helped frame my research. My aim was not to be unbiased in my research, rather it was to

acknowledge my bias and incorporate it into my methodology and analysis. Chapter IV explores further my situation within the research and personal reflections.

Methods

Participant Recruitment

The first step of this research project (after conducting a thorough literature review) was to apply to and obtain approval from The University of Manitoba's Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB). Upon receiving approval from the Ethics Board, I sought permission from Rugby Canada to recruit Canadian women's rugby players to participate in this study. Once Rugby Canada approved the study, I recruited participants via Facebook by posting a recruitment poster (attached in Appendix A) on my current and previous rugby teams' pages. I also sent the poster to the Canada National Senior Women's Rugby Team page for their players to view. The poster outlined the purpose of my study and asked for interested volunteers to contact me via email.

I aimed to recruit teammates that I knew to aide in my research participants' comfort and openness throughout the research process. I also believe that my close relationship with the participants would help to generate richer data because, as Laverty (2003) explains, "It is within the embodied relationship [between the researcher and participant] that the text or data will be generated and interpreted in these types of research [phenomenological]" (, p. 19). In hermeneutic phenomenology, both the researcher and participants work together to generate the data; thus participant-researcher relationships are essential to the research.

Due to the fact that I wished to analyze the relationship that level of competition had on female apologetic behaviour, my intent was to recruit from three separate levels of rugby. The first level consisted of rugby players who had only competed at provincial-wide competitions. The rugby at this level is recreation focused; the highest level of competition for these participants has been at the club level and/or the high school level. The second level consisted of players who had competed at national-wide competitions. This rugby is more competitive as participants have also played (or currently play) at the Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) level. It was likely that these participants had also played on their respective provincial teams. Finally, the third level consisted of players who had competed internationally. These players were members of the Senior Women's Canadian National Rugby team. Given the scope of this project, I planned to conduct interviews with three participants from each level of rugby (nine participants in total). If I received more than my desired number of participants, I planned to select those who fit the purpose of my research project best to interview (such as racial diversity and sexual orientation diversity), although, if time allowed, I would interview all who volunteered.

Data Collection

When I received an email from a potential participant, I replied via email with an electronic copy of the Informed Consent Form (Appendix B), which included an outline of the study and informed the participant of her right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. I also explained to her how she could set up an interview with me, and asked her to suggest times when she would be available to schedule an interview. The interviews were conducted either in person, over Skype, or via telephone, based on

the participant's preferred format. Reluctance to participate in interview studies by potential participants has been established previously (Creswell, 1998), thus I deliberately allowed potential participants to choose their preferred type of interview (in person or via Skype or telephone) to encourage participation in the research study.

Five interviews were done over Skype, two via telephone, and two in-person, both which were done at my home. In total, I completed 9 interviews. Two of the participants were currently on the Canadian National Senior Women's Rugby Team and another participant had competed extensively internationally (although is not currently a member of the National Team). Three of the participants had competed at some level above high school and club. Two of these participants had competed at high school, club, provincial, and university level. They both had also competed on a junior national team. The third participant has played high school, club and provincial level rugby; she played junior provincial for just one year and the tournament was in her home province of Manitoba. The highest level the other three participants had competed at is the club level; two had also played high school rugby while one only played recreationally at the club level. Although the participants did not fit into the three levels of rugby exactly as intended, there were still three participants that fit into each level. The overlap between the three levels was not a concern as the participants represented the entire spectrum of experience, from the recreational level to the international level.

At the beginning of each interview, I reviewed the informed consent form with each participant to ensure they had read and understood it (see Appendix C for the script used). The participant then chose a pseudonym I could refer to her by throughout the

remainder of the research process. These steps were taken to maintain anonymity and confidentiality of the participants in line with the ENREB requirements.

All interviews were audio-recorded using a digital audio recorder. During the interviews, I took hand-written notes and after each interview was over, I wrote down my reflections. This reflective process is discussed further in the Data Analysis section of this chapter and in Chapter IV. The interview audio files were transferred onto a software program on my password locked computer. The original audio files (on my portable recorder) were kept in a locked filing cabinet that only I have access to. I transcribed the audio-recordings using the software programs Sound Organizer and DragonSpeaking. Participants' transcriptions were emailed to them, which gave them the opportunity to alter, remove or add any data to the transcript; any changes to a transcript were done so permanently. This was done to ensure anonymity amongst the participants and to allow them to confirm and/or provide additional information; it was done as a form of member checking (Kvale, 1996).

After I completed all of the interviews and began my data analysis process, I completed another form of member checking with the participants. I created a list of themes from coding the data that I sent to the participants to review. This step was outlined in the participants' informed consent forms. Details about this process are explained in the data analysis section of this chapter.

Although I did know all but one of my participants on a personal level, the type and order of questions that I asked them was still an important consideration. My first few questions were designed to be easy to answer, descriptive in nature, and intended to get my participants thinking and talking about the research topic. I wanted to ensure that

my participants felt comfortable and open throughout the interview. I had a list of questions that I asked each participant, but as I was using a semi-structured format, I also used prompts and asked each participant other specific questions dependent upon the answers I received to my listed questions. A semi-structured interview has been defined as “an interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena.” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 3), thus fitting with my research purpose and methodology. Kvale (1996) also noted that the semi-structured format ensures that similar questions are asked in each interview. The semi-structured format allowed for clarification and elaboration on my core questions, and it allowed the participant to have more input on the content of the data created as how they answered questions guided the direction of my clarification and elaboration questions.

The core interview questions I asked were as follows.

General Rugby Questions

1. Can you tell me about how you began to play rugby? (Additional prompts where needed; where, for how long, age – ties in with question 2)
2. Please describe the nature of previous and current teams which you have played for/currently play for without actually naming the teams. For example, “I played for my high school team and a club team who competed in the first division.”
-please list all the provinces where you have played
3. Why do you play rugby?
4. How does playing rugby make you feel? (If participants are struggling with this question, ask for key feeling words while playing).

5. What, if any, are the specific aspects of rugby that you enjoy? (About the game and/or culture)
6. What, if any, are the specific aspects of rugby that you do not enjoy? (About the game and/or culture)
7. How would you describe the typical female rugby player?
8. Do you think that there are certain stereotypes associated with women's rugby? If so, could you tell me about them?
9. Have you ever felt personally stereotyped because of your involvement in rugby? If so, can you provide me with some examples?
10. Have these stereotypes affected you or your teammates? If so, how?
11. Have you ever engaged in any sort of behaviour to try and avoid being labelled with these stereotypes?
12. How do you feel about being both a female and an athlete?
13. Can you identify any personal, positive and negative aspects of this dual identity (female and athlete)?

Level of rugby

14. *For those participants in the two higher level groups: Can you tell me about changes, if any, that occurred when your involvement in rugby became more serious?

Race

15. How would you identify yourself racially?
16. Has your race ever had any relationship with your participation in rugby?
-if yes, prompt about any relationship when their involvement became more serious

17. Based on your experiences, do you think that Canadian Women's rugby is dominated by a particular race/ethnicity? If yes, please elaborate

Sexual Orientation

18. Do you believe an association exists (perceived or real) between women's rugby and sexual orientation? If yes or no, please elaborate.

19. How would you define your sexual orientation?

20. Explain your experience and thoughts surrounding the relationship, if any, that exists between your sexual orientation and your involvement in rugby.

-if they believe there is a relationship between the two, ask to elaborate on if the relationship changed as their involvement in rugby became more serious

Class

21. Do you think that one's class or socio-economic status has an effect on the likelihood that she will play rugby?

22. Do you think that a female rugby player's class or socio-economic status has any effect on or relationship with her rugby involvement and experience?

Location

23. **For those players who have played in various provinces – Have you identified any major differences between the provinces in which you have played in? If yes, please elaborate.

Final thoughts

24. Is there anything else you would like to share surrounding your rugby experiences or topics we have touched on in this interview?

The interviews lasted on average just over half an hour, ranging from 17 minutes to 58 minutes. Once I had transcribed the interviews, sent them to the participants to review, and received them back with any changes the participants wanted to make, I then proceeded with the data analysis.

Data Analysis

For my data analysis process, I loosely followed Philip Burnard's (1991) stage-by-stage method for analyzing interview transcripts in qualitative research. Burnard (1991) outlines a 14-step process for data analysis which covers from the interview process to writing up the findings. I condensed and modified this process into 10 steps. I believe this was acceptable to do because as Tesch (1990) argues, unlike in quantitative data analysis, "no one has ever 'codified' the procedures for qualitative analysis, and it is not likely that anyone ever will" (p. 4). In other words, there is not one correct way to qualitatively analyze data; the analysis process must fit the research. Furthermore, Tesch continues:

Qualitative researchers are quite adamant in their rejection of standardization.

Whenever they describe their methods, they are usually eager to point out that this is just one way of doing it, which *others should feel free to adopt as much as they see fit, and modify and embellish it according to their own needs and ideas.* (p. 4, italics not in original)

The adapted 10-stage data analysis procedure used in this study is outlined below.

Stage one included note-taking before and after all interviews; these notes were my personal reflections and possible categories/reoccurring ideas. Field and Morse (1985,

as cited in Burnard, 1991) call these ideas about categorizing data ‘memos.’ Throughout the entire recruitment, data collection and analysis project, I kept a journal where I wrote additional ‘memos’ and reflections. During stage two, the aim was “to become immersed in the data” (Burnard, 1991, p. 462); to do so I read through each transcript, made notes about themes, and thus created more memos in the process.

In stage three, I began the coding process using a technique called ‘In Vivo’ coding (Saldana, 2009). ‘In Vivo’ coding is a technique where the researcher creates codes using the participants’ own words. I used this initial coding method because it honours the voice of the participant; its purpose is to grasp what is important to the participant, and it is good for beginning researchers (Saldana, 2009). The characteristics of this type of coding fit well with my research purpose and methodology. The purpose of the interview questions was to gain an understanding of what these women experienced and how they experienced it (Moustakas, 1994) and in hermeneutic phenomenology it is important to stay true to the voice of the participants. Stage four consisted of typing up the codes from all of the transcripts into a word document where I sorted them by question. Each participant had a colour by which all of her codes were typed in.

Once I had all of the codes together into one document, organized by question, I completed the fifth stage by looking for overlap and condensing the codes into common ideas/themes. In stage six, I grouped these themes into of the following seven categories:

1. Female Apologetic
2. Common Rugby Experiences
3. Sexual Orientation and Rugby
4. Location of Rugby

5. Level of Rugby

6. Class and Rugby

7. Race and Rugby

I created these categories by grouping similar questions together. Many of the themes I created could fit in more than one of these categories, although I selected the one they best fit into to avoid repetition. The overlapping of themes into multiple categories demonstrates intersectionality of the categories--an eighth category I added after sending the theme list out to the participants.

Stage seven consisted of sending the list of themes to each participant so she could comment on them. This procedure was outlined in the informed consent form. I did this for two reasons: one, to stay true to the circular relationship that exists in this type of research and two, to increase the internal validity of the study. The participants were asked to read and consider the themes that emerged from the coding process. Each participant was asked to provide her input surrounding the themes; they were able to suggest additions, modifications or removal of themes. This input ensured a true, co-construction of knowledge between participant and researcher. Asking for my participants' input on the credibility of my interpretations and results was another form of member checking (Creswell, 2007). Member checking is considered to be "the most critical technique for establishing credibility" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314 as cited in Creswell, 2007, p. 208), thus this was a very important step in the research process.

Stages eight, nine and ten in my modified data analysis matched Burnard's (1991) stages 12, 13, and 14. Stage eight consisted of compiling of all sections of the data analysis (initial coding, rough themes, final themes) and the original interview transcripts.

The original transcriptions were referred back to if anything was unclear as I began writing the discussion, which was stage nine. In the final stage, I made the decision to first write up the findings using “verbatim examples of interviews to illustrate the various sections” (Burnard, 1991, p. 464) so that I would “stay closer to original meanings and contexts” (p. 464). I then compared and contrasted these findings with previous scholarship on female apologetic behaviour. I completed this analysis by writing a summary of the method and results for each research article I had found that related to my study.

Limitations

Limitations associated with this research study are roadblocks to my project that cannot be removed. I am only proficient in the English language; therefore I am only able to interview English-speaking participants. This limitation excludes any non-English-speaking participants. Given the scope of this project (a Master’s thesis as part of a two-year Master’s program), the number of participants I am able to interview is also limited.

Another limitation could arise from the assumption that lived experiences are conscious (Creswell, 2007). If several of my research participants fail to think about what they are experiencing or are poor at reflecting or thinking about their situation within the world then weak data might result. However, for the most part, the participants gave very thoughtful and elaborate answers, although there were a few occasions where I felt the participants lacked effort in reflecting upon the question and providing an adequate answer. The rationale behind the few lackluster answers I noted will be discussed further in Chapter IV.

Delimitations

The self-imposed limitations, known as delimitations, I imposed on my study have to do with the participants. I decided to only interview participants with whom I had previously or currently play(ed) rugby. As previously stated, this was to aide in the openness and comfort of the participants throughout the research process. This exclusion parameter also facilitated the recruitment process. I also restricted participation in the study to athletes over the age of 18. It was highly likely that all potential participants would be over the age 18 because I recruited from senior women's and university teams, but for ethical reasons I ensured that I only used participants who were 18 years or older and able to provide informed consent themselves. I also intentionally excluded people involved in rugby culture who do not currently play on a team, such as coaches, managers, athletic therapists, and retired players, because I was specifically looking at female apologetic behaviour from the viewpoint of Canadian, female rugby players. I sought to understand how the athletes themselves negotiated any stigmas associated with their participation in women's rugby.

The focus of Chapter IV is on reflexivity; in the next chapter I address how characteristics of my research affected my interpretation of the data. Throughout the research process I kept a thesis journal to record all of my personal reflections and viewpoints on the research; these reflections as well as how my situational context influenced the data collection and analysis are explored in Chapter IV. In Chapter V, I discuss the themes that were drawn from the interview transcripts. The final chapter consists of conclusions from the discussion in Chapter V, comparison of these findings with the results of previous literature and implications for future research.

Chapter IV: Reflexivity

This project involves an interpretivist approach due to my previous engagement with the sport of rugby and familiarity with the participants. The analysis that follows is shaped by my worldview and perspective as a white, middle-class, lesbian researcher. Acknowledging and elaborating on my standpoint was an integral part of the research process; this reflexivity piece is important to the trustworthiness of the study (Fonow & Cook, 1991). As the primary investigator, I chose how to frame the research question, who my participants would be, how I would interact with the participants, and how the participants and I would co-construct the results of the current study. In this chapter, I describe the research process through my personal reflections. Throughout the research process I kept a “Thesis Journal” where I recorded my reflections and thoughts on all facets of the research process. My reflections on the recruitment process, the participants who agreed to take part in the study, the interview protocol, the transcription and member checking stage, the content analysis, and the writing of the thesis are described below to help contextualize the analysis and conclusions that follow in the subsequent two chapters.

Recruitment Challenges and Successes

Upon reviewing my application, the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB) had eight questions requesting some additional information, clarification, and revision. Specifically, the reviewers requested further information about the destruction of data, the degree of privacy for participants, the potential for rookie players to feel obligated to participate, the rationale for asking two of the questions, the language level

on the recruitment poster, and the letters of support from Rugby Canada and the provincial rugby associations to pursue my study. I replied with the requested revisions and was able to commence my participant recruitment once I received approval from Rugby Canada. I explained to the ENREB reviewers that it was not necessary to receive permission from the individual provincial unions if Rugby Canada had provided their support. A representative from Rugby Canada replied promptly to me, granting permission for me to recruit female, Canadian rugby players to participate in my study.

As an active member of the rugby community many of my current and previous teammates were aware of my research interests, therefore when I initially posted my recruitment poster on Facebook, I received many emails with offers to be a participant in my study. I have played rugby across Canada (with the exception of the territories and Newfoundland and Labrador) over the past eight years, thus my recruitment pool included various teams from various provinces, at various levels of rugby. My involvement in rugby facilitated the recruitment process and, I believe, provided me with many potential participants. As outlined in the previous chapter, I also sent the recruitment poster to the Canadian National Senior Women's Rugby Team Facebook page.

As I recorded in my journal, "My recruiting posters have been up for only 1 day and I already have a ton of potential participants" (Hardy, Oct. 12, 2012, p. 3). In total, 24 female rugby players expressed interest in participating in this study; however, actually setting up an interview time and date with participants turned out to be a challenge. Beyond the nine women with whom I completed interviews, I corresponded with three individuals on numerous occasions about participating in the study, but was unable to

arrange times to conduct interviews with them. Two individuals whom initially offered to be interviewed never responded to any subsequent emails. I thanked 10 other individuals for their interest in my study, but informed them that I filled my participant quota already ensuring that I had met the level, race, and sexual orientation diversity qualifications. Due to time constraints, I did not interview more than the originally planned nine participants.

In addition, in early November I went to visit my alma mater, St. Francis Xavier University, where the 2012 Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) Women's Rugby National Championships were hosted. I planned to conduct several of my interviews in person while there, although I was unable to do so because I became too ill while visiting to conduct interviews. I conducted these previously confirmed and scheduled interviews on a later date via Skype.

Overall, I interviewed nine participants who ranged from those having just played high school and club level to those competing for the Senior Women's National team and international level teams, however they did not fit into the three separate categories (as outlined in Chapter III) as neatly as I had intended. I had participants whom were hard to place in a definite category as they are not on the Senior Women's National Rugby team, but had competed internationally. I also had a participant who, for the most part, belonged to the lowest level group (playing only locally), but had competed on one provincial team as a teenager. I did not see this softening of borders between my outlined groups as problematic because I was still able to produce information surrounding the influence of level of rugby because I had an equal distribution of participants from all levels; I had participants representing all three levels with some fluidity across the borders I set.

Details about Participants

The nine participants in the study play various levels of rugby both in Canada and abroad and reported a diversity of sexual orientations and racial identities. Four participants reported only having played in one province. Two participants had competed in multiple provinces across Canada as well as England and Scotland as part of a Junior National team tour. One participant reported competing in several Canadian provinces and in England while playing at the club level and for select sides there. Two participants have played in multiple provinces and various countries and are currently competing for the Canadian National Senior Women's Rugby Team.

In terms of level of competition, two participants played high school and club rugby, one participant reported only playing club rugby, and one participant reported playing high school, club and one year of junior provincial rugby (in her home province). Two participants have competed at the high school, club, provincial, university and Junior National level. One participant has competed at the high school, club, provincial, select sevens, and international select and club teams. Finally, two participants currently compete on the Canadian National Senior Women's Rugby Team and have previously competed on club, provincial and university teams.

The self-reported racial and sexual orientation classifications were as follows: three participants stated that they are heterosexual, four participants identified themselves as lesbians (two said gay, one stated lesbian and one said homosexual), and two identified themselves as bisexual (one stated bisexual and one said that she had "only had sex with guys but had been attracted to girls"). In terms of race, four participants identified themselves as Caucasian (two said Caucasian, one said Canadian Caucasian, and one said

Caucasian, French-Canadian and born in Sweden). One participant identified herself as Asian and another participant identified herself as Asian, Spanish, white and Canadian (racially mixed in quotations). Another participant stated that she was Métis and white, and another participant stated that she was black (with Jamaican heritage). The last participant stated that she was “a big mix of things” including Caribbean, African, Chinese, Indian and French-Canadian with French, English and Irish heritage (racially mixed in quotations). I believe that my participant pool satisfied my requirement for racial and sexual orientation diversity as well as having participants from various levels of rugby.

Interview Process

My first interview was performed on Oct. 17, 2012 via Skype and the last interview on Dec. 11, 2012 over the phone. In between these dates I completed the remaining seven interviews over the phone, via Skype and in-person. The interviews ranged in length from 17 minutes to 58 minutes, with the average lasting just over half an hour. I felt that being a rugby player myself, as well as knowing my participants on a personal level prior to the interviews, really helped with the comfort level of the participants and allowed them to share more information with me than they would with a stranger. As I noted during my first interview: “it really helps that I have a rapport with the participant already” (Hardy, Oct. 17, 2012, p. 21). I had not had any communication with the participant I interviewed on October 17 for over three years, but she saw my recruitment poster on the Facebook page of a team we both used to play for and offered

to participate. Despite our lack of recent communication, our previous relationship created a very comfortable and open environment for the research process.

I previously played or currently play rugby with all of the participants in this study with the exception of one participant. The fact that I have been/am teammates and not acquaintances through other measures with my participants affected our relationships in two ways. First, there is a particular closeness that teammates share from competing in a sport together that creates a unique relationship (Carron & Brawley, 1985); with the sport of rugby in particular, I have found this bond is even stronger. Many of the participants in the study talked about the ‘family’ aspect of the rugby community; this feeling of family and familiarity, I believe, worked in my favour. Secondly, the fact that we both know and have experienced the game of rugby aided with the interview process. I believe that the participants were able to open up more to me as a fellow ‘insider’ of the rugby culture. This openness from our shared experiences as rugby players became especially apparent while interviewing the one participant I did not know prior to the research process. Despite our unfamiliarity with one another, we shared the bond of rugby, which created an instant connection. As a rugby player, I was able to contribute more to the interview than I could have if I had not also been a rugby player. The participants and I were able to have more of a conversation, rather than a follow a strict question and answer format. This conversation helped to stay true to the “co-construction of knowledge” which is desired in phenomenological research. As Kvale points out: “through conversations we get to know other people, learn about their experiences, feelings, attitudes, and the world they live in” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. xvii).

I also found that the more familiar I was with the participant, the more details they were willing to share. In one of my post-interview notes I reflected: “This participant is a very close friend of mine and we’ve talked about many of these issues/topics before so I think that really helped with her extensive answers” (Hardy, 2012, p. 67). With the exception of the one player whom I did not know at all, interviews with the players I knew less (for a shorter period of time or with whom I am not as close with) had a much shorter duration than the interviews with teammates I am closer with. The depth of the answers in the latter group tended to include richer responses as well.

In one situation, my closeness with a participant caused her a certain level of discomfort. I wrote in my post-interview notes that I could “see how knowing my participants can be a double-edged sword; She [the participant] was hesitant on some answers because of our history” (Hardy, 2012, p. 51). The specific questions this participant was hesitant to answer were in regards to her sexual orientation. When asked if there was anything else the participant wanted to add or share, her discomfort became apparent:

Bynx: [long pause, very long pause]. I guess the sexual orientation questions are sticking in my mind because those were tough to answer.

Liz: K, we can go back to them...

Bynx: Talking about it is difficult also because of our relationship

Liz: Right, yeah

Bynx: Yeah...[both laughing]

Liz: Yeah, I guess the only thing I can tell you that like obviously this is—even though we have like an outside relationship, this is going to be 100% confidential

Bynx: Yeah, but any like, answering those questions to you versus if it was...

Liz: like say my supervisor or like an RA

Bynx: Yeah, I would probably be able to just talk on and on but it's difficult!

[both laughing] ...

Bynx: it's tough though...

Bynx: I guess no, yeah as much as I have shared and it's difficult to share, I think that's the most that I guess I can say about it. I think I said yeah, enough. I tried to be as elaborate as I could be. –Bynx (racially mixed, bisexual)

The participant felt apprehensive answering some of the sexual orientation questions because of our outside relationship. She cared about what I would think of her answers and noted that if she did not know me she might be able to open up more. This situation brought to my attention a downfall of knowing my participants prior to the research process: the fact that these participants might be more reluctant to divulge personal information. I felt that by knowing my participants on a personal level, they would feel more comfortable with the research process and feel relaxed providing in-depth answers. Although, as Bynx explained, she thought she might be more comfortable talking to a complete stranger.

Despite this one incident, I believe that knowing my participants produced more positive effects than negative ones. Bynx remained a participant in the study, did not bring up that portion of the interview with me any time within or out of the research study context, and we have continued our relationship as a researcher-participant co-constructing knowledge and as friends and teammates outside of the research confines. My previous familiarity with the participants (except one) prior to the research project

aided in expediting the recruitment process and with the exception of the incident explained above, helped with the comfort level of the interviews. It was not just the comfort level of the participants that was increased due to our familiarity with one another, but also my own. I felt more comfortable asking further questions and for clarification because I knew the participants well. In addition, our shared experiences often provided topics on which the participants were able to elaborate.

Although I felt comfortable asking subsequent questions to each participant because of my close relationship with them, there were certain topics around which I was less comfortable discussing and thus did not ask as many probing questions. In particular, this was the case for questions about racial identity. I am very comfortable discussing sexuality as I am gay myself, therefore I am part of a minority group and have had many conversations surrounding the topic of sexuality. On the other hand, in terms of racial identity, I identify myself as white and I have much less experience discussing issues of 'race.' I believe that my own discomfort and unfamiliarity with the topic of racial identity had an impact on how far I pushed my participants on subsequent questions about this topic.

As a female rugby player, I came to this research with my own experiences and opinions on the research topic. I had my own answers to the interview questions and I tried to recognize my own biases. I was explicit with this bias throughout the study and incorporated it by the use of my Thesis Journal. A stereotype that I believe is associated with women's rugby and which has been found in previous research (Carle & Nauright, 1999) but found that I did not encounter often in the interviews was the association of rugby players with drinking and partying. As I wrote in my journal:

The other stereotype which really hasn't come up a lot and I feel like people are forgetting about it—this could also be because I'm asking about women's rugby and this stereotype is with all rugby players in general, is that we're all boozers.

(Hardy, 2012, p. 14)

I discussed this with my MA thesis supervisor and she suggested reiterating in the member checking stage that participants were encouraged to add or remove any information in their transcripts related to stereotypes and other topics covered. They were also invited to add any information they had thought of since the interview took place. I did not receive a response from any of the participants from this email, although in subsequent interviews I did ask more specific sub-questions in relation to stereotypes after making this observation. One participant explained that:

Yeah because a lot of the tournaments I guess are all around beer. I mean after a hockey game or tournament, you don't see them drinking beer. I guess they do but it's not as looked at, with rugby it's almost you can be drinking on the sidelines, it's so social and fun and I guess I wouldn't call it a stereotype because it's true.

—Mel (Métis/white, straight)

Melanie talked about how drinking was part of rugby culture, but she did not view it as a stereotype because it is true; it actually happens. I had not thought of it this way, and upon reviewing other participants' transcripts noticed they hinted at a similar mentality:

With the culture, I love how, more so with the club side too, how after games we stay and talk with the other teams, have a drink and—like the social aspect, it's not just like play and done, there's the friendly atmosphere after. —Lucy (black, straight)

It just happens in rugby and with drinking, ha. –Bynx (racially mixed, bisexual)

Hm, well I guess it depends right, because it depends what team I am playing for.

So part of the culture obviously is the third round, where you actually go out with your opponents and talk about the game while enjoying a beer and whatever. I

think it's pretty neat, I think the only sport that does that and I think it's an

amazing part of the culture of rugby. –Alex (racially mixed, bisexual)

For the above participants, drinking was viewed as a positive and unique aspect of rugby culture, but not all participants shared this viewpoint. Lucy and Jenny discussed the pros and cons of the drinking that goes hand in hand with rugby:

Um, [long pause.] I think more so when I was younger, I didn't like, more so on the cultural side of it, when we have, um, like 'Player of the Match' and like how they make you 'shoot the boot' or like chug a drink if you played well, like when I was like just 19, I wasn't a really big fan of it. I didn't feel forced, but if I didn't do it, it would be disappointing to everyone who was there. But that's like really the only thing that I can think of that like negatively I thought about, yeah.

–Lucy (black, straight)

Ah, the boozing; there's far too much of that now that I'm getting to my older ages, [laughing]. I recognize that perhaps we don't need to partake in, in as much partying as, that happens; like there's rookie initiations, there used to be parties every weekend, right? It's, I think that if part of that was, if there wasn't as much pressure put on newer players to do that I would like it better, but this is looking

at it from already gone through it and now I'm over it [laughing]. –Jenny (white, gay)

These participants paint the drinking in a negative light, although there is no mention of it as a stereotype; it is simply stated as an activity that happens at rugby. There was one participant who noted she thought drinking was a stereotype of women`s rugby:

Sure. I mean, especially at lower club levels I think there's—and it does travel up, I think the stereotype would be that there's a lot of lesbians in the game, and that most of the girls that play rugby are very masculine and not very fit and like to drink a lot of beer. –Marg (white, straight)

Although most of the participants did not cite drinking as a stereotype of women`s rugby, they still discussed it as being part of the culture, both as a positive and a negative.

Through identifying my own biases and expectations I recognized that I did indeed have expectations for how the participants would respond to particular questions. The case of drinking and rugby made me realize that my personal experiences and thoughts about rugby are not necessarily held by all female rugby players. This was a very important realization that I kept in mind while continuing with the data analysis.

Transcription and Member Checking

The transcription process went smoothly but took a lengthy amount of time. The software program I used to help with this process could only be programmed to my voice, so I had to re-record all of the interviews in my own voice. I then uploaded the new recording to the software program (DragonSpeaking) and converted the audio file to text. The program was not without fault, thus I spent two to five hours editing each

transcription while listening to the original audio file. The editing process was to ensure that the transcript was in fact verbatim, to add punctuation and any non-verbal descriptions (pauses, emphasis, laughing, etc.). This process allowed me to become quite familiarized with the data and to formulate tentative themes.

I completed and edited each transcription within two to three weeks of the interview and emailed the transcript as an attachment to the interviewee. I explained in the email that the participant should read through the transcription and remove, add or change any information. This was a form of member checking (Kvale, 1996). Five of the participants responded to this email, four of whom confirmed the transcript I sent was correct and no changes were required. A single participant made several changes to her transcript using the track changes tool on Microsoft Word. The majority of these changes were to remove or alter possibly identifying information from her interview transcript such as: the specific location of her rugby participation, her self-reported racial categorization, specific details about a relationship, and details about the high school where she played rugby. She also made slight changes in the wording of her answers to make them more succinct. I did not receive a response from four of the participants; their omission of alterations was taken as a confirmation of the transcription.

Throughout the transcription process, I continued to make notes in my Thesis Journal about emerging themes, interesting points, and reflections upon my own rugby experiences. Often my notes were not about what the participants said but how they said it; long pauses might indicate that the participants had to really think about an answer, and an immediate, short answer hinted at a level of discomfort with the question, as did

laughter in certain situations. I noted these types of responses were prevalent when answering the sexual orientation questions:

Liz: K and how would you define your sexual orientation?

Nixonshow: Gay? [Both laughing]. –Nixonshow (white, gay)

Liz: okay, how would you define your sexual orientation?

Bynx: [laughing] in terms of like who I have sex with or who I'm attracted to?

Liz: ah, [both laughing] however you would like to, whatever you would like to divulge, basically

Bynx: like I've only had sex with guys, but I have been attracted to girls.

–Bynx (racially mixed, bisexual)

Liz: K. How would you define your sexual orientation?

Kate: [pause] I'm homosexual [mumbled quickly]. –Kate (Asian, gay)

Liz: Yeah. How Would You Define Your Sexual Orientation?

Lucy: I'm straight

Liz: K

Lucy: Heterosexual [Laughing] sorry [Both Laughing]. –Lucy (black, straight)

Liz: right, K how would you define your sexual orientation?

Jenny: Ahh, I am gay. –Jenny (white, gay)

Laughing and/or hesitation were common amongst participants while describing their sexual orientation. Although the participants discussed how women's rugby is a very open environment in terms of sexuality, I felt there was still some level of discomfort

involved in discussing their personal sexualities. Once again I believe my prior relationships with the participants helped ease this discomfort.

Another possible explanation for some of the participants' laughter (including my own) when discussing the topic of sexual orientation stemmed from the participants' and my own experience with women's rugby culture. To elaborate, in some of the interviews the laughter was due to our mutual experiences with the lesbian stereotypes that surround women's rugby. For some participants, I felt that they were expecting to be asked about sexuality because of its relationship with the sport. Upon reflection, I do not think that this laughter, or sharing of an 'insider's joke' would have been present in the interviews if they had been conducted by a researcher who is outside of the rugby culture, or in other words an 'outsider.'

Another trend I noted while transcribing was that many of the participants had confusion and/or uncertainty when I asked them to identify themselves racially.

Liz: right. Um, how would you identify yourself racially?

Lucy: Black? [Both Laughing]

Liz: Okay

Lucy: [Laughing] I'm a black female. –Lucy (black, straight)

Liz: okay, so how would you identify yourself racially?

Jenny: ah, Caucasian? Canadian Caucasian? –Jenny (white, gay)

Liz: K, ah, how would you identify yourself racially?

Kate: like I'm Asian? –Kate (Asian, gay)

Liz: ...So how would you identify yourself racially?

Nixonshow: ah, Caucasian, white person? [Both laughing], and French-Canadian.

–Nixonshow (white, gay)

Liz: okay, how would you identify yourself racially?

Mel: racially?

Liz: yeah

Mel: umm, Métis.

Liz: K

Mel: White. –Mel (Métis/white, straight)

Liz: ... how would you identify yourself racially?

Brenda: um Caucasian?

Liz: yeah

Brenda: I think [laughs]. –Brenda (white, gay)

Many of the participants answered the question as a question as if they were unsure how to identify themselves racially or they did not understand why I was asking about race. Upon reflecting, I felt that I would have had the same confused answer to this question if I were asked prior to this research project. This observation supports the idea that race is an ambiguous term whose terminology has been debated (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993). The content of the participants' answers surrounding race, as well as sexuality, will be discussed and analyzed further in the next chapters.

Content Analysis and Themes

Once I had confirmation (including those via omission) from all of the participants about their interview transcriptions, I began the data analysis process that is outlined in the previous chapter. Essentially, I read and re-read each transcription writing memos in the left-hand margin and then created In Vivo codes in the right hand margin and/or by highlighting. I typed up all the codes and grouped them by question. Each participant was assigned a colour by which all of her codes were typed in. I then read through the codes, my memos and Thesis Journal and condensed the codes into themes/ideas. Upon reading through and analyzing my newly created list of themes and ideas I created seven categories.

My thesis journaling and memoing throughout the research process helped with the data analysis process. Through these practices, the emerging themes and common ideas became apparent quite easily. I sent my theme list to the participants as another form of member checking. The list of themes is grouped into seven categories (and then an eighth category, intersectionality, after I had emailed the seven categories to the participants):

1. Female Apologetic

1a: -female apologetic behaviour generally not found among participants

-some stated they used to engage in it, but no longer do

1b: -have teammates who do and do not engage in apologetic behaviour

-those who do: through appearance and/or interactions with males

1c: -have teammates who engage in “unapologetic” behaviour (live up to/emphasize stereotypes)

1d: -age/maturity is important to recognize as factor with female apologetic behaviour

2. Common Rugby Experiences

2a: -most began in high school, had played at least one other sport prior and were prompted by peers who already played to join

2b: -idea of 'falling in love' with the sport

2c: -being a rugby player key to participants' identities/ 'cannot imagine my life any other way'

-participants had no negative connotations/stigmas about being a female athlete

2d: -felt women's rugby is a welcoming, close-knit community, even between teams

-includes diverse body shapes, sizes, abilities, sexual orientations, etc.

2e: -camaraderie, team atmosphere and family common words used to describe rugby

3. Sexual Orientation

3a: -main stereotype about women's rugby is that we're all lesbians

-this stereotype only had effect on participants when younger, if at all

3b: -women's rugby is an accepting/safe place for all sexual orientations

-leads to open environment about sexuality

-influences lesbian stereotype positively

3c: -lesbians play all sports, but more evident in certain sports that are more open about it

– generally team, contact sports

3d: -emphasis on participants' personal sexual orientation and their involvement in rugby being separate things

4. Location of Rugby

4a: -similar rugby culture across Canadian provinces

-BC has higher level of rugby/knowledge due to extended season

4b: -lesbian stereotype more pronounced in UK and US

4c: -rugby culture, importance and funding varies by nation

5. Level of Rugby

5a: -generally, lesbian stereotype greater at higher levels

5b: -game becomes more complex and competitive at higher levels

6. Class

6a: -on field, rich or poor has no effect

6b: -at lower levels of rugby it is a relatively accessible sport

6c: -can be financial barriers as one progresses to higher levels of rugby

6d: -‘pay-to-play’ model mentioned often

7. Race

7a: -generally, little relation between personal race and participation in rugby

7b: -general idea that women’s rugby in Canada is dominated by whites/Caucasians, but only because reflective of population demographics

8. Intersectionality

Of the five participants who responded, two simply stated that the themes made sense and they agreed with them. The other three participants provided additional feedback.

Mel agreed with all the themes but wanted to clarify details about the lesbian stereotype. I stated that according to the participants the main stereotype about women’s rugby is the association with lesbianism; this stereotype affected the participants when they were younger, if it affected them at all. Mel wished to underline that this lesbian stereotype does not seem to affect female rugby players at an older age, but it is still

present. So although the lesbian stereotype no longer affects her, she still encounters it. Kate felt that the themes were good generalizations that were well thought out. She agreed that age/maturity is a factor in apologetic behaviour but added that the personality and natural preferences of the person had an effect as well.

Alex provided extensive feedback with examples. Generally, she agreed with the themes and only added personal examples or comments on the themes. In her interview, Alex talked about how she used to engage in apologetic behaviour because of the lesbian stereotype that was associated with rugby. In her feedback she explained that she used to engage in apologetic behaviour when she was not comfortable with her sexuality; once she became at ease with it she explained that she “no longer had an issue with whatever opinion people had of me or of the people I hung out with” (Alex, (racially mixed, bisexual) email communication, January 8, 2013). She felt the same went for her teammates; those who were comfortable with their sexuality did not demonstrate apologetic behaviours and were able to integrate themselves into a team easily. Alex made note that this comfort comes more with maturity than age and recognized the role the environment plays.

Alex wrote about how her teammates who do engage in apologetic behaviour did so through interactions with males or with their friends who are not comfortable with their lesbianism; in other words they acted differently with different people (teammates vs. other friends). She reiterated how rugby is a unique sport and that there are enormous amounts of stereotypes.

The feedback I received about the list of themes fortified my data analysis process and theme creation. Over half of the participants responded to the themes, all of which

were affirmative. I felt as though my methods of member checking were necessary and helpful, particularly this last check. In the next chapter, I discuss each theme by analyzing the participants' transcriptions. This will allow me to draw conclusions, show how the current study challenges and reinforces already discovered knowledge surrounding the female apologetic in sport, and suggest future research in the final chapter.

Chapter V: Analysis and Discussion

After receiving affirmative feedback from the participants about my initial themes, I reviewed the list of themes again with respect to the purpose statement of the current study: to explore the female apologetic within Canadian women's rugby with particular attention paid to level of rugby, race, sexual orientation and class. My intent with this thesis project is to examine the intersectionality of these categories and the associated stereotypes. The majority of the initial themes sent to the participants for feedback suited the research question, although I added a category on intersectionality, and in the resulting discussion of themes will not address in depth the themes that are less relevant.

This chapter discusses and analyzes the resulting themes by drawing on quotes from the interview transcripts and using Butlerian theory on gender performativity. I purposefully use frequent quotes from the participants to ensure their voices are heard. The themes are grouped in smaller categories to aide with the flow of the analysis and are as follows: 1) female apologetic and sexual orientation, 2) level and location of rugby, 3) female apologetic behaviours in teammates, 4) race and class influences, and 5) intersectionality.

1. Female Apologetic and Sexual Orientation

Overwhelmingly the participants reported that they did not engage in female apologetic behaviours. As previously explained, female apologetic behaviour is any behaviour that female athletes engage in to negate the masculine and/or lesbian stereotypes as a result of their sporting participation by emphasizing hegemonic

femininity (Felshin, 1974). After discussing the stereotypes that the participants had been subjected to as a result of their involvement in rugby, I inquired about possible apologetic behaviours. When asked if they had ever engaged in any sort of behaviour to try to avoid being labeled with these stereotypes, the general consensus was that they did not:

No! No, not really. I don't think I could have. Um, no, I never really dressed overly feminine or anything. –Mel (Métis/white, straight)

Um, no. I, I—no, I really just don't care what they think so I just do my own thing. –Lucy (black, straight)

No, not particularly. –Jenny (white, gay)

[long pause.] Hm, no, I guess because I'm okay with it. Yeah.

–Nixonshow (white, gay)

Many of the participants stated that they did not care about the stereotypes or that they did not affect them or their resulting decisions. Mel's response that she does not think she *could* have engaged in any sort of behaviour to negate the stereotypes points to the prevalence of the stereotypes in women's rugby; regardless of how she dresses or acts, she perceives the stereotypes will still be present.

Although all of the participants stated that they do not engage in apologetic behaviours, it was not due to a lack of stereotypes. In fact, the participants talked at length about the stereotypes that surround women's rugby. Undoubtedly, the most prevalent stereotype was the partnership between lesbianism and women's rugby:

Overall there was this consensus that everybody who plays [rugby] is gay or lesbian. –Jenny (white, gay)

Yes there are. One being, well actually, the main one is that like all rugby girls are lesbians. –Lucy (black, straight)

Every participant talked about an association between women's rugby and a gay/lesbian stereotype. Several participants gave examples of how frequent and automatic this association is:

Yeah, I, well I remember—well not even remember, it happens all throughout university; especially like let's say you go to your first party with say non-rugby players or say like football guys and I remember legitimately the first question they asked me if I was straight or gay. And I was like what does it have to do with that, like with anything, like whether I'm straight or gay can we not have a conversation. It's usually stuff like that; it's usually one of the first questions I'm asked, outside of and inside of rugby. –Lucy (black, straight)

You'd go to a pub and suggest to somebody that you're a rugby player, the next thing out of their mouth, if they've had a couple of beverages, is: 'Oh are you gay then?' –Jenny (white, gay)

I guess in university when I started playing, well I also have dreads that might have something to do with it, but a lot of the football players always come up and ask me if I was a lesbian or if I was this or that because I play rugby. And then they always wanted to know about other people and then so that was the stereotype I was always like asked about or what not. –Mel (Métis/white, straight)

These quotes are a representative sample of responses provided in the interviews; most of the participants talked at length about this stereotype because of its prevalence in

women's rugby. Referring back to Butlerian theory surrounding sexuality performance and gender performance, this combination can be understood. Butler (1990) explains that if one does not perform their gender 'properly' then their sexuality is also called into question. Griffin (1998) adds that femininity is a code word for heterosexuality, thus the opposite holds true as well: masculinity in females is a code word for homosexuality.

The lesbian stereotype was by far the most prevalent stereotype that was discussed amongst the participants in regards to women's rugby, but it was not the only stereotype reported. Participants described being stereotyped as tough or a 'brute' because of their involvement in rugby:

Yeah, I think it's the whole thing with being tomboyish or tough and being a brute, along those lines. –Kate (Asian, gay)

I think a lot of people believe that they [female rugby players] all look very masculine and very big and very, I don't know, for a lack of a better word, non-attractive I guess—like a male. –Alex (racially mixed, bisexual)

Or they think you're tough, you know, it's like oh you play rugby, you're tough, so that's pretty common. –Nixonshow (white, gay)

Um stereotypes, that you [pause] that automatically if someone plays rugby it's assumed that you're tough and aggressive, which may not be the truth--may not be the case... And that people make the assumption that: Oh, you're scary, you're a rugby player, that you must be hard-core and tough; which may or may not be true. –Bynx (racially mixed, bisexual)

Toughness and aggression are not traits that are associated with traditional femininity; these traits are associated with masculinity. These stereotypes enhance the lesbian stereotype because gender performativity polices sexuality performativity; in other words, because these females were displaying more masculine traits their sexuality was called into question by associating lesbianism with them.

The association between gender and sexuality is not only in the theories I reference. The participants themselves referred to the idea that gender performativity polices sexuality performativity:

I mean you play rugby you're considered tomboyish and it would, I mean...

[pause] I think a lot of people think that as a female rugby player you're, entitled to, swing the other way [laughs]. –Kate (Asian, gay)

Okay, um, I don't enjoy how everyone is considered very masculine or butch and the big thing is that if you play rugby you're always going to be considered a lesbian or you're very masculine you can't be feminine to play this sport.

–Mel (Métis/white, straight)

Although the participants did not use Butlerian terms of gender and sexuality performativity, they made the link between how one displays gender and how it affects other people's perceptions of one's sexuality. Mel reasoned that it was because the sport was masculine that there was the lesbian stereotype:

Women rugby players are stereotyped as being overly masculine and homosexual because it's a masculine sport...so like I know other sports have them [lesbians] too but it's not as looked upon because the sport is not masculine. The fact that

this is a contact sport automatically people think that it has more homosexuals than other sports... –Mel (Métis/white, straight)

Other participants did not go as far as Mel did in explaining that the lesbian stereotype stemmed from rugby's masculine association, although linkage between gender and sexuality was evident. The participants discussed how society made this association and the participants made it themselves as well, consciously or not:

Umm, well dressing gay in my opinion would be like not the stuff you see on Cosmo magazine, you know I'm going to wear looser jeans sometimes, um very plain neutral colors. I usually always wear a hat and yeah, sweatshirts like nothing too, [pause] runners, no heels. –Nixonshow (white, gay)

You're either stereotyped as a lesbian or unless you are very overly feminine.
–Mel (Métis/white, straight)

The participants connected sexuality with femininity; normative femininity equates to heterosexuality. This demonstrates how the participants are aware of the policing between gender performance and sexuality.

Gender performativity, that is expressions of femininity and masculinity, automatically translated into an expression of one's sexuality. In the case of women's rugby, the female rugby players do not perform the hegemonic version of femininity, therefore according to Butler's (1990) heterosexual matrix, this means that they perform masculinity. As previously discussed, rugby women's participation in masculine activities leads to a lesbian stereotype, more specifically the 'masculine lesbian' stereotype, often termed 'butch.' This stereotype came from both outside the rugby

context and within it. The athletes interviewed confirmed their experiences match the application of this stereotype:

Okay, hm, I don't enjoy how everyone is considered very masculine or butch and the big thing is that if you play rugby you're always going to be considered a lesbian or you're very masculine you can't be feminine to play this sport.

–Mel (Métis/white, straight)

Um, yeah I think that's really the--or that we're butch. Um, yeah, you know like butch like manly look, it's never like a nice pretty girl like the volleyball team.

You know what I'm saying? –Lucy (black, straight)

These examples demonstrate the 'butch' lesbian stereotype with the participants encountered as a result of their rugby participation.

The participants in the current study discussed an additional reason for the lesbian association with their sport. Rugby was portrayed as a welcoming, safe place for all sexual orientations (as well as all different types of people – sizes, body types, socio-economic status, 'race', and abilities). Several participants felt that this welcoming environment was a potential attraction for gay women:

I think it's more acceptable for your teammates to accept you for who you are so people who are of other orientations or genders or races are accepted because you have to be. Like you can't, it's such a close sport that you feel welcome and others are going to welcome you. So I think people of other like of different sexual orientations are drawn to the sport because it's almost like a safe zone where they know that they're not going to be judged to an extent because there's other people like them. –Mel (Métis/white, straight)

Whereas in rugby, it's very accepting for you to be in a same-sex relationship or have same-sex interest, so it's almost an opportunity for—like I think that some people might start playing rugby or start playing hockey or soccer because it's an opportunity for them to meet people that are--that have the same interests.

–Marg (white, straight)

Yes, like it's legitimately like a safe place because there's other people who are [gay] so they feel more comfort with like saying that they are. –Lucy (black, straight)

Okay, um...well, I feel as if I was given a community that was more accepting of, of that, not that, of that lifestyle, I suppose. And again, a community free of, of that feeling of prejudice, of that feeling of, of bias, because there was other individuals that were of the same mind or other individuals who have been with teammates who accept it and who understand it. –Jenny (white, gay)

And the straight people would come in and then they know what they're coming into so they have to be accepting of it, you know. –Nixonshow (white, gay)

This open environment in women's rugby in Canada possibly adds to the lesbian stereotype because there are so many 'out' women on rugby teams. The participants explained that people frequently saw women's rugby teams with numerous 'out' lesbians, so this fueled the stereotype that all female rugby players are gay, even though this is not

accurate. However, this stereotype might help create an environment where sexuality is fluid and the players feel safe 'testing out' different sexualities:

I don't know, sometimes I feel like because you're on a rugby team it's more easier to try things out. And so it's a little bit more like, oh, I think I'm gay, but they don't really know if they are or not, it's more so like there's a chance to try it, like there's an opportunity if you're on the rugby team. –Lucy (black, straight)

Yes absolutely. I would say, well, there's a lot of gay girls in rugby so you meet people or know people, especially like if you're single or whatever, through that way. And you feel obviously more comfortable because there's more people like you. –Nixonshow (white, gay)

It's almost like it's accepted, it's almost like it's a new trend, do you know what I mean? For some girls it's exotic I guess you could say, they want to know what it's like to I guess be with another person of the same sex... It's like am I, they don't know, they are in there just trying to attempt it you know see if they are and maybe they did enjoy it but at the same time females are already close, in general, in a more sexual way than males are to each other, so I think the fact that girls already are close together makes them think or maybe want to say that they are gay but in reality if they'd maybe they'd marry a man. But at the same time, it just opens up your eyes to people just like people for who they are, you don't have to like them for their body parts, you can like them for their personality.

–Mel (Métis/white, straight)

In these excerpts, the open sexuality environment in women's rugby in Canada is highlighted. As several participants stated, this type of environment may enhance one's openness to different or fluid sexualities.

In the present study, the participants made a connection between gender performativity and sexuality performativity. Although the participants stated that they did not currently engage in apologetic behaviour, despite the stereotyping, a few said they used to engage in it previously:

I guess in the past I have, when I first started rugby, it was labeled as a lesbian sport. And I was kind of self-conscious about it, figuring if I walked with them out of rugby context then I would be labeled that way as well. But, now I guess I've learned not to care, not to give a shit really and just go along with it and whatever happens happens. -Alex (racially mixed, bisexual)

Actually, if I was to speak honestly, probably when I was younger. When I was like, because I've played for 14 years, I played for the same club for quite a while and at times you would engage in [laughing] I don't know how to word this, whatever it's confidential, so I mean as a kid I would do stupid things like, hooking up with some of the guys on the team, just to avoid that that label, that prejudice and that's pretty pathetic if you think about that, right? And I recognize that now, that it was silly and it was things to avoid getting labeled.

-Jenny (white, gay)

In both these examples the participants were worried about being labeled as a lesbian so they performed typically feminine acts to avoid the label. Butler explains that gender is a

repeated performance; it is an act one performs to fit their prescribed gender role of either masculine or feminine. The participants who did engage in apologetic behaviours stated that they did so at a younger age, when they were concerned about what others thought about them. According to Butler, gender is defined by *repeated* performances, so although playing rugby does not fit the script of society determined femininity, participants could engage in other behaviours that do fit this script to solidify their womanhood.

The participants stated that the reasons they did not engage in apologetic behaviour were that the stereotypes did not bother them or they did not care about them. In many previous studies, apologetic behaviour has been a response to women's sporting participation because this participation was viewed as deviant behaviour (e.g. Clasen, 2001; Messner 1988; Myers, 1978; Wughalter, 1978). Although the physicality of women's rugby does not align with hegemonic femininity, the participants did not see being a female and an athlete as deviant behaviour; they demonstrated no issue with being both a female and an athlete and in fact all had a positive attitude towards their athleticism:

I feel like people think highly of female athletes. –Lucy (black, straight)

Helps you builds strength and life skills. And then being an athlete has made me learn how to work as a team, not just individually. –Mel (Métis/white, straight)

[pause.] I love it [laughing.] I mean it's all I know. –Marg (white, straight)

These responses demonstrate how gender norms are shifting and athleticism in females is becoming more accepted, at least among athletes. This shift could explain why none of the participants engaged in apologetic behaviour.

It is interesting to note that participants at all levels of rugby stated that being a rugby player was a key component of their identity. All but one of the participants had played other sports prior to rugby; most of them grew up participating in organized sport, which could be why they did not consider athleticism to be a deviant trait for women:

I don't feel anything out of the ordinary. I mean it's been my whole life right? So I feel normal. I don't feel any different. –Brenda (white, gay)

I love being a female athlete; I would never imagine my life any other way. As soon as I'm done rugby I'm going to find something else to do. –Jenny (white, gay)

I love it. I don't have a problem with it. Well I've been a female and an athlete for like most of my life, so it's natural to me, I don't know [laughs]. –Lucy (black, straight)

Um, I think it's a big part of my identity. It's a big part of, of what I bring to even any perspective I feel like. Anything that I've experienced in sports and being an athlete affects how I think and interact with people, I don't know how to elaborate on that. It's so much a part of me that I can't really separate it out in terms of how it affects how I interact with others, how I am in other realms outside of sports. But it's a big part of my self-esteem and confidence. If rugby was taken away

from me, I don't know like how I would function really. –Bynx (racially mixed, bisexual)

These statements reflect Butler's (1988) position that gender "is an act which has been rehearsed" (p. 526) and that "the body is understood to be an active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities" (p. 521). In other words, gender is a repeated performance that is dictated by the social context in which one is situated within. With this in mind, why the participants did not view being a female and an athlete as deviant can be reasoned. It has been argued throughout this thesis that sport is masculine, but the participants obviously do not hold this opinion (although they recognize that society holds this view). How can sport be masculine if they, as females, have been involved in it for most of their lives?

Gender scripts are written by one's environment; these women have been surrounded by other female athletes, so it follows that they would view females who are also athletes as a normative performance of femininity. It must also be recognized that these women do not only live in the athlete context, but also in their schooling, work, family, peer, religious, etc. contexts, so the acceptable gender scripts from these contexts also have an impact.

There was a general consensus among the participants that people in the 'out of rugby' context did not have a proper conception of what female rugby players look like:

I think that they relate it a lot to what they see on television and when you look at a rugby player on television, the ones that generally stand out are the ones with the cauliflower ears and all that and so that's what they assume when they think of a rugby player because that's what they are exposed to. So I think that they

would just, they would assume that that transfers over to the women's game.

–Marg (white, straight)

So every time I tell somebody I am a rugby player they just look me up and down and are just like, ah are you sure you're rugby player? I think a lot of people believe that they all look very masculine and very big and very, I don't know, for a lack of a better word, non-attractive I guess—like a male. –Alex (racially mixed, bisexual)

Female rugby players were stigmatized as looking masculine and unattractive. Partly as a response to these stereotypes, the Canadian National Senior Women's Rugby Team (NSWT) published a fundraising calendar. In this calendar, some of the members of the NSWT pose nude. (NSWT Calendar, n.d.). I discussed the motivation behind the creation of this calendar with a few of the participants, who responded:

Part of the calendar was, you know, to show that the National Women's Rugby team is an elite group of women that train incredibly hard to be incredibly fit so you know, right there we're obviously trying to say that were not these beer drinking, overweight, social rugby players that people assume or have stereotypes about. –Marg (white, straight)

And another reason obviously we wanted to break some of the stereotypes. We've been working out for five months and people just assume that after five months of working out of whatever, that girls are way too muscular, it's not attractive to be muscular and we just wanted to break that stereotype that it's okay to have

muscles and stuff. And to work out and to be fit and we can look good and you know it's not the typical calendar where we weren't necessarily looking to be sexy in that calendar we are trying to promote being muscular and being proud of our bodies kind of thing. –Alex (racially mixed, bisexual)

It is obvious that these women do want to break down certain stereotypes that are associated with women's rugby, but I do not believe the calendar propagates or endorses apologetic behaviour. Based on the literature reviewed in Chapter II, the definition of female apologetic behaviour that I have used throughout the research process has been that it is behaviour that *emphasizes traditional notions of femininity* and is in response to the masculine/lesbian stereotypes associated with women's sport. Although the calendar may be considered sexual due to the lack of clothing and the women are not actually playing rugby in the pictures, I still do not believe it is emphasizing traditional notions of femininity. As Alex explains, the calendar is trying to show that “it's okay to have muscles and stuff” and that they are trying to promote “being muscular and being proud of our bodies.” Being muscular is certainly not congruent with hegemonic femininity.

Rather than breaking down the stereotypes associated with women's rugby through emphasizing hegemonic notions of femininity, these women, the National Team players involved with the calendar, are attempting to provide an alternative version of acceptable femininity. The current captain of the Canadian National Senior Women's Rugby Team, Mandy Marchak, explains:

What message do I think we are trying to send? Elite women in sport work very hard and dedicate a lot of time and effort to something they love and are extremely passionate about. I would say that I feel that is what this calendar

shows to anyone who is interested. It shows that elite women in sport don't have to fit into the stereotypes you hear floating around. That elite women athletes can be fit, muscular, 170 lbs yet look amazing and beautiful. It's something we're proud of. Every day in and out of training we do what we love and the end product is beautiful. (Hull, 2013)

Marchak is not attempting to downplay the musculature or size of female rugby athletes by focusing on the traditional feminine attribute of beauty. Instead she is attempting to re-define what *is* beautiful and what *is* feminine. The calendar is trying to demonstrate that females can be fit, muscular, 170 lbs, and beautiful, or in other words, that being fit, muscular and 170 lbs *is* beautiful for females. The women who participated in producing this calendar may be trying to negate the inaccurate stereotypes associated with women's rugby by providing an image of what female rugby players really look like, but this image is inclusive of many versions of femininity, many of which are resistant to the traditional version. The participants in the present study were comfortable embodying resistant versions of femininity by their rugby participation as well.

2. Level and Location Influences

One of the aims of the current study is to analyze the effect that level of rugby has on apologetic behaviour in Canadian women's rugby. Although there appears to be no difference for apologetic behaviours across the different levels of rugby for the participants in this study, the participants agree that the lesbian stereotype increases as one progresses to higher levels of rugby:

Um, good question. I think the higher the level of sport, no matter what the sport is, chances are it's more likely to be open in sexuality and being open in your sexuality is probably one of the reasons why there's more homosexuals on high-level teams than on low-level teams, just because it's so open about it. So they're more likely to come out. –Alex (racially mixed, bisexual)

Despite the perceived increase in the lesbian stereotype as the level of rugby increased, the participants did not give any indication that they participated in or observed an increase in apologetic behaviours. In fact, for some participants who now play at higher levels it was the opposite; they only displayed apologetic behaviours at lower levels of rugby. These participants explained how it was not the level of rugby that influenced their decision to demonstrate apologetic behaviours. Instead age, maturity and comfort with their sense of self and sexuality were often discussed by the participants as contributors to female apologetic behaviour:

Um for me personally, at first I'd be like really offended by it, well more so because they just assumed I was. But now, I am, I'm used to the whole thing and I just like shake it off, don't really care about it. I'm more like, no, k, what's your point? I more so just like brush it off and don't really care about it because I'm used to it, but earlier it affected me more. –Lucy (black, straight)

Um, I wouldn't say they have, maybe in the past a bit, but in long-term no. Um I think they can affect certain people—me not overly, um [pause] because I guess I have enough like, I wouldn't call it willpower but like enough grounds to know who I am to not question myself in believing what people are saying, do you know what I mean? –Mel (Métis/white, straight)

I used to when I was not comfortable with my sexuality but as soon as I became at ease, I no longer had an issue with whatever opinion people had of me or of the people I hung out with. –Alex (racially mixed, bisexual)

The participants felt that as a player spent more time in the rugby community, she became more comfortable with whom she was and her sexual orientation due to the open and welcoming environment that rugby provided; thus rugby players are likely to not care or care less about the lesbian stereotype and not feel the need to engage in apologetic behaviours. This finding is opposite to what was hypothesized about the influence of level of rugby; instead of the participants demonstrating more apologetic behaviour at higher levels, the participants felt that the higher levels a rugby player was at (and thus also the more time she has spent in the rugby culture) the less likely she is to engage in apologetic behaviours.

It makes sense that the longer time spent in the rugby community, the older one gets, hence the influence of age. Although, a few participants noted that age does not automatically equate to comfort with one's sexuality:

There's the stereotype itself but I think it's also because we got older so people are more comfortable just telling us or even coming out of the closet in general. –Lucy (black, straight)

I absolutely agree that age/maturity is a factor in apologetic behaviour and should perhaps be emphasized. But personalities and for lack of a better word preferences (not necessarily life style/sexual etc.) I think can also affect it.

–Kate (Asian, gay) (Email communication, January 13, 2013)

I would say more maturity than age. Then perhaps not maturity but simply being comfortable with whomever it is they are... which comes at all ages. –Alex (racially mixed, bisexual)

Lucy, Kate, and Alex emphasized that it was not only age and/or maturity that influences the extent of apologetic behaviours among female rugby players. Alex and Kate also discussed that the environment can play a role as well:

I guess the environment usual plays a big role... in the sense that at university people don't care who or what attracts you as opposed to say in high school where people make it a hobby to gossip and sometimes make people's lives miserable. – Alex (racially mixed, bisexual)

Um, yeah the stereotypes kind of lessened I think ,whereas playing high school rugby and just being around say a bunch of teenagers say, the stereotypes are a lot stronger and a lot more prominent, whereas going into senior women's and just having a larger community there as well it kind of lessened quite a bit.

–Kate (Asian, gay)

In these two examples, the stereotypes were stronger at the high school level, which is the lowest level of rugby analyzed in this study. They are an exception to the general consensus by the other participants in the current study that the stereotypes of women's rugby (lesbian in particular) increase as the level of rugby do.

In regards to environment, there were some differences noted between the geographic locations where the participants played rugby. Overall the participants had played in every province in Canada and five of them had played at the international level

at least once in their rugby careers. From their descriptions, it is clear that the rugby culture/environment across Canada is very similar. The participants who play at the higher levels (and thus have experience playing in multiple provinces) talked about how the level and knowledge of rugby is more advanced in British Columbia. The rationale for this disparity is because of the climate in BC; due to the warmer weather, leagues in British Columbia are able to have, on average, a four month longer season than the rest of Canada.

The level of competition, um, I mean take for example even just within Canada, British Columbia--they are able to play on average, four months longer.

–Jenny (white, straight)

Um, provinces not overly, I guess with BC they are more developed so they can play year round pretty well. Their body types I guess are more developed for the sport because they play more often. –Mel (Métis/white, straight)

The participants who had played extensively internationally stated that the rugby, and to some extent the rugby culture, varies greatly from country to country. As Marg explains, part of this variance is due to how important the sport of rugby is to each country:

And you can see that it's in their culture, like hockey for us, right? So, it's like you would go around New Zealand and everyone's playing rugby on the parks just like someone would be playing hockey in the winter or soccer in the summertime in Canada. –Marg (white, straight)

Marg compared rugby in New Zealand to hockey in Canada; this signifies rugby's importance in New Zealand, which has an effect on the funding teams receive, the amount of women's leagues offered and the number of women players.

The lesbian stereotype was also discussed by participants in the context of nation norms:

Ya, I mean, well certainly, especially in different countries—like, our Canadian men’s team is very supportive of women's rugby, but when we travel tot other countries that isn’t always the case-- I remember a French player--male--was hitting on me at the bar and then when I told him that I played rugby he just turned around and was no longer interested. And I find that there's a lot of countries like that, Argentina, is another example of countries where women’s athletics are not strongly supported. –Marg (white, straight)

Yeah and overseas for sure there's a very big difference because there’s a very more um like homosexual aspect and I guess questioning ... –Mel (Métis/white, straight)

Yeah I mean if I'm being honest, I saw a lot more prejudice against female rugby players in England. Not only would they say that we’re gay or lesbian but there were also the stereotypes that the individuals would suggest that were butch and that everybody hates men, [laughing] that's, and that's why they joined rugby. And that was far more pronounced like I said in England. I've never really come across that in Canada. –Jenny (white, gay)

According to these participants, Canada had the least amount and severity of the lesbian stigma. Rugby is still growing in popularity in Canada and has a much higher female player to male player ratio than many other countries (Chadwick et al., 2010). This may

help to explain the less prevalent lesbian stereotypes in Canada. As has been demonstrated throughout this paper, sport is a masculine domain and as such, sport helps to define masculinity. Therefore if a sport is of particular importance to a nation it could be seen as critical to setting boundaries on masculinity, and females playing this sport could be seen as deviant and threatening, hence the greater lesbian stereotypes.

Jenny had the unique experience of playing for select club and representative (a team that represents a particular location, generally a city, state, province, region, etc.) sides in England. She noticed that the level of rugby overseas is much more competitive than in Canada. She also noted several times how much more prevalent the lesbian stereotype was in England than it is in Canada. This pattern aligns with what other participants perceived about level of rugby and the lesbian stigma. Mel provided a rationale for this increase in the stereotype:

The more you get into the sport and the more your body builds for the sport more masculine that your body is going to be. The higher the level you go, the more, technically if you're with the sport and you're getting better, your body's going to look more masculine because you're building those muscles for the sport. In high school you're not that developed into it so you could have still a feminine body and still play. But the higher the level, the more masculine you're going to be from training and everything and stronger just like any sport. –Mel (Métis/white, straight)

In this excerpt, Mel explains that at a higher level of rugby one's body transforms to become more muscular and by consequence more 'masculine.' A female body that is built for rugby does not coincide with a normative female body, nor do the practices by

which one must engage in to acquire this body; heavy and persistent weight training to become more muscular does not align with hegemonic versions of femininity. Women who partake in these activities are not performing their gender properly; they are stepping beyond the pre-set boundaries of femininity and as a consequence face the lesbian stigma. This is an example of how Butler's (1990) 'obligatory frame of heterosexuality' functions; a lesbian stereotype is put upon women who do not perform their female gender properly.

3. Female Apologetic in Teammates

According to the participants' narratives, the lesbian stigma had more of an effect on their teammates than on themselves. Most participants stated that they had teammates who do and do not exhibit female apologetic behaviour as a response to their rugby involvement:

Um, in terms of other people, yeah, I think a lot of people either make more of an effort to live up to that, and act more aggressive, more competitive than they actually are, and I've seen other people actually go the opposite way and try to act more girlish. –Kate (Asian, gay)

The teammates who demonstrated apologetic behaviours did so off the pitch (rugby playing field) primarily by dressing more feminine or by heterosexual interactions. Again the linkage of femininity and sexuality was discussed:

I think people do. I think they will try and like dress more feminine or, yeah. I think more so their appearance or they'll be really like flirty with guys to make sure it's known that like, they are straight. –Lucy (black, straight)

[pause] Um, I think I've met a couple teammates who like maybe went home with males at the bar just to try to make a statement. You know if one girl makes out or sleeps with a guy, then oh they must be straight, so I think a couple of those have happened, um I think some dress more feminine or try to but other times some don't. –Mel (Métis/white, straight)

When I asked participants why they thought some of their teammates took part in apologetic behaviours they discussed several influencing factors. They felt that those players who are not comfortable with their sexuality or are trying to hide their sexuality are more likely to engage in these behaviours. They also suggested that newer (and often younger) players who are not accustomed to the stereotypes female rugby players encounter are more likely to engage in apologetic behaviour:

Yeah, because I feel like if I was trying to hide that I was gay then yeah obviously I would be all over that, but I am not, so I don't feel like I need to.

-Nixonshow (white, gay)

It's only going to affect you if it's true, do you know what I mean? Like if you're hiding something and someone says something about you it's going to affect you, but if it's not true, then it's just like you know what, it doesn't bother me think what you think. I don't know it's just, it sucks in a way how people like always have to question until they know the official truth but you know what everyone does it so...I don't think it bothers really anyone actually, except for the ones who really are gay who aren't and aren't fully out or comfortable with themselves.

–Mel (Métis/white, straight)

Again it seems that my teammates that are comfortable with their sexuality (straight or gay) have no apologetic... those that are unsure of what they are tend to fear being judged. –Alex (racially mixed, bisexual)

The participants also discussed how the environment can have an effect on apologetic behaviours and stereotypes. Nobody talked about any sort of stereotypes or apologetic behaviours on the rugby field; it was always off the pitch. As Jenny explains, “it’s more so when you get into the social element after the rugby.” Another participant stated that the ratio of “homosexuals to heterosexuals” on a team influences the team environment and could impact the extent of apologetic behaviours:

Ah, well for my teammate, I'd say sometimes they're kind of bothered. On the field, they play amazing and they live up to their size and they like being big, but when they're off the field, I've had some my friends actually be bothered about their size and get teased about it, or...I don't know. –Alex (racially mixed, bisexual)

Um you know I think it is to an extent in all sport but I think like if there are—if there's more than one lesbian on a team or so it's accepted because it depends on what the ratio is, because if there's more lesbians than heterosexuals on a team then the heterosexual feels like the outcast. –Mel (Métis/white, straight)

The participants gave examples of teammates who had engaged in unapologetic behaviours as well. Broad (2001) defined female unapologetic behaviour that works to do the following: “transgressing gender, destabilizing the heterosexual/homosexual binary,

and ‘in your face’ confrontations of stigma” (p. 182). These teammates performed acts that increased the stereotypes they encountered rather than stifling them:

I guess like you know how when girls get drunk or whatever a lot of girls who make out with each other or do whatever well I know some girls who are straight who do that and they aren’t gay at all. –Mel (Métis/white, straight)

And some actually on the other hand, one of my teammates who was a homosexual actually like was getting called straight all the time and she didn't like it. So she deliberately like sometimes on dress-up nights she hated being hit on by guys so she would deliberately do the opposite and she would try to make herself look masculine by dressing just, like plain Jane. –Mel (Métis/white, straight)

In these examples the teammates continue to resist gender norms rather than apologize for already deviating from them by their rugby participation. In the former example, the women are destabilizing the obligatory frame of heterosexuality by identifying as ‘straight’ women but making out with girls. In the latter example, the woman is deliberately attempting to look more ‘masculine.’ This type of defiant reaction to the stereotypes put upon female athletes has been documented in previous literature (Broad, 2001) and will be discussed further in the following chapter.

4. Race and Class and Rugby

Compared to the topic of sexual orientation, the participants had much less to say about race and class in regards to rugby and the female apologetic. It was obvious that most of them had not thought a lot about their race in relation to their rugby participation,

regardless of how they categorized themselves racially. Every participant except one felt that their race had no relationship with their participation in rugby:

Ahh, no, I wouldn't say the race at all. I'd say the context of rugby, just because rugby is a contact sport and my parents don't necessarily go for it, something like soccer is the way to go. –Alex (racially mixed, bisexual)

I don't think so. I mean, I realize not a lot of Asians play rugby, but I don't think it's ever actually had any affect, or any relation to that, to anything. It's just sort of a moot point. –Kate (Asian, gay)

Ah, it hasn't crossed my mind too much. –Marg (white, straight)

Bynx discussed the relationship her race has with her participation in rugby. She faced additional stereotypes because she is Asian and a rugby player. She also expressed feeling different from many of her rugby teammates because, unlike them, she did not grow up playing sports. The reaction she received from her family was that “because I was small and Asian that rugby wasn't for me.” Additional quotes from Bynx regarding her racial identity, gender and rugby involvement are discussed later on in this chapter in the Intersectionality section.

There was a consensus among the participants that women's rugby in Canada is dominated (by number) by Caucasian/white women. Multiple participants noted that they had not really noticed this dominance before I explicitly asked them about it; for example, Marg responded, “it hasn't crossed my mind too much.” This speaks to the invisibility that racial privilege can carry for those in a majority group (McIntosh, 1988).

Similar to the discussion surrounding race and racial identity, the dialogue about class/socioeconomic status was much less pronounced than that about sexual orientation and stereotypes. I did not ask the participants about their personal socioeconomic status, but instead about their perceptions of how socioeconomic status/class affects or does not affect Canadian female rugby players.

Some participants identified the barriers that women of low socioeconomic status may face with respect to sport participation, but other participants did not. The barriers related to team fees, travel costs, and transportation to practices and games. All participants, including those who identified fiscal barriers to sport participation, felt that rugby was a relatively accessible sport compared to other sports:

It's a sport that can be attainable to everybody because there's measures in place if you don't have the money, to pay it off, there's a payment plan.”

–Jenny (white, gay)

The sport doesn't require a lot of equipment or cost so people who want to get active and don't have a lot of money are able to play the sport because all you need is a pair of cleats and a pair of shorts and a mouth guard. It's not like hockey where you have to sign up and you have to pay all this money to play for equipment and for your travel. And the team is usually pretty local and you can usually carpool and it's a lot easier I think to play the sport in that sense because it's a low-cost sport. –Mel (Métis/white, straight)

Once you're there, it actually probably is one of the easier sports to have less money in simply because you show up to training in clothes that aren't your best anyway. Like you would wear an old T-shirt and rugby shorts to training [laughing]. And so where in other sports, you might see rich kids in a fancy golf outfit and so if you had a poor kid playing golf it would be a lot more evident.

–Marg (white, straight)

Marg's last comment addresses the idea that on the rugby pitch socioeconomic status does not matter. The participants shared this sentiment and some added that they could see class having an influence in other sports:

I think everyone gets treated the exact same. It's just more so if you can afford it is really all it is ... You're not treated differently based on money. –Lucy (black, straight)

There's no like rich or poor on the field. –Mel (Métis/white, straight)

I don't think that a child's socioeconomical situation would have any impact on playing rugby. –Marg (white, straight)

No participants felt that a player's socioeconomic situation factored into player selection, treatment of a player, or rugby experience. Marg, however, made one exception to this when she stated that:

Unless it [low socioeconomic status] was so severe that they had the stress and anxiety about it and they brought that on to the rugby pitch. –Marg (white, straight)

The other relationship between socioeconomic status and rugby that a few participants mentioned was how some lower socioeconomic areas in Canada do not supply the same opportunities for rugby that certain higher socioeconomic areas offer. Specifically these participants were referring to how they perceived that Manitoba had lower funding options for their rugby programs than other provinces in Canada:

Yes I think so in Manitoba, yeah. Especially if you were like to play more competitively. That's probably one of the main reasons why we don't have, like we don't have the funds that some provinces to so that's for sure, yeah.

–Nixonshow (white, gay)

Again the effect of class in this example is in relation to opportunity to play, rather than playing experience.

Finally, multiple participants talked about the ‘pay-to-play’ model for elite rugby in Canada. Most of these participants discussed how there is a shift occurring in the funding provided for elite, Canadian rugby programs and players. So, although there were relationships mentioned between socioeconomic status and participation in rugby, there was no connection made between class and female apologetic behaviours in women’s rugby.

5. Intersectionality

It has been argued that social constructs such as gender, race, class and sexual orientation cannot be fully understood unless analyzed together, yet often differences between these constructs are ignored (Lorde, 1984). Some intersectionalities of these

constructs have already been addressed in this chapter, but overall I felt that the interviews failed to draw out a lot of responses that incorporated intersectionality of the main themes of this research project. The question schema I created could have been better created to discover additional intersectionalities. This is discussed further in Chapter VI when I discuss future research. A few references to overlapping constructs arose from the data analysis.

Firstly, there is the linkage between gender performance, sexuality performance, and female apologetic behaviours, which was discussed at length at the beginning of this chapter. The few examples of apologetic behaviours described by the participants were primarily in response to the 'butch' lesbian stigma that is associated with women's rugby. This stigma stems from the viewpoint that rugby and its associated activities are socially defined masculine activities. The women who perform masculine activities are deviating from what is truly feminine; as a result they may encounter a butch lesbian stereotype. For some, the response is to demonstrate overtly feminine behaviours (female apologetic) to re-establish their femininity. The participants mostly gave examples of how their teammates did so by public displays of heterosexuality and/or feminine appearances.

In terms of race, class and female apologetic behaviour I did not discover any relationships from my interviews with the women's rugby players. There were however, several intersectionalities that were addressed between gender and class, race and sport, and race and sexuality. These were not included in the themes list because each was only discussed by one participant.

In terms of gender and class, Marg hinted at how it may be more difficult for low-socioeconomic females to access sport than their male counterparts. When I asked her if

she thought that one's class or socio-economic status has an effect on the likelihood that she will play rugby, Marg's response was "for females, absolutely." She went on to discuss obstacles that women with lower socioeconomic status could have to sport participation, particularly for women's rugby. Although she did not explicitly state that there are more barriers for women than men, her response certainly implied it.

The intersectionality of Lucy's answer in regards to race and sport was more direct. When I asked her to about the relationship between her racial identity and her participation in rugby, she responded:

Okay, okay. Um, like with the standing out, I feel like as a black athlete I do stand out and especially with rugby where everyone's predominately white it's really easy for me to stand out and um, yeah. Also I feel like because I'm black people expect me to be good, so that's the relationship with that [laughs]. –Lucy (black, straight)

There were a few other participants who acknowledged that they were one of the few women of their self-identified race who played rugby, but felt that it was a moot point. Lucy's association of being black and people expecting her to be a good athlete is an interesting one. Regardless of how one defines race (real or not), Lucy's observation demonstrates how racial categories have real consequences.

Bynx also felt that her race had an impact on her participation in rugby. The stereotype she encountered, which was unique, was that she should not be playing rugby because she is Asian:

I was the quiet, Asian, bookworm kid who played piano and that stereotype kind of almost made people more surprised and I think just over time in the circles of

people that I know, those stereotypes--like my mom still doesn't approve of me playing rugby. She still doesn't go to any of my games. –Bynx (racially mixed, bisexual)

For Bynx, her rugby participation is not only outside of her socially constructed gender role, but also outside of her socially constructed racial role. According to other's standards, she is not performing her gender or her race properly and she has therefore encountered additional backlash. In other individuals this might create additional reasons for apologetic behaviour, but Bynx demonstrates no such behaviour. She states that the surprised responses she encounters fuel her desire to play rugby even more; she wants to prove them wrong and show that 'small Asians' can play rugby:

Because I was a small Asian that I wouldn't amount to much in terms of tackling and rucking and things like that. It almost made me want to prove people wrong. Um and stereotypes from like family members that I've experienced before is because I was small and Asian and a girl that I was supposed to stick to my *piano* and my *books* and that they didn't find it was very lady-like or appropriate for me to play rugby, so of course it made me want to play it more so to prove them wrong, but ya that almost like, because I was small and Asian that rugby wasn't for me. –Bynx (racially mixed, bisexual)

In this sense, Bynx exhibits unapologetic behaviour with her attempt to break down the stereotypes surrounding female Asians.

Bynx also discussed how sexual orientation is incorporated into the mix. Based on her experiences, she thinks that:

Being Asian and being gay would be more difficult than being like, having parents who are more open and understanding and understand the concept more than immigrant parents who are like “what?! You’re supposed to be my perfect little Asian daughter who's going to make babies for me and like be the perfect housewife”, like those stereotypes so what's female and what's not female is more, is stronger for immigrant parents who are traditional I feel. –Bynx (racially mixed, bisexual)

Once again gender performativity and sexuality performativity are inextricably linked here. Bynx explains that, in her opinion, being both Asian and gay is more difficult because rules about what is female and what is not female are stricter. This could lead to a higher potential for female apologetic behaviours because the script for femininity is not as flexible.

In the next chapter I draw conclusions from this discussion. I also demonstrate how the current study both challenges and reinforces knowledge about the female apologetic in women’s sport and specifically in women’s rugby. Finally I discuss how the findings from this research project can help frame and direct future research.

Chapter VI: Conclusions and Implications for Future Research

In the previous chapter, I analyzed and discussed the themes produced from the research process using a Butlerian framework. In this chapter, I draw conclusions from that analysis and discuss how the results from Chapter V advance knowledge surrounding female apologetic behaviour in women's rugby and women's sport by both enforcing and contesting current knowledge. I do this by comparing the results of this study with previous research in the field.

Conclusions

Firstly, I found that none of the participants currently engage in female apologetic behaviours as a result of their rugby participation. This finding is similar to that of Shockely (2005), Chase (2006) and Gill (2007) whose rugby participants also did not display female apologetic behaviours, as well as Enke's (2005) analysis of female basketball players who did not emphasize their femininity or belittle their athleticism. In the current study, there were no differences in prevalence of apologetic behaviours between participants of different self-reported racial identities, nor did the participants' level of competition impact their tendency toward engaging in female apologetic behaviours. The participants also did not make any connections between one's socioeconomic status and the potential for apologetic behaviour. These findings point to the conclusion that although female apologetic behaviour is still present in women's rugby, race, level of competition and socio-economic status does not seem to affect the prevalence of this behaviour.

Although there was no differences in self-reported female apologetic behaviour found across the three levels of competition analyzed in this research project (provincial wide, nation-wide and internationally), the discussion surrounding level of competition did offer insight into what influences this behaviour. The participants felt that it was a combination of the team environment, duration of involvement with rugby and personal comfort with one's sexuality that had the most impact on apologetic behaviours. They felt that age and maturity of a player also played a role.

For example, several of the participants stated that they had displayed apologetic behaviours in the past when they were younger. As such, they had not been immersed in the rugby culture for as long and stated that they were less sure of themselves than they were at the time of the study. In relation to Butler's (1993) theory surrounding gender performativity this trend may be rationalized. Younger players who are less familiar with rugby culture may still rely on society's scripts of normative femininity to determine their gender performances and as such, they engage in apologetic behaviours because they acknowledge and feel uncomfortable with their non-normative performances of femininity which are required in rugby. For more experienced and usually older female rugby players the normative femininity as defined by society may have less of an impact on them; the reason for this is two-fold. Firstly, as several of the participants pointed out, as they got older, they cared less about what others thought about them. Secondly, because these participants are continually surrounded by other females who are also performing resistant versions of femininity, this becomes their norm. In Butlerian terms, this equates to the performances of femininity being mostly dependent upon their own ideas as well as their immediate surroundings rather than the larger societal context.

It appears as though as one progresses through her rugby career, the less likely she is to display apologetic behaviours. The current study is the first to note this trend within Canadian women's rugby, although a similar conclusion was drawn from a 2009 study done with elite female wrestlers in Norway; the seniors were accepting of their muscularity and the resultant social costs, but the juniors were wary of these social costs and held back in training (Sisjord & Kristiansen, 2009).

None of the participants reported currently engaging in apologetic behaviours, but they reported that this was not the case for all female rugby players in Canada. Participants disclosed that there are athletes in Canadian women's rugby, at all levels, who both engage and do not engage in female apologetic behaviours and some who display 'unapologetic' behaviours. The display of unapologetic behaviours was nowhere near as prevalent as Broad (2001) found in her study of an USA club rugby team, but there was still some mention of it. The apologetic behaviours among the participants' and their teammates appeared to be much less prevalent than what was found in other studies (e.g. Carle & Nauright, 1999; Ezzel, 2009; Russel 2004). Similar to the conclusions drawn from Wheatley's (1994) study about rugby songs, the women in the present study were comfortable with and embraced the open lesbian environment:

It's like the girls that I'm close with, there's just open flirting. –Bynx (racially mixed, bisexual)

It's just really open, you can joke around, you can be honest, you know there's no self-consciousness –Alex (racially mixed, bisexual)

The straight people would come in and then they know what they're coming into so they have to be accepting of it [homosexuality], you know.

–Nixonshow (white, gay)

These examples demonstrate how in their rugby settings, there is an open and sex-positive environment that is free from judgement.

When examples of apologetic behaviours were given, the way these behaviours were demonstrated was by emphasizing femininity through appearance (off the pitch) and/or emphasizing heterosexuality. These two ways of displaying heterosexual femininity were also identified by female, rugby participants in the Eastern USA in Fallon and Jome's (2007) study. Davis-Delano, Pollock and Vose's (2009) study with female, US collegiate basketball, soccer and softball athletes found that their participants displayed these two behaviours at least some of the time, as well as apologizing for aggression. The latter behaviour was not found in the current study.

Overall, the participants did not currently engage in apologetic behaviours, but some had reported doing so in the past. Female apologetic behaviour was still present amongst some of the teammates of the participants, although never during actual athletic participation; this was also found by Festle (1996). Participants felt that several environmental and personal factors played into if an athlete engaged in apologetic behaviour or not. These factors did not include race or class, but sexual orientation and level of rugby had some influence. Several participants felt that heterosexual athletes and athletes who are uncomfortable with their sexual orientation are more likely to engage in apologetic behaviours. Similarly, participants thought that newer players to the game and to the culture of women's rugby are more likely to display these behaviours compared to

more experienced players. In most cases it follows that the newer the player the lower the level of competition, so it may be that there is a higher potential for apologetic behaviours at lower levels of rugby. It should be noted that this was not the case in this study as all participants denied participating in apologetic behaviours, but all had played for five or more years.

Despite the lack of apologetic behaviours amongst participants there was no lack of stereotypes surrounding their rugby participation. The lesbian stigma that is often associated with women's sport has been found in previous studies (Knight & Giuliano, 2003; Proudfoot, 2009; Russell, 2004). By far, the automatic association of lesbianism with women's rugby was the most dominant stereotype in the present study. Other common stereotypes mentioned were the association of toughness, aggression and masculinity with female rugby players. These stereotypes simply enhanced the lesbian stigma due to the linkage between female masculinity and homosexuality, particularly in women's sport (Brownsworth, 1991).

The intense stereotypes the women in the present study faced did not appear to induce any sort of role conflict in terms of being both a female and an athlete. So, although others took issue with these women participating in the game of rugby that presented itself in the form of a lesbian stigma, these women took up no such issue. Unlike other findings (Clasen, 2001; Daniels, 2002) none of the participants feel conflict over occupying both roles. In fact, they all reported positive sentiments towards being female athletes. This was also the case for the participants in Chu, Leberman, Howe, and Bachor's (2003) study with The New Zealand Black Ferns rugby team (the New Zealand women's rugby national team).

In regards to socioeconomic status, the participants revealed no linkage to female apologetic behaviours, but it is important to recognize that the participants were not asked if they felt there was an association between the two directly. A portion of the participants thought that one's socioeconomic status or class was related to one's participation in rugby; women of a lower socioeconomic status face more barriers to playing rugby than women of a higher socioeconomic status, the primary barrier being a financial one. There have been several studies that have found this perception to be accurate. Gidlow et al. (2006) concluded that individuals of a higher socioeconomic status spent more time doing physical activity during leisure time than individuals of a lower socioeconomic status. It has been shown that Canadian adolescents from higher or middle socioeconomic status participate more in organized physical activity (commonly sport) than their lower socioeconomic status counterparts (Bengoechea et al., 2010). It has also been found that often the costs of playing a sport are often a barrier to participation (Holt et al., 2009). These findings support the notion the participants held that individuals in a lower socioeconomic situation have a harder time participating in sports.

Relative to other sports, it was found in the current study that rugby is perceived as a more accessible sport due to low registration, equipment, and travel costs. At the higher levels of rugby (provincial and up) the costs do increase, but more funding is becoming available for these players. Some felt that women who lived in a lower socioeconomic area (regardless of their personal financial situation) had fewer opportunities in terms of rugby development. Once a player was already playing rugby on

a team, the participants felt that her class had no effect on her treatment or rugby experience; as Mel put it: “there's no like rich or poor on the field.”

Similar to socioeconomic status, there was no obvious association between female apologetic behaviours and race, but connections between rugby and race were discussed. Generally, the participants thought that women's rugby in Canada is dominated by white/Caucasian women. Most of the participants did not feel as though their race had any interaction or influence on their rugby participation, although one participant discussed how she faced steeper stereotypes with regards to her rugby involvement because she was both female and Asian. Another participant explained that many people expect her to be good at sport because she is black. These associations address certain stereotypes that are associated with racial categorizations and demonstrate how the consequences of such classifications have real world implications. It also demonstrates how various social constructions (such as gender and race, or race and sexuality) interact with each other.

It is important to note that there were no differences in the quality and richness of responses based on the interview format (telephone, Skype, in-person). To review, two interviews were completed over the telephone, five via Skype and two in-person. Although some have stated that phone interviews are not appropriate for longer, in-depth semi-structured interviews (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Harvey, 1988), others have found the same as I did—that there is no difference in quality of responses between phone and in-person interviews (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004).

I believe that allowing the participants to choose which format they wished to complete the interview in increased participant comfort level and willingness to be in the

study, and did not compromise the results. I draw this conclusion for several reasons. Firstly, volunteering to be in a qualitative study can be “time consuming, privacy endangering, and intellectually and emotionally demanding” (McCracken, 1988, p. 27), so permitting the participants to choose how the interview was conducted helped to ease some of these barriers. Interviews over Skype were the most popular format; I believe this is because there is no cost to use it, participants did not have to travel anywhere to complete the interview and they all had access to a computer with internet, and the closeness of face to face interaction was present. Additionally, there were only two interviews conducted over the phone; one with the participant I did not know previously and the other with a participant who wanted to be interviewed via Skype but could not maintain a reliable internet connection. These two interviews were the longest and third longest interviews in duration with rich responses so I do not feel as though the telephone format compromised the data collection.

Although Creswell (1998) has noted that a researcher is not able to see body language and facial expressions during interviews conducted over the telephone, I do not believe it was a detriment to the study. Firstly, the majority of my data analysis came from the content of the participants’ answers, which, as already noted, was thorough in both the telephone interviews. Secondly, I made note of the participants’ tone of voice rather than their nonverbal communication. Finally, if I had chosen to only perform interviews via Skype or in-person, I might not have been able to conduct interviews with the two telephone participants.

The conclusions from this study are specific to the participants involved and may not be generalizable to all female rugby players because of the influence of many factors

that were pointed out by the participants. To summarize, these participants did not engage in female apologetic behaviours, although they did acknowledge that these behaviours do still occur in Canadian women's rugby and some had engaged in these behaviours in the past. They did not view their participation in rugby as deviant behaviour nor their roles as females and athletes, but they were well aware that this was not an opinion held by all. This was most evident through the lesbian stereotype that all participants discussed as a result of their rugby participation. Race, class, level of rugby and location within Canada did not factor into female apologetic behaviour, although each had other interactions with rugby participation and experience.

Key Contributions to Research

Some female rugby players in this study noted that they still encounter the lesbian stigma, although female athletes in general are becoming more accepted. As Jenny points out:

I mean society overall is changing. I mean even look at magazines and everything and all the sudden over the past 10 or so years, actually probably over the last five years, skinny is no longer the new in, it's that muscular, female athlete that's quote unquote "in." Um, that being said, you still go to the gym and if you're lifting heavy weights you're still getting stared at –Jenny (white, gay)

Jenny is referring to what Ezzel (2009) refers to in his study as the 'heterosexy-fit' that his female rugby players demonstrated; they were "simultaneously tough, fit, feminine, and heterosexual" (p. 112). This demonstrates a shift in what are acceptable femininities

that moves away from the notion of one hegemonic femininity. As Jenny remarks, the lifting of heavy weights by a female still tends to draw attention because she is stepping outside of her accepted gender performance. So it appears as though female athletes may remain 'real' women if they are able to balance their athletics, femininity and sexuality.

This is of particular interest to the sport of rugby because of the recent rise of interest in the sevens game. Traditionally, rugby has been played with 15 players per side, although the modification where each team fields seven players is slowly increasing in popularity due to its recent inclusion onto the programme of the Olympic Games beginning in 2016 in Rio de Janeiro. As Marg and I discussed:

Liz: yeah and do you think with like sevens being in the Olympics that is any effect on like the popularity of it as well?

Marg: absolutely, for sure, without a doubt.

Liz: okay and so, this is really for my own interest, um, didn't you guys get some sweet funding like \$750,000?

Marg: [laughing] yup. So there's a program, it's government initiated, I believe, but it's not government money. So it's called "Own the Podium" and basically it was an organization that was set up, I believe, after the last summer Olympics where Canada didn't do that well. And then they basically give funding to sports that have podium potential, so it's all based on how well you do. So right now we have lots of funding coming in through "Own the Podium," but if we were to you know, part of that's because we won Hong Kong sevens and we've been ranked first in the world with our sevens program so that's why we're getting so much

funding from them. And if we fell off that we would get much less. –Marg (white, straight)

This new interest in the sevens game may have interesting implications for the acceptability of the sport and its stigmatizations and stereotypes because, as a few of the participants pointed out, the game of rugby seven's demands a different type of athlete:

The women playing sevens are incredibly fit and incredibly fast. And then the opportunities that we have with sevens are so incredible compared to 15's because we basically piggyback onto the men's tournaments –Marg (white, straight)

When I play for my national team, like it's a sevens team, so it's all about speed, it's all about fitness so most of the girls are skinnier, or are fitter, or are a different fitter. So I don't know, how do I describe that? I guess depending on the level they'll look fitter or less fit, so you'll have different sizes, some will be skinnier and some will be bulkier I guess –Alex (racially mixed, bisexual)

The athletic body necessary for rugby seven's certainly differs from the 15's rugby body. As has already been explored, much of the lesbian stigma associated with women's rugby is due to the female athletes' masculine appearance (Messner, 1988). Thus, a future study that explored this stereotype and resultant apologetic behaviours (if any) in only rugby seven's players could open doors to the relationship between the physical attributes of female athletes and stigmatization.

Notably, it was discovered that the participants perceived Canadian women's rugby to be dominated by white/Caucasian women; they recognized that individuals in a lower socioeconomic standing face more barriers to sport participation than their higher

socioeconomic standing counterparts (particularly females); they felt that the lesbian stigma increased as the level of rugby did, but this did not equate to a rise in apologetic behaviours; and they pointed out that rugby culture was consistent across Canada. In addition, the participants felt that once an individual was playing rugby her socioeconomic status did not have an effect on her experience or interactions within the rugby community. They also discussed how the longer a player was involved with rugby and the more comfortable she was with her sexuality, the less likely she was to engage in apologetic behaviours.

The intersectionality of gender performance and sexual orientation was undeniable throughout the research, leading to the conclusion that the two still police one another. One participant discussed intersectionality of gender performativity, race and sexual orientation; she felt that the boundaries around what is feminine are stricter for Asians, thus it would be harder to be Asian and gay. Another participant felt that as a black athlete she was expected to be good at sport. The current study drew out various intersectionalities but was by no means an exhaustive look at how various social constructions interact to contribute to female apologetic behaviour among female rugby players. By drawing attention to the importance of these interactions hopefully future research will be more inclined to look at such topics.

Future Directions

The conclusions from the current study not only add to knowledge surrounding apologetic behaviour in women's rugby, but they also reveal areas for future research. The importance of analyzing intersectionality of potentially oppressive structures (race, class, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status) was acknowledged in this study. This

research provides only one perspective on examining intersectionalities in sport, thus more scholarship surrounding this topic is certainly warranted.

The discrepancy in female apologetic behaviours between novice players and more experienced players, which was perceived by the participants in the present study, presents an interesting potential for future research. All of the players in this study had played rugby for at least five years, so the apologetic behaviour they discussed was only about other younger or less experienced teammates, or about when they themselves were new players. A study could compare the apologetic behaviours of newer players (rookies) versus more experienced players (veterans). It would also be interesting to hear the perspectives of women who have dropped out of rugby. The players in the current study have become comfortable with the stereotypes that surround their sport, but they expressed how new rugby players, particularly those who are unsure about their sexuality, experience discomfort with these associations and may display apologetic behaviours. It could also be that some women drop out of the sport altogether. The participants in this study do not display apologetic behaviours, nor do they sense conflict with being an athlete and a female; but this does not mean this is true for all female athletes, or athletes who have discontinued their participation in the sport. Exploring the effects of the lesbian stigma that is associated with women's rugby and female apologetic behaviours amongst rookies, veterans and drop-out players may provide further insight into this phenomenon.

Another cohort of female rugby players that could offer additional insight is those from multiple countries. Overall, the participants felt that the rugby culture and stigmas were similar across Canada, although it was mentioned on several occasions that this

rugby culture and its stereotypes differ vastly from country to country. The participants discussed how they felt that the lesbian association was much stronger in countries outside of Canada, (e.g. England, USA, France, and Argentina) which may lead to a higher prevalence of female apologetic behaviours than was found in this sample of Canadian female rugby players.

Additionally, comparing the responses of these Canadian female rugby players with research about female apologetic behaviour among Canadian female athletes of other sports may help to understand shifting gender norms in Canada. The stereotypes that the participants in the current study encountered, point to the idea that gender performance is still policed by sexuality insofar as how their participation in the masculine domain of sport equated automatic lesbianism in the opinion of some. On the other hand, these women did not engage in behaviours to try to negate these stereotypes and furthermore, as Jenny explains, felt that “overall it's a pretty strong ignorance that allows anybody to think like that and allows people to be pigeonholed like that.”

Analyzing whether female athletes from other sports encounter similar stereotypes, and if so how they deal with them, would further the knowledge about gender norms in Canada.

In closing, analysis of the discourses provided by the participants of the current study led to conclusions that both reinforce and challenge the existing scholarship on female apologetics in sport. Rugby was portrayed as a site of resistance to various norms where women of all races, classes, athletic abilities, shapes, sizes, and sexual orientations were welcomed, although the under-representation of non-white women was discussed. The interconnectedness of the above social constructions surfaced throughout the research and will hopefully bring about future research on these topics. Not only did this

research explore the influence of racial identity and women's rugby, it included perspectives from women of multiple races. This was a key difference from much of the past literature published about women's rugby and female apologetic behaviour (Broad, 2001; Chase, 2006; Ezzel, 2009; Fallon & Jome, 2007; Russell, 2004; Shockley, 2005).

Judith Butler's theory about gender performativity was used to frame the research project and analyze the resultant themes. Her ideology about how gender performance and sexuality are linked was expressed by the participants in their experiences with the lesbian stigma due to their rugby involvement. Despite this, they demonstrated no apologetic behaviours, portrayed women's rugby in Canada as a safe place for lesbians and heterosexual women, and felt positive about being a female and athlete, particularly a rugby player. Rugby gave the women in this study a space where it was safe and accepted to perform a resistant version of femininity. These women became comfortable enough with this version of femininity that they continue to perform it in all contexts and in some cases, attempted to push the boundaries of what is feminine. Perhaps with continued scholarship and awareness the boundaries around black or white, feminine or masculine, and gay or straight will melt into one another; as participant Mel states:

so in a way they might not be gay but they might not be straight; they just are. I think maybe rugby's opening up people's lives to you just like who you like and it doesn't matter what sex they are. – Mel (Métis/white, straight)

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Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment Poster

Are you interested in participating in a research study?

I am seeking female rugby players who are over the age of 18 to participate in my study entitled: The Female Apologetic within Canadian Women's Rugby

This study is about exploring female apologetic behaviour in Canadian, female rugby players. It seeks to understand the participants' feelings, opinions and perceived stereotypes about being a female rugby player. It will also explore participants' racial identity, sexual orientation and level of competition.

Participants will be interviewed by the researcher (Elizabeth Hardy). The interview will be audio-recorded and then typed up. The typed-up transcription of each interview will be emailed to each participant for them to confirm it is correct. Each participant will also be asked (via email) to comment on themes that the researcher finds. Participants will remain anonymous (no one will know who each participant is because they will pick a fake name) and all information related to the participants will be kept confidential.

If interested, please contact Elizabeth Hardy at Elizabeth.Hardy@ad.umanitoba.ca

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Research Project Title: The Female Apologetic within Canadian Women's Rugby

Sponsor: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC);

Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarships Program Award

Researchers: Elizabeth Hardy, Sarah Teetzel, PhD (MA supervisor)

Please contact Elizabeth Hardy or Dr Sarah Teetzel if you have any questions about this study:

E-mail: Elizabeth.Hardy@ad.umanitoba.ca

Phone: (204) 930-6517

Mailing address: Elizabeth Hardy, Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation

Management, 307 Max Bell Center, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB,

R3T 2N2

Email: Sarah.Teetzel@ad.umanitoba.ca

Phone: (204) 474-8762

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel welcome to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand the accompanying information.

What is the study about?

This study is exploring female apologetic behaviour in women's rugby. Female apologetic behaviour in sport includes any behaviour by female athletes or others

(commonly the media) which emphasizes a female athlete's femininity. This behaviour is in response to the masculine and/or lesbian stereotypes associated with female sport participation. Particular attention will be paid to the interactions between apologetic behaviour with race, sexual orientation, level of rugby and socio-economic status.

What am I being asked to do?

Participation in the study is completely voluntary and involves reading this document and arranging an interview (in person, by telephone or via Skype) with Elizabeth Hardy, by contacting her at Elizabeth.Hardy@ad.umanitoba.ca

The interview will take approximately sixty minutes. The interview will be recorded using a digital voice recorder and later transcribed *verbatim* (word for word) by the researcher, Elizabeth Hardy. You will be sent a transcript of your interview by email and asked to verify the accuracy of it; this process will take approximately 30 minutes of your time. You can choose to change or remove any information from the transcript. You will also be asked to review and comment on the themes emerging from the analysis of the transcript. This process will take approximately 30 minutes for a total of 2 hours of participation time.

The results of the analysis will be published in the researcher's master's thesis and could potentially be presented at academic conferences and used in academic journal articles. However, you will choose a pseudonym (a fake name) to be referred to by and your identity will not be included in any form of dissemination. In June 2014, the audio files, electronic transcription files, hand-written notes, contact information and printed transcripts will be destroyed; the audio files will be permanently deleted, the computer storing the transcribed interviews will be reformatted, and the hand-written notes, contact

information and printed documents will be shredded. At the interview you will be asked if you would like a copy of the final results, and if you would like one, it will be sent to you at the email or mailing address you provide.

During the interview you will be able to ask questions or choose not to answer any question(s). Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you will be given continuing opportunities to decide whether or not to continue participating. You can withdraw from the study or stop your interview at any point. If you do not want to answer a question you are asked, you may state so and choose not to answer without any negative consequences. Your answers supplied prior to the point of withdraw will only be used if you provide permission to do so. You can request that the audio recording of the interview to be stopped at any point by verbally indicating your decision. You can refuse to answer any questions without having to terminate your involvement in the interview or in the study. To do so, simply state your preference to Elizabeth Hardy verbally or in writing.

Will anyone know what I said?

Every effort to protect your identity and maintain confidentiality will be implemented throughout the entire study. You will choose a pseudonym at the beginning of the interview before the audio recorder is turned on, so that your name and identifying features will not be associated with your interview. No identifying information will be included in your transcript or any documents or communications resulting from this study. Your team names will not be used either.

The researcher has taken a pledge of confidentiality related to this project and will not discuss your answers with anyone other than her master's thesis supervisor, Dr Sarah

Teetzel, and the other members of her thesis committee, Dr LeAnne Petherick, Dr Liz Millward, and Dr Moss Norman. Only the researcher, Elizabeth Hardy, will know your identity; the supervisory committee will only see the pseudonym you select prior to your interview with Elizabeth Hardy. In the thesis, and possible presentations/publications you will be referred to by the pseudonym you chose.

Consenting to participate

I understand that if I agree to participate in this study my participation will require roughly two hours of my time, consisting of sixty minutes to answer the interview questions, thirty minutes to review a copy of my transcript and thirty minutes to review the emergent themes. I understand that my interview will be recorded using a digital audio recorder and transcribed by the study's researcher, Elizabeth Hardy.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or consequence by informing Elizabeth Hardy of my decision. I recognize that if I feel uncomfortable with a question I can skip that question and choose to remain in the study or withdraw from the study completely. If I choose to withdraw from the study at any point, I understand that any data associated with my participation will be immediately destroyed (electronically deleted and paper shredded) and will not be used in the study.

I understand that to further protect my anonymity, I will be asked to read the interview transcript. I will be sent this transcript by email. This process will allow me the opportunity to change any information I wish to remove or that I feel would serve to identify me. I understand that my name and all identifying features will be kept confidential and will not appear in any written or verbal report, document or presentation that may result from the study.

I understand that the data for the project will be destroyed 1 year following the completion of research, which will be in June 2014.

I also understand that there is no anticipated benefit to me of participating and that risks of participating in this study are not expected to be greater than those experienced in the normal conduct of my everyday life.

If I opt to contact Elizabeth Hardy about an interview and arrange to participate, I will review this Informed Consent form fully and state my consent verbally at the time of the interview. I will keep this Informed Consent form for my records. I know that I will have the opportunity to ask questions about this form before the interview begins.

Your signature on this form (and your verbal declaration of consent during your interview) indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board(s) and a representative(s) of the University of Manitoba Research Quality Management/Assurance office may also require access to your research records for safety and quality assurance purposes.

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about

this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat, Maggie Bowman, at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date _____

I would like to receive a summary of the findings by email sent to me at:

Appendix C: Interviewer Script

Script to read prior to each participant before the interview begins:

Hello, my name is Elizabeth Hardy and I am a master's student conducting a research study titled: "The Female Apologetic within Canadian Women's Rugby." Thank you for your willingness to help with this research by telling me about your rugby experiences and thoughts surrounding the sport.

I am going to record this interview as well as take notes, and after the interview is over I will transcribe the tape and send it to you for you to verify. Before I turn the tape on I'd like you to pick a pseudonym which you will be referred to by from this point forward in order to protect your identity and confidentiality. Please think of any name you'd like to use and I will ask you to state it once the recorder has been turned on. No one but me will know your actual identity. My MA supervisor, Dr. Sarah Teetzel, will have access to your transcript but will only see your chosen pseudonym, not your real name.

Before we begin, I need to go over with you some of the details included in your Informed Consent form. Have you read the form?

If no, inform the participant she must carefully read the informed consent form before participating. If yes, continue.

Do you understand that this interview will be audio recorded, that measures are in place to protect your identity and confidentiality of responses (as outlined in your Informed Consent form), that you can choose not to answer any questions asked, and you can

choose to end the interview at any time, and withdrawal from the study at any time simply by telling me so verbally or via email?

If no, turn off tape and thank participant for interest, reminding her that the study parameters require participants to participate in an audiotaped interview. If yes, continue.

Would you like a copy of the results of this study by email?

Do you have any questions before I turn on the recorder? Please remember you can also ask questions at any time throughout the interview or after and you may opt to cease participating without penalty or consequence simply by telling me your decision at any point during the interview or by telephone or email after we finish.

If no questions, continue

I am going to turn the tape on now.

Have you read the informed consent form for the study “The Female Apologetic within Canadian Women’s Rugby” and are you aware that you may end this interview and withdraw from the study at any time simply by stating your preference to do so?

If no, turn off tape and thank participant for interest, reminding her that the study parameters require participants to provide informed consent verbally to participate.

If yes, continue.

Please state clearly whether or not you consent to participate.

If no, turn off tape and thank participant for interest, reminding her that the study parameters require participants to provide informed consent to participate.

Please read aloud the informed consent script which has been emailed to you. It can be found at the very end of your informed consent form.

[I have understood to my satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive my legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions I prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. My continued participation should be as informed as my initial consent, so I should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout my participation.]

Are you over 18 years of age?

If no, turn off tape and thank participant for interest, reminding him/her the study parameters require participants to be at least 18 years of age. If yes, continue

Please state the pseudonym you chose: _____

Now we are ready to begin with the interview questions.