Rugby, School Boys and Masculinities:
In an American School in Taiwan

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Abstract

Gender research throughout the last two decades has positioned sport as one of the central sites in the social production of masculinities. In particular, body contact, confrontational sports have been identified as central to the reproduction of a dominant but problematic form of masculinity, typically known as hegemonic masculinity. Whether it is through participation, opposition, resistance, complicity or media consumption, contact sports have been identified as constructing individual understandings of masculinity as well as contributing to the continued marginalization and subordination of other types of masculinities. Researchers working within schools have also linked rugby to similarly negative understandings of masculinities. The majority of these school based studies have been conducted in countries where contact sports are traditionally respected or in schools where rugby is tied to traditional and institutionalized understandings of masculinity. As yet little attention has been paid to boys who play rugby in countries or schools where rugby is not tied to traditional and institutionalized understandings of masculinity.

As a New Zealand teacher working in an American school, in Taiwan, I set out to examine the rugby experiences of high school boys and to investigate the influence that rugby has on their understanding of masculinities. My study employed in-depth interviews with seven boys. Cognizant of the fact that the majority of gender based sport research has utilised Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, I adopted a 'Foucauldian method' to analyse the data. In doing so it was my intention to contribute to the field of sport and gender studies by utilising an alternative perspective instead of creating repetitive and redundant research which could lead to some problems being explored exhaustively.

My main findings revealed a number of dominant discourses surrounding and constituting rugby within the American School of Taiwan. These included discourses of rugby as a masculine sport, as a foreign/western sport, and as a low status sport. Drawing upon these discourses I examined how the participants' gendered subjectivities were influenced by their rugby participation. The results revealed that within the general context of the school, rugby players were generally regarded as low status male athletes. However, within the western cultural group of students, rugby players were regarded as high status male athletes. This study contributes to

gender and sport studies by suggesting that contact sports such as rugby need not always contribute to structured and hierarchical understandings of masculinities.

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CHAPTER ONE
Introduction

My interest in this study

As a boy growing up in New Zealand I was surrounded by a culture that revered rugby. As the most popular and dominant sport, rugby in New Zealand has been linked to various powerful discourses of masculinity and nationalism (Pringle, 2003; Star, 1999). Whilst I and all of my friends played soccer throughout primary school, at some level we were all aware of the fact that playing rugby was the only true way to constitute oneself as a genuine and respected New Zealand man. Upon reaching high school this knowledge played a role in our decision to quit soccer and form a rugby team. Reflecting upon my high school rugby experiences I am sure that the discourses surrounding rugby in New Zealand not only played a part in our decision to play rugby but also in our continuing perceptions and experiences of the game. Bumps, bruises and ruck marks were badges of honour that distinguished us from less manly athletes such as soccer players. The pain experienced when training and playing was considered part and parcel of the rite of passage that one must endure in order to qualify as a full-fledged New Zealand male. Although I was never an exceptional rugby player and our school team was not accorded any overt status or privilege, rugby was an enjoyable and important part of my high school years. Upon leaving school I played club rugby for a couple of years before my job as a physical education teacher and my position as a high school rugby coach made my own involvement in the game too difficult to maintain. Whilst I still work as a physical education teacher and rugby coach, my current employment situates in me in Taiwan, a country where rugby is a relatively unknown sport. When observing my students' enthusiasm for the game I am intrigued as to why boys at my school decide to play such a rough and foreign game. Furthermore I am curious to learn how they perceive the game in the absence of such totalising discourses as those that I experienced when playing as a school boy in New Zealand. Finally, I would like to understand how their involvement with rugby influences their understanding of themselves as boys and men.

My research paradigm and guiding questions

My interest in this area of research and my conception of the issues involved are reflections of my views regarding the nature of reality and knowledge. These views have been shaped through my life experiences and more recently by my involvement in tertiary studies. With regard to the nature of knowledge I take a subjectivist position. As such I do not believe that knowledge is concrete or stable, what is to be considered 'true' or 'false' is dependent upon the experiences, perspectives and insights of individuals (Sparkes, 1992). With regard to the nature of reality I take an internal-idealist position which sees 'reality' as the product of individual cognition and not some external, objective, structure (Sparkes, 1992). These assumptions regarding the nature of knowledge and reality orientate my research approach within the postmodern paradigm. "Postmodernism is a rejection of both the idea that there can be an ultimate truth and of structuralism, the idea that the world as we see it is the result of hidden structures" (Burr, 1995, p. 13). Postmodern researchers aim to 'deconstruct' knowledge, to expose the unstable nature of 'truth' and identity, and to challenge traditional ways of 'doing' social science research "including the ways in which researchers write reality and people's understanding of it" (Rail, 1998, xii). Postmodern research encompasses an array of different approaches, methods and theories (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). In this regard I have adopted a post-structuralist approach. As Wright (2006) suggests, post-structuralism is used to describe research that takes a particular interest in how 'texts' in "the narrow sense of written, electronic, spoken texts, and in the broader sense, of discourses, practices, institutions, produce particular subjects, subjectivities and social relations" (p. 60). As language is the centerpiece of post-structuralism, many researchers utilize some form of 'discourse analysis' to conduct research (Wright, 2006).

Whilst there are numerous approaches to discourse analysis, in this thesis I adopt a Foucauldian view of language and discourse that concentrates on the power relations in particular social relations and the effects that result (Wetherell, 2001). Michel Foucault was a French philosopher who has variously been described as both a postmodern and post-structualist thinker (Faubion, 1998; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Rail, 1998). It is my intention to draw upon Foucault's conception of discourse to examine not only how students in an American school in Taiwan make sense of rugby but to also explore how discourses of rugby within

the school influence the subjectivities of the participants and the subsequent relations of power between subjects? These concerns form the basis of my two guiding questions.

1. How do boys at the American School of Taiwan make sense of rugby?
2. How do the participants' experiences of playing rugby and the discourses associated with the game influence gendered subjectivities and relations of power between boys at American School of Taiwan?

The American School of Taiwan (A.S.T)

Recognising the contextual nature of knowledge, the following section provides a brief overview of the school and the wider school community within which this research was conducted.

The American School of Taiwan (hereafter referred to as A.S.T) provides an American-based education to students from grades K (5 years old) to 12 (18 years old). The school is a non-profit, independent school that was established to cater for the children of foreign businessmen, technicians, scholars, missionaries and other foreigners in Taiwan. Whilst all expatriate students are able to apply for admission, priority is given to students that hold United States passports. A.S.T has a strong focus on academic excellence. The average external S.A.T scores of students at the school are 25% higher than the average scores achieved by students in the United States. Whilst not considered to be a private school, high fees and an international reputation for academic excellence set A.S.T apart from similar schools in Taiwan. The American School of Taiwan participates in frequent sporting and cultural exchanges with other high calibre international schools in South East Asia.

The sporting structure of the school

The structure of sport within the school reflects the American-based education that the school offers. The school year is divided into three 10 to 12 week seasons. Each season has three or four sports that cater for both boys and girls. Students in the high school from freshmen (14-15yrs) to seniors (17-18yrs) are able to try out for one sport per season. Some sports will have a varsity team (the top team), a junior varsity team (the second team) and a freshmen team; other

sports may only have a varsity team. Often, more students will try out for teams than there are spaces; as a result students who do not make a team are cut from the program. For students that are cut there are no other opportunities for them to play structured sport. Due to the elite nature of this sporting structure varsity athletes are often accorded high social status amongst their peer group (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1995; Pascoe, 2003).

Rugby in the school

Rugby is a second season sport and is played during the Taiwanese fall and winter; from October through to the start of February. As a second season sport the rugby program competes for athletes against, swimming, tennis and basketball. Basketball is one of the most popular sports in Taiwan and is very popular amongst boys in the school. On the other hand rugby is a minor sport in Taiwan. In the capital of Taipei, a city of some two and a half million people there are only three middle school rugby teams and two high school rugby teams. The basketball program attracts large numbers of students during try outs and although they have three teams many students are cut from the program. Rugby attracts far fewer students during try outs and there are usually only enough players to form two teams. During the season students in the varsity team train five days a week for an hour and a half each day. Students in the junior varsity team train four days a week for an hour and a half a day. Training space is limited and students play on an artificial turf. Games are usually held on Friday night against local high schools or universities. Towards the end of the season fifteen boys are selected from the varsity team to represent the school at an overseas tournament where they compete against students from other international high schools in ten aside rugby. Whilst the American School of Taiwan has competed in this tournament for over ten years they have not often been successful and are generally regarded by other teams as the easy-beats. Whilst this tournament consists of only six games spread over three days it is considered to be the focal point upon which the entire season is judged.

Significance of this study

In recent years there has been a high and sustained level of interest in issues to do with men and masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Edley,

2001; Gard, 2006). At the same time there is "a growing consensus that language lies at the heart of understanding men and masculinity, with many writers now insisting that masculinity is something constructed in and through discourse" (Edley, 2001, p. 191). Recent discursive examinations of masculinities and the influence of heavy contact sports have both refuted and supported suggestions that sport clearly helps to produce culturally dominant conceptions of masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Pringle, 2003; Pringle & Markula, 2005). Whilst researchers have examined how boys position and identify themselves in relation to discourses of rugby and masculinities (Edley & Wetherell, 1997; Light, 2007; Pringle, 2003; Pringle & Markula, 2005), these studies have been conducted in countries where contact sports are traditionally respected or in contexts (schools) where rugby is tied to traditional and institutionalized understandings of masculinity. As yet little attention has been paid to boys who play rugby in countries, cultures or contexts (schools) where rugby is not tied to traditional and institutionalized understandings of masculinity. As Chandler and Nauright (1999b) suggest, how rugby and its links to masculinities differs in non-traditional settings is a question worthy of study. As such, the opportunity to examine the discourses of rugby within a country, culture and school where rugby is a relatively unknown sport provides the potential to explore new understandings of rugby and its links to masculinities.

Outline of thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters. A review of literature follows this introduction as the second chapter. This review examines the field of social research as it applies to issues of gender and sport. Where possible I have attempted to focus on those studies that have investigated links between schools, masculinities and heavy contact sports such as rugby. In chapters three and four, I discuss my theoretical approach and methods. This includes details of my Foucualdian discourse analysis as well as an outline of the interview process and the interview participants. I have also attempted to address the issues of validity, reliability and evaluation that afflict postmodern research. In doing so, I have endeavoured to detail any limitations that may influence the findings of this study. In chapter five I detail the research findings that resulted from in-depth interviews and the subsequent process of data analysis. In chapter six I draw upon

theoretical concepts and previous research in order to draw conclusions from the findings of this study with regard to contemporary perspectives in the field of sport and gender studies.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the personal experiences that have drawn me towards this area of research. I then linked my views regarding the nature of knowledge and reality to my research paradigm and guiding questions. I have also attempted to provide the reader with some level of context regarding the social environment within which this study was conducted. Finally, I have detailed the significance of this study and have provided an outline of the remainder of this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO
Research, Paradigms and Theory

In an attempt to describe my approach to research, this chapter will examine my own understandings regarding the nature of reality and knowledge and how these relate to my research paradigm.

Ontology and Epistemology

Research can be perceived in many different forms by different people. This complexity is due to the diversity of human nature, firstly, within the researcher and secondly, within the social world which is being researched. When qualifying their own definition of research as, "a systematic process of discovery and advancement of human knowledge", Gratton and Jones (2004, p. 4) note that "we are aware that this definition itself – like any other – is open to criticism". This criticism and diversity of opinion can be traced back to the fact that individuals hold different ontological and epistemological viewpoints.

As Burrel and Morgan (1979) observe social scientists are primarily faced with one basic ontological question:

> whether the 'reality' to be investigated is external to the individual – imposing itself on individual consciousness from without – or the product of individual consciousness; whether 'reality' is of an 'objective' nature or the product of individual cognition; whether 'reality' is a given 'out there' in the world, or the product of one's mind. (p. 1)

The two ontological positions alluded to in this quote are the external-realist viewpoint and the internal-idealist viewpoint. To an external-realist, 'reality' exists outside of human influence; it is seen as a set of given rules that influence human interaction and behaviour (Sparkes, 1992). Consequently, an external-realist believes that reality is 'out there' waiting to be discovered. On the other hand an internal idealist sees 'reality' as being created internally through the subjective construction of human interaction (Sparkes, 1992). Therefore, internal-idealists see reality as the product of an individual's thoughts, feelings, assumptions, experiences and interactions. Furthermore, an internal-idealist also considers reality to be a product of subjective idealism. Subjective idealism

suggests that as reality is internally constructed, then each individual constructs his or her own reality (Sparkes, 1992). Consequently an internal-idealist believes that reality lies within social interactions and that there can be many different interpretations of these interactions or many different realities.

Closely linked to an individual's ontology is his/her epistemology. Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggest that there are two diametrically opposing epistemological positions that an individual could take. Firstly an objectivist viewpoint that sees knowledge as something tangible which can be acquired and secondly the subjectivist viewpoint which sees knowledge as something that has to be personally experienced. Due to the assumptions and beliefs implicit in their ontological position an external-realist will possess an objectivist epistemology. On the other hand an internal-idealist will possess a subjective epistemology. In the research world these differing ontological and epistemological viewpoints have given rise to different research paradigms.

What is a research paradigm?

Just as there are different definitions of research and different ways to view reality and knowledge there are also many different ways to view and conduct research. These different viewpoints can be categorized into research paradigms. The permeating influence of research paradigms is so powerful that Guba and Lincoln (1994) consider questions of paradigm to take precedence over questions of method. Research paradigms can be thought of as a fundamental set of beliefs that guide the research process and provide a particular sets of lenses for seeing the world and making sense of it in different ways (Sparkes, 1992). Research paradigms are the foundation of research because they tell us what is important, legitimate, and reasonable. As Lincoln (1990) notes, the adoption of a paradigm "literally permeates every act even tangentially associated with inquiry, such that any consideration even remotely attached to inquiry processes demands rethinking to bring decisions into line with the world view embodied in the paradigm itself" (p.81). Furthermore, Popkewitz (1984) contends research methods are not simply technical skills that exist independently of the purpose and commitment of those who do the research; rather, techniques emerge from a theoretical position that reflects certain values, beliefs and dispositions towards the social world. In other words, a method is a well thought out process which

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correlates with the researcher's preferred paradigm. With this perspective in mind a research method can be seen not only as a means to gather information but also as a means to determine which information should be gathered and which should be ignored, it provides systems to ensure that the information gathered is valid or 'truthful' and it prescribes how the information gathered can be interpreted, analysed and presented.

My research paradigm

When contemplating research paradigms a researcher must reflect upon their own ontological and epistemological assumptions as these "are the starting points or givens that determine what inquiry is and how it is to be practiced" (Guba, 1990, p. 18). In the following section of this chapter I shall examine my own ontological and epistemological assumptions and consider how these relate to my research paradigm.

As previously noted, Burell and Morgan (1979) have suggested that an individual can take one of two basic ontological positions. One position sees the social world as existing externally to an individual whilst the other position sees the social world as a product of internal consciousness. My own inability to conceive of a social world shaped by external constraints and variables, divorced from the people who participate and interpret that reality, leads me to agree with Wolcott (as cited in Sparkes, 1992, p. 27) who said: "I do not go about trying to discover a ready-made world; rather I seek to understand a social world we are continuously in the process of constructing". This view of the social world aligns my ontological position with that of an internal-idealist. With regard to the nature of knowledge I agree with Dilthy who concluded that **"**society is the result of conscious human intention and that the interrelationships among what is being investigated and the investigator are impossible to separate" (as cited in Sparkes, 1992, p. 25). As such my epistemological position can be identified as subjective (Guba, 1990). A subjective epistemology accepts that inquiry acts are intimately related to the values of the inquirer (Guba, 1990). By acknowledging that all facts are value laden and "science is a value constituted and value constituting enterprise" (Kvale, 1997, p. 36) I dispute the assumption that researchers can make detached and neutral observations that will generate objective knowledge. Instead I see knowledge "as the outcome or consequence of human activity, that

is, knowledge is a human construction, which means that it can never be certifiable as ultimately true but rather it is problematic and ever changing" (Sparkes, 1992, p. 26). As I shall illustrate, my subjective epistemology and ontological position of internal-idealism allow me to relate to the values, beliefs and assumptions implicit within postmodern research paradigms.

Whilst Guba and Lincoln (2005), suggest that "there can be no question that the legitimacy of postmodern paradigms is well established and at least equal to the legitimacy of received and conventional paradigms" (p. 191), it is important to acknowledge the difficulty in defining postmodernism. As noted by Markula, Grant and Denison (2001), "postmodernism, as a term is probably the least possible to define, and this has undoubtedly led to much confusion and also arguably undue dismissal of research under this rubric by many academics" (p. 257). Postmodernism has variously been described as the breaking apart of modernism (Lemert, 1997), a 'epochal transition' from past social and political traditions (Rail, 1998, p. xi), a stylized movement in the visual and literary arts (Crook, 2006), an architectural style (Rail, 1998), an attitude (Kvale, 1997), a new cultural logic and a form of writing and researching which shuns attempts to build a positivist and post-positivist science of society (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Whilst this list does not capture all the possible connotations of the term postmodernism, it is generally agreed that postmodernism represents many interrelated social phenomena (Burr, 1995; Crook, 2001; Denzn & Lincoln, 2005; Kvale, 1997; Rail, 1998).

For the purposes of this thesis I will focus on postmodernism as it applies to social theory. Within the context of social theory it is generally agreed that postmodern paradigms seek to challenge the assumptions of positivism whilst simultaneously rejecting the modernist conviction that scientific knowledge and technological innovation can guarantee progress, enlightenment and universal emancipation for humankind (Burr, 1995; Crook , 2001; Kvale, 1997; Rail, 1998). Therefore to better understand postmodernism as it relates to social theory I will start by examining positivism as it relates to social theory.

The ontological and epistemological foundations of positivism are considered to be a realist-external ontology and an objectivist epistemology (Sparkes, 1992). Essentially, positivist researchers view the social world as existing independently of an individual's appreciation of it. It is not something

that an individual creates but rather it exists 'out there' (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Furthermore, this externally existing world is seen to be made up of hard, tangible and relatively immutable facts (Sparkes, 1992). Researchers who adhere to positivist paradigms assume that through objective and unbiased study they can reveal the facts of this external reality (Henderson, 1991; Popkewitz, 1984). Central to the positivist production of objective and unbiased knowledge are two interrelated assumptions. Firstly, the belief that the social world can be reduced to distinct and analytically separate parts of one interacting system (Henderson, 1991; Popkewitz, 1984) and secondly, the belief that researchers are able to stand apart from what is being studied thus allowing knowledge to be constructed in a neutral manner (Sparkes, 1992). These two assumptions not only allow positivist research to be presented as free of the values and interests of those who produce it but also as universal, not bound by social context and consequently generalisable across time and place. This in turn allows positivist knowledge to be transformed into principles or laws that can explain and predict what happens in the social world (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It has been noted that the positivist paradigm's desire to rationalize, generalize and universally apply scientific knowledge to the social world reflects its links to modernist beliefs and ideals, specifically the goal of a better future for mankind through the practical application of science (Halfpenny, 2001; Lyotard, 1984).

Although the positivist paradigm has enjoyed great success and popularity in the physical sciences numerous critiques of positivism as it relates to the social sciences have emerged (Halfpenny, 2001; Henderson, 1991; Sparkes, 1992). Many of these critiques centre on the belief that whilst positivist assumptions of ontology and epistemology may be appropriate for the study of the physical world, they are not appropriate for the study of the social world which is seen as having very different characteristics (Sparkes, 1992). Critics of positivist research believe that the reality of the social world does not exist externally to individuals and as such there are no hard facts to be found and no objective vantage point from which to make observations (Popkewitz, 1984). Theorists such as Lyotard, Foucault, Derrida and Baudrillard have argued that social 'reality' is subjective and based on language, signs and texts (Rail, 1998). This viewpoint challenges the positivist belief in an objective truth as it is argued that language and texts are not a transparent window into the real world but rather an opaque media in and by

which versions of the real are constructed (Crook, 2001). Consequently any attempt to find objective truth will be incomplete, inaccurate and biased. As a result, postmodern research paradigms place a great deal of emphasis on the deconstruction of language and text (Burr, 1995; Crook, 2001; Kvale, 1997; Rail, 1998; Wright, 2006).

The rejection of society as an external 'reality' also challenges the positivist belief in research neutrality and value free knowledge. As Foucault (1980) argues, facts and values cannot be separated, knowledge and power are entangled. This disbelief in an external-realist view of society challenges not only positivist claims to objective and value free knowledge but also the subsequent generalization of this knowledge through universal theories. As Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) claim "the core of postmodernism is the doubt that any method or theory, discourse or genre, tradition or novelty has a universal and general claim as the "right" or the privileged form of authoritative knowledge" (p. 475). This doubt has enabled postmodernists to challenge the "misleading appearances of coherence in all of the grand narratives' attempts to develop and legitimate systematic, scientific representations of the world" (Halfpenny, 2001, p. 382).

Lyotard's (1984) influential postmodern critique argues that the scientific and political projects of the past two centuries, such as positivism and modernism, have legitimated themselves through meta-narratives of enlightenment, emancipation and progress, consequently silencing other discourses of knowledge. However, it is generally recognised that since the late twentieth century such meta-narratives have lost their legitimating force (Crook, 2001; Halfpenny, 2001). Science and technology as well as progressive politics have revealed their dark side, so that "it is no longer possible to call development progress" (Lyotard 1992, p. 91-2). Rail (1998) suggests that the postmodern rejection of meta-narratives and generalizations means that social reality cannot be satisfactorily explained by modernist notions of class, race, gender, nor any other form of totalizing thought. Consequently, within a postmodern paradigm the unifying, rationalist structural schemes and grand narratives of modernists give way to post modern celebrations of the local and the subordinated (Crook, 2001).

The postmodern rejection of universal truths and its enthusiasm for localized de-historicized knowledge has drawn criticisms of relativism and nihilism (Crook, 2001) which has in turn allowed some critics to construe

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postmodernism as an attack on reason and truth (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Whilst some proponents of postmodernism argue that radical relativism and nihilism is an acceptable stance to take (Vattimo, 1988); others embrace contextual relativism (Kvale, 1997). This perspective recognizes the situational limitations of the knower whilst acknowledging that having a partial, local, historical knowledge is still knowing. As Richardson (2004) observes, postmodernism allows us "to know "something" without claiming to know everything" (p.475). Positioning myself within this debate, I acknowledge that judgements of truth are complex, and as such have no generalisable solutions as modernist thought would lead us to believe. Yet refusing binary means of judgement does not lead to the abandonment of 'truth', simply the recognition that ethical considerations of 'truth' must be contextually driven (St. Pierre, 2000). Therefore I do not accept the notion that all interpretations of 'truth' are as good or justified as any other and that consequently 'anything goes'.

With the context of social theory and research, the deconstruction of meta-narratives and the privileged discourses that deny and silence competing and dissident voices has allowed for new academic perspectives, disciplines and epistemologies to emerge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Rail, 1998). This in turn has eroded the belief that any "one paradigm is sufficient to answer the important questions of today" (Bruce, as cited in Pringle, 2003, p. 24). Consequently it is seen that there is no *one* way to conduct postmodern research and as such researchers in this paradigm can draw upon and interweave a range of different disciplines, perspectives and theories (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Richardson (2005) suggests that one particular kind of postmodernist thinking that is beneficial to social research is that of post structuralism. Wright (2006) acknowledges that post structuralism is support by and situated within postmodern assumptions, in particular the need to deconstruct notions of knowledge and truth, and the desire to transgress boundaries in the ways of doing research. At the same time, she suggests that post structuralism as a research approach comes closer to providing a specific methodology for achieving this.

The centerpiece of post-structuralism is language. Drawing upon postmodern assumptions, language is not seen to reflect or mirror social reality but rather it is viewed as producing meaning and constructing social reality (Burr, 1995). As a result language is seen to influence not only how individuals come to

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understand and experience their social worlds but also how individuals come to understand their own identity within these worlds. As Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) observe, "language is how social organization and power are defined and contested and the place where one's self- one's subjectivity – is constructed" (p. 961). The notion of the self as a product of language and social interaction is regarded as anti-essentialism or anti-humanism. Such a position recognizes that the multiple and changing meanings inherent in language ensures a fragmented, shifting and temporary identity that is constantly in flux depending on whom one is speaking to, and with what purpose (Burr, 1995). Subsequently, this fluid conception of identity requires post-structuralists to focus on partial, situated, and relative understandings of knowledge as different contexts are considered to be capable of producing different subjects, subjectivities, social relations, and social realities (Taylor, 2001). As Richardson and St Pierre (2005) note, "language is not the result of one's individuality; rather language constructs one's subjectivity in ways that are historically and locally specific" (p. 961).

The assumptions that underpin both postmodernism and post-structuralism resonate with my ontological and epistemological beliefs. My subjective understanding of knowledge supports the focus on local and partial understandings of knowledge as opposed to the universal meta-narratives of modernism. My ontological position of internal-idealism similarly supports the rejection of essentialist forms of identity and supports the notion that through language individuals may construct and perceive multiple social realities and multiple and changing subjectivities.

When detailing the relationship between postmodernism and post-structuralism as they pertain to research, Wright (2006) suggests that the strength of post structuralism is its ability to provide more specific analytical tools in the form of 'discourse analysis' with which to interrogate language and its role in the construction of knowledge and social realities. Within the respective realms of both sport, and gender studies, there has been in recent years, a growing assertion that the work of Michael Foucault, including his understanding of discourse and discourse analysis, must be explored and utilised if new questions, answers and ways of knowing are to be found (Andrews, 1993; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Markula & Pringle, 2006 Petersen, 2003; Pringle, 2005).

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Michel Foucault

Foucault has variously been described as both a poststructuralist and a postmodernist; however, he characteristically preferred not to identify himself with either of these labels (Foucault, 2003a). Foucault disagreed with traditional models of power which assumed that power was possessed and wielded from centralized sources in a repressive manner (Sawicki, 1991). Instead Foucault viewed power as something that was exercised in a relational manner, emanated from the depths of society in a capillary like manner and was primarily productive in its use (Markula & Pringle, 2006). When describing the workings of power, Foucault (1980a) considered that:

> Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application. (p. 98)

By viewing individuals as both the vehicles and targets of power, Foucault's examination of power focuses upon "relations between individuals or between groups" (Pringle, 2003, p. 35). As Foucault (1997a) describes, Power is relations; power is not a thing, it is a relationship between two individuals, a relationship which is such that one can direct the behaviour of another or determine the behaviour of another (p. 155). Indeed Foucault stated that he always used the term 'power' as a "shortcut to the expression… the relationships of power" (Foucault, 2003b, p. 34).

This relational understanding of power rejects the notion that power can be exclusively possessed or held instead, power exists only as exercised by some on others and only when it is put into action to help guide another's conduct or direct the possible field of action by others (Foucault, 2003). These power relations permeate all levels of social existence and are therefore to be found operating at every site of social life (Hall, 2001). As a result power is considered to be everywhere "not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (Foucault, 1978, p. 93). This relational understanding of power assumes that "power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free" (Foucault, 2003c, p. 139). Whilst acknowledging that power relations

are not always balanced, "the struggle, of course, is not symmetrical, the power situation is not the same" (Foucault, 1997b, p. 167), Foucault views power as flowing or shifting between people, not from one person *onto* another. This means that within a relation of power "there is necessarily the possibility of resistance, for if there were no possibility of resistance (of violent resistance, flight, deception, strategies capable of reversing the situation), there would be no relations of power" (Foucault, 2003b, p. 34). Finally Foucault sees power as not primarily repressive, but productive (Sawicki, 1991):

> If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think that one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. (Foucault 1980b, p. 119)

The ability of power to produce knowledge and 'truth' is central to Foucault's understanding of 'how' power works. Foucault stated that "the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power" (as cited in Gordon, 2000, p. xvi). Foucault used the concept of discourse to describe, represent and analyse this relationship between knowledge, power and 'truth'. As Foucault (1980a) observed:

> In any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth. (p. 93)

Foucault (1972) described three ways within which discourses can act to create objects of knowledge, new bodies of information and ultimately, power and 'truth'. In this regard, Foucault considered the term 'discourse' to be a fluctuating concept suggested that discourse could refer to:

- the general domain of all statements
- an individualizable group of statements

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- a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements (Foucault, 1972, p.80)

Explaining Foucault's understanding of discourse, Markula and Pringle (2006) suggest that discourse, as a reference to 'the general domain of statements', "is concerned with statements that coalesce within specific social contexts and have some particular meaning or effect" (p. 29). This is to say that meaning and meaningful practise is constructed within discourse and that nothing has any meaning outside of discourse. So although a rugby ball may physically exist, as an oddly shaped piece of rubber, it has no meaning, as a rugby ball, without the discourse of rugby. Actions are also devoid of meaning without discourse. Whilst it cannot be denied that the action of a rugby tackle is tangible and real, without the discourse of rugby another discourse must be found to give that action meaning. For example, without the discourse of rugby a tackle may be understood within the discourse of law as assault. As meaning can only be constructed within discourse Foucault considers objects of discourse and the discourse that constitutes those objects to emerge at the same time.

The second usage of the term discourse which refers to 'an individualizable group of statements' or to statements that refer to the same phenomenon is seen to encompass all the ways within which an object is referred to or described (Markula & Pringle, 2006). This could include a combination of unified and consistent statements that refer to an object but it can also include divergent statements that refer to the same thing. For example, rugby players can be described amongst various other things, as skilful, violent, disciplined and/or aggressive. Whilst these statements may make different and sometimes contradictory claims about the same object they combine to create a conception or representation of what it means to be a rugby player as opposed to what it means to be a soccer player.

In expanding upon the third understanding of discourse, as a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements, Markula and Pringle (2006) suggest that:

> By this usage Foucault is referring to the unwritten 'rules' that guide social practices and help to produce and regulate the production of statements that, correspondingly, control what can be understood and perceived but at the same time, act to obscure. (p. 31)

For example, the various discourses which constitute rugby players as tough, stoic, and unemotional ensure that the theatrical and emotional appeals or confrontations that occur in soccer are absent from the rugby field. Within this context the discourses of rugby may be viewed as producing respectful and disciplined behaviour however it can also be seen to obscure actions that express joy, frustration or sorrow.

Although Foucault's understanding of discourse appears to focus exclusively on language and the usage of statements, this does not suggest that discourses should be treated simply as linguistic phenomena (Holstein & Gubrium, 2005). Foucault (1972) considers that discourses in the form which they can be heard or read are not merely an intersection of "things and words: an obscure web of things, and a manifest, visible coloured chain of words" (p. 48), nor did he view discourses simply as bodies of ideas, ideologies, or other symbolic formations but instead he regarded them as "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972, p. 49). In this regard, Foucault used the concept of discourse to explain how historically and culturally located systems of power, knowledge, and 'truth' act to construct social worlds and the subjects that exist within these worlds (Holstein & Gubrium, 2005). Given that discourses act to create meaning, describe, and regulate, "they can accordingly be regarded as constraining or structuring the "order of things" or perceptions of reality including knowledge of self and others" (Pringle & Markula, 2005, p. 476).

Acknowledging that discourses act to shape our understanding of self, Foucault sought to analyse "the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects" (Foucault, 2003c, p. 126). Essentially, how individuals acquire, form, or create 'identities'. Like the concept of power Foucault disagreed with traditional understandings of 'the human subject'. Foucault rejected the notion of 'the subject' as an individual who is fully endowed with consciousness; an autonomous and stable entity that acts as an independent and authentic source of meaning (Hall, 2001 p. 79). As Foucault (1989) claimed "I don't think there is actually a sovereign, founding subject, a universal form of subject that one could find everywhere. I am very sceptical and very hostile toward this conception of the subject" (p. 452). This re-examination of 'the subject' was made possible by Foucault's understanding of power. He saw the

subject not as an essential element that acted as "the vis-a-vis of power" but rather, through the workings of discourse, as "one of its prime effects" (Foucault, 1980a, p. 98). This conception of identity positions Foucault as an anti-essentialist or anti-humanist. Whilst an essentialist understanding of identity would argue that,

> when we hear ourselves speak, we feel we are identical with what has been said. And this identity of the subject with what is said gives him or her a privileged position in relation to meaning. It suggests that, although other people may misunderstand us, we always understand ourselves because we were the source of meaning in the first place. (Hall, 2001, p. 79)

Foucault would argue that when we hear ourselves speak it is discourse not the subjects who speak. To think of one's self as a rugby player has no meaning without discourse. Firstly we require the discourse of rugby to give meaning to the words 'rugby player'. Secondly we need groups of statements that define and differentiate a rugby player from other possible subjects such as a tennis player. Thirdly we need the unwritten rules and regulations created by discourse to define what behaviour and actions we should undertake in order to be recognised as a rugby player. Thus, Foucault conceives it is discourse that constructs the knowledge about, and actions of, a subject not the subject themselves.

Referring to the role that discourses play in the understanding, identification and constitution of subjects. Foucault was greatly interested in the ability of discourse to control, judge and normalise subjects in such a way that they were "destined to a certain mode of living or dying" (Foucault, 1980a, p.94). He used the term "technologies of domination" to describe this process (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 38). Foucault's understanding of 'technologies of domination' not only acknowledged that discourses could limit the field of possible actions in power relations but that power could also act in a disciplinary manner. Foucault (1995) considered that disciplinary power,

> 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise... The success of disciplinary power derives no doubt from the use of simple instruments; hierarchical observation, normalising judgement and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination. (p. 170)

This is not to say that people are 'discursive dupes', ignorant and helpless to the power of discourse and technologies of domination (Pringle, 2003). Within Foucauldian theorizing, power works in a relational, omnipresent and productive manner. So although individuals may be viewed as subject to the power of discourse they are also considered to be active subjects within power relations (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 137). As such Foucault conceded that it is possible for an individual to choose to transform his/her identity by engaging in a process that he labelled the technologies of the self (Markula, 2003). Foucault (2003) considered that technologies of the self,

> permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality. (p. 146)

Simply put, technologies of the self is how a human being turns him or herself into a subject (Markula & Pringle, 2006). Whilst this theoretical position gives the subject a certain reflexive awareness of his or her own conduct, Foucault still stopped short of restoring the subject to his/her full sovereignty (Hall, 2001). As Foucault (1980c) asserted, an individual "with his identity and characteristics, is the product of a relations of power exercised over bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires, forces" (p. 74). Thus it is not possible to conceptualise an essentialist form of identity which exists outside of power relations and allows individuals to exercise entirely free choice.

Foucault used the process of subjectivation to describe how an individual can transform themselves within the power relations of discourse, technologies of domination and technologies of self. Subjectivation is the process whereby an individual acquires an identity within power relations that both 'subjugate and make subject to'. "This process is two-fold: first it makes the individual a subject to someone else by control and dependence, and second it ties him/her in his/her own identity by conscience or self-knowledge" (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 138). As Hollway (2001, p. 277) observes, "discourses make available positions for subjects to take up", however, these possible positions are always formed in relation to other people. For example, an individual who wishes to be identified as a teacher must subject themselves to the rules and regulations of the discourse

of teaching in order to be recognised / identified as a teacher. This could include unwritten rules and expectations that dictate how an individual should talk, act and think in order to be identified as a teacher. However, individuals do not simply and blindly adhere to the rules and regulations of a discourse; rather, they attempt to locate themselves as subjects within the range of positions made available by a discourse or discourses, in order to utilise the power of these discourses. Within the discourse of teaching an individual could take the subject-position of a 'mean teacher' a 'fair teacher' or an 'easy teacher'. By taking such a subject-position the individual not only subjects themselves to the meanings, and regulation of the discourse and the relevant subject positions, in this case how a teacher should think and act, but they also become the bearer and relayer of power which that discourse produces. As such this enables them, within context, to alter power relations in order to influence others (students).

Although it may appear that discourses have regulatory intentions, this does not mean that they ultimately result in regulatory outcomes. As Markula and Pringle (2006) note, the complex workings of discourse are "influential in the construction of 'subjects' or, more specifically, disunited or fragmented subjects" (p. 30). There are several reasons why discourses produce disunited or fragmented subjects. Firstly, Foucault recognised that an individual's subjectivity is influenced by others through power relations,

> each individual is, therefore, caught in a network of power relations through which s/he constitutes her/himself as a subject acting on others: s/he is subjected to control but also has some freedom to use power to control others. However, while individuals can influence these relations, they are also influenced by them: power relations simultaneously make the individual an object and produce her/him as a subject. In other words, an individual becomes a subject within such power relations. (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 138)

The ever changing dynamics of these power relations ensure that a stable, consistent subject is never achieved. Secondly, it is recognised that discourses themselves are in a state of constant reconstitution and contestation. Discourses do not exist in isolation they are "fluid and often opportunistic, at once and the same time, drawing upon existing discourses about an issue whilst utilizing, interacting with, and being mediated by, other dominant discourses... to produce

potent and new ways of conceptualizing the issue or topic" (Carabine, 2001, p. 269). For example, the discourse of rugby is variously influenced by discourses of sport, masculinity, health, nationalism and sexuality amongst others. Thus as these discourses influence and change each other, subjectivities which are influenced by the discourses of rugby will also change. Thirdly, not all discourses have the same force. Some discourses are more powerful than others and have more authority or validity (Carabine, 2001). Furthermore, the balance of power may change with time and place, "depending on where one is and what role... one's allegiances and interests will shift" (Sawicki, 1991, p. 26). For example, whilst an individual may be influenced by the discourses of fatherhood, rugby, friendship and professionalism these discourse will hold different authority or validity depending on the context of the situation and the stage of their life. Finally as Foucault (1995) recognised, the disciplinary power of discourses is not always successful in determining the shape of people: "instead of bending all its subjects into a single uniform mass it separates, analyses, differentiates, carries its procedures of decomposition to the point of necessary and sufficient single units" (p. 170). As Carabine (2001) describes, the "normalization process of discourses produces differentiating effects and fragmented impacts being variously regulatory, penalizing or affirmative in respect to different groups" (p. 279). So whilst several different individuals may undertake the same action, such as participate in rugby, the discourse of rugby will position these individuals in different ways. It may be seen to have a regulatory effect on those who are influenced, coerced or forced to play the game instead of other team sports such as soccer. It can be seen to have a penalizing effect on those people who are not good at the game or people whom the discourse prescribes should not play such as woman or non-athletic boys. It can also be seen to have an affirmative effect on those who are good at the game or are supposed to play (athletic boys). Whilst this is not a definitive list of the ways within which the disciplinary techniques employed within sport 'makes' individuals, it allows us to understand the process by which a multitude of subject positions such as losers, wimps, the unskilled, the unfit, athletes, winners, and champions are produced. By acknowledging that 'identity' represents the workings of power as connected to available discourses, technologies of domination, technologies of self and relations of power; Foucault

presents multiple vantage points from which to understand and examine identity construction, including the creation of disunited and fragmented subjectivities.

My ontological, epistemological and paradigmatic positions resonate with Foucauldian theorizing on a number of levels. Firstly Foucault's (1972) assertion that 'nothing has any meaning outside of discourse', represents a constructivist understanding of knowledge whereby people live in a social world that we are continuously in the process of constructing. This understanding of reality aligns itself with my ontological position of internal-idealism. Secondly, Foucault's understanding of power and its ability to work in a relational, omnipresent and productive manner fits with my subjective epistemology. Like Foucault, I see knowledge "as the outcome or consequence of human activity, that is, knowledge is a human construction, which means that it can never be certifiable as ultimately true but rather it is problematic and ever changing" (Sparkes, 1992, p. 26). Furthermore, although Foucault was reluctant to adopt the label of postmodernism many of his thoughts reflect the values of postmodern paradigms. This includes his criticism of "the inhibiting effect of global, totalitarian theories" (Foucault, 1980a, p. 80) and his affirmation of localised and subjugated knowledges "whose validity is not dependent on the approval of the established regimes of thought" (Foucault, 1980a, p. 81).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have outlined the relationship between research paradigms and questions of ontology and epistemology. More specifically I have identified how my ontological and epistemological positions of internal-idealism and subjectivity correspond with the postmodern rejection of universal truths and the conception of a social world that is objective and external to the minds of individuals. In this regard I am drawn to the postmodern research paradigm as a place where researchers can,

> reconfigure knowledge so that its uncertainty and incompleteness is acknowledged. Disciplinary boundaries, the separation of science from ideology and the division between power and knowledge are all challenged. In human studies, absolute knowledge, universal categories and grand theories are abandoned in favour of local, historical and pragmatic enquiries that alert us to and encourage tolerance of social differences. The abstracted

rational knowing subject is replaced by multiple subjects in multiple local situations with multiple identities and multiple knowledges. This, the postmodernists argue, enables us to recognize and aspire to altered relations between knowledge and power and provides a critical edge, an opportunity to live our lives differently. (Halfpenny, 2001, p. 382)

At the same time I have also attempted to illustrate the relationship between postmodernism and post-structuralism, as these concepts relate to research. I have suggested that within the sensibilities and assumptions of postmodernism, post-structuralism provides some semblance of methodology from which to conduct social research. Finally I have attempted to link post-structualist understandings of knowledge, truth and language to Michel Foucualt's theories on power, subjectivity and discourse. In the following chapter I will provide a review of literature that has examined the relationship between sport, gender and identity.

CHAPTER THREE
Sport, Gender and Identity

The problem of identity is becoming a central, even fashionable one... Much of the attention given to this issue is explained by the continuing development of feminist theory and studies which have succeeded in establishing the idea of gender as a key concept in understanding the social process. (Hill & Williams, 1996, p. 1)

In this chapter I review the literature surrounding sport, gender studies and male identity. I begin by providing an overview of the research, debates, and conceptual shifts that have led to current theoretical understandings of gender and masculinities. Following this I detail the assumptions and concepts that underpin Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity. I also review critiques of hegemonic masculinity and detail the differences between a hegemonic approach and a Foucauldian approach to gender studies. Next I review research that has examined the relationship between rugby and masculinities in various international settings. This is followed by a more specific examination of research that has studied the relationship between rugby and masculinities in schools. Throughout this process I intend clarify how my own assumptions regarding the nature of knowledge, reality and research influence my understanding of the relevant perspectives and theories involved.

By the early 1970s, sport studies had illuminated the relationship between sport and racism, class inequality, nationalism, violence, drug use and other social issues (Kimmel & Aronson, 2004). However, if Messner and Sabo (1990a) are to be believed, the concept of gender was "conspicuously absent from most analyses of sport" (p. v). By the late 1970s feminist research had begun to examine the relationship between sport and gender, developing a critique of sport "as a fundamentally sexist institution that is male dominated and masculine in orientation" (Theberge, 1981, p. 342). Despite the proliferation in feminist studies of sport, it was not until the mid 1980s that theoretically informed studies of men, masculinity and sport began to emerge (Messner & Sabo, 1990b, p. 13).

Not limited solely to the context of sport studies, masculinity research has enjoyed considerable growth over the last two decades (Connell, 1998, 2003; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Gard, 2006; Kimmel & Aronson, 2004; Kimmel & Messner, 2004; Mac an Ghaill, 1996; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Risman, 2004). Throughout this time masculinity research has spread to include such diverse areas of social life as crime, violence, education, health and sport (Kimmel & Aronson, 2004; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Masculinity research is considered to be important because "it is hoped that by understanding what creates and maintains a masculinity, new and healthier ways of being masculine can be found" (Clatterbaugh, 1998, p. 25). Despite the popularity of such research the terms 'masculinity' and 'masculinities' have been described as ambiguous, loaded, slippery and difficult (Clatterbaugh, 1998; Donaldson, 1993; Pringle, 2005).

The concept of masculinity has variously been described as:

A discursive accomplishment rather than a natural fact
(Edley, 2001, p. 196)

The meanings that are attached to the differences of biological sex within a culture
(Kimmell & Aronson, 2004)

Configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting.
(Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 836)

The ambiguity or confusion regarding these definitions stems from the different ontological and paradigmatic assumptions that the researchers and readers of masculinity research take. As Connell (1995), acknowledges "gender terms are contested because the right to account of gender is claimed by conflicting discourses and systems of knowledge" (p. 3). As Clatterbaugh (1998), succinctly notes, "whatever masculinity is or masculinities are, they are subjects of theorizing" (p. 25).

The 'natural attitude' towards gender has been cited as a series of unquestionable truths, including the beliefs that there are only two genders; gender is invariant; genitals are the essential signs of gender; the male/female dichotomy is natural; being masculine or feminine is natural and not a matter of choice; all individuals can (and must) be classified as masculine or feminine (Hawkesworth, 1997). Whilst the 'natural attitude' suggests that masculinities are biologically grounded, it is generally agreed that they are "socially and historically constructed" (Clatterbaugh, 1998, p. 25). Studies examining the social construction of gender in the 1970s were dominated by sex role theory (Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1985; Connell, 2003; Kimmel & Aronson, 2004; Messner & Sabo, 1990). Sex role theory suggested that masculinity and femininity were socially constructed sex roles that were consequently acted out by men and women (Carrigan et al., 1985; Edley & Wetherell, 1996; Kimmel & Aronson, 2004; Whitehead, 2002). Social learning theory was used to account for how these sex roles were appropriated and internalized; men and women imitate others of the same sex (role models) and are consequently rewarded by society for their sex appropriate acts, thus encouraging them to repeat this behaviour (Carrigan et al., 1985; Edley & Wetherell, 1996; Kimmel & Aronson, 2004; Whitehead, 2002). Sex role theory suggested that gender behaviour patterns could change if role norms and expectations changed (Connell, 1987). However, several weaknesses of sex role theory were identified, these included a blurring of norm and behaviour, a categorical and often stereotyped and ethnocentric approach to gender, a difficulty in grasping issues of power and inequality, and an inability to explain change (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 2003; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kimmel & Aronson, 2004). For researchers interested in men, one of the major short comings of sex role theory was its inability to satisfactorily explain multiple types of masculinity and the associated power inequalities between these masculinities (Connell, 2005, Gard, 2006; Kimmell & Aronson, 2004). To account for these multiple masculinities and the inequality of power relations existing between them, Carrigan, Connell and Lee, (1985) drew on the work of Antonio Gramsci to develop a theory of hegemonic masculinity.

Hegemonic Masculinity

Antonio Gramsci was an Italian writer, politician and political theorist who whilst serving time as a political prisoner in the 1920s developed his concept of hegemony to explain how a ruling class establishes and maintains control of subordinate groups (Pringle, 2005). Although influenced by Marxism, Gramsci suggested that the ability of a class to rule or dominate another is not solely dependent on economic structures and modes of production but on the ability of the dominant class to promote and reproduce within society the norms and values that reinforce its structural advantage (Sage, 1990). Whilst Gramsci's theory of hegemony represented a top down analysis of power he rejected the traditional Marxist view of power whereby the bourgeoisie (upper class) are viewed as holding power over the proletariat (working class) (Pringle, 2005; Sage, 1990; Sawicki, 1991). Instead Gramsci viewed power as a relational concept that worked through the actions of people (Pringle, 2005; Sawicki, 1991). Although Gramsci acknowledged that social control could be achieved through force via the legal system, the government, the police and the military it was recognized that exclusive reliance upon force would inevitably lead to resistance (Sage, 1990). The term hegemony was therefore used to describe how one group could dominate another through a complex process of consent and coercion associated with a series of cultural, political and ideological practices that persuades the masses to embrace a consensus that supports the status quo (Pringle, 2005; Sage, 1990). This rule by consent or ideological domination "persuades the general public to consider their society and its norms and values to be natural, good, and just, concealing the inherent system of domination" (Kellner, as cited in Sage, 1990, p. 19). Gramsci theorized that hegemony "does not just passively exist as a form of dominance. It has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not all its own" (Williams, as cited in Sage, 1990, p. 20).

Reflecting the principles of Gramsci's theory of hegemony, hegemonic masculinity concerns itself with "how particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth, and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance" (Carrigan et al., 1985, p. 592). Hegemonic masculinity recognizes that cultural, political and ideological means of domination are more effective than the sole reliance upon force. As Connell (1987) notes,

Ascendancy of one group of men over another achieved at the point of a gun, by the threat of unemployment, is not hegemony. Ascendancy which is embedded in religious doctrine and practice, mass media content, wage structures, the design of housing, welfare/taxation policies and so forth is. (Connell, 1987, p. 184)

In this regard, Connell (1995) conceives of hegemonic masculinity as the configuration of gender practice which guarantees the dominant position of men and subordination of women in an unequal gender order. The advantage that "men in general gain" (p. 79) from this unequal gender order is referred to by Connell (1995) as the 'patriarchical dividend'.

A recognised strength, and point of difference from sex role theory, is the ability of hegemonic masculinity to account for multiple forms of masculinity and the power relations that exist between them (Messner, 1990c; Demetriou, 2001). In this regard not all men are viewed as benefitting equally from the patriarchal dividend (Connell, 1987, 1995, 1997). Those men "who have some connection" (Connell, 1995, p. 79) to ideals of hegemonic masculinity are perceived to benefit most from the patriarchal dividend. At the same time, men who are unable to connect to, or draw upon the ideals of hegemonic masculinity "pay part of the price, alongside women, for the maintenance of an unequal gender order" (Connell, 1997, p. 63). This has led to a great deal of debate and theorising as to what hegemonic masculinity looks like in practice (Clatterbaugh, 1998; Miller, 1998; Petersen, 2003; Wetherell & Edley, 1999). Although Connell (1995, p. 77) has described the hegemonic form of masculinity as the "most honoured or desired in a particular context" there is no singular definition of hegemonic masculinity. This is because hegemonic masculinity is considered to be a relational concept that relies upon cultural and historical ideals of masculinity and also because it is considered that "masculinity is not a fixed entity embedded in the body or personality traits of individuals" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 836). Nevertheless research conducted in a variety of different contexts has presented several exemplars of what hegemonic masculinity might look like in its embodied form. These include international business men, surf lifesavers and professional athletes including contact sport participants such as Aussie rules and rugby players, (Connell, 1987, 1998, 2005, Light, 2006). As these examples suggest, hegemonic masculinity is not assumed to be normal in the statistical

sense; only a minority of men might enact it. Consequently, the ideal (or ideals) of hegemonic masculinity need not correspond at all closely to the actual personalities of the majority of men (Connell, 1987, 1995). Indeed it is suggested that the 'winning of hegemony' often involves models of masculinity which are quite specifically fantasy figures (Connell, 1987, 1995). Despite this, hegemonic mascuinity *is* considered to be normative. Due to the status and power accorded to hegemonic conceptions of masculinity, other forms of masculinity must position themselves in relation to it (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Thus within the framework of hegemonic masculinity, meanings and identities are expressed in relation to hegemonic values as either dominant, subordinate, and/or in opposition to the hegemonic form (Connell, 1987, 1995). These relationships are perceived to exist in a continually contested balance of forces and state of play (Connell, 1987, 1995), which allows for the possibility of resistance, challenge and change which could result in older forms of masculinity being displaced by new ones (Connell, 1987, 1995).

Connell's (1987) theory of hegemonic masculinity has been used extensively to help researchers understand the gendering process related to sport and has provided pertinent critiques of heavy contact male dominated sports such as rugby union and American Football (Burgess, Edwards & Skinner, 2003; Chandler, 1999; Chandler & Nauright, 1999a; Light & Kirk, 2000; Light, 2007; Light, 1999; Nauright & Chandler, 1999). As Pringle (2005) observes, "since the late 1980s the concept of hegemonic masculinity... has provided the dominant framework for examinations of the complexities associated with masculinities, sport and gender relations" (p. 256). Despite the popularity of hegemonic masculinity (or because of it), several critiques of hegemonic masculinity have emerged (Demetriou, 2001; Hearn, 1996; Howson, 2006; Martin, 1998; Miller, 1998; Petersen, 2003; Pringle, 2005; Whitehead, 1999).

The concept of hegemonic masculinity has been criticised for being both too ambiguous and in other instances for being too specific (Hearn, 1996; MacInnes, 1998; Martin, 1998; Miller, 1998; Petersen, 2003). Wetherell and Edley (1999) suggest that the ambiguous concept of hegemonic masculinity fails to describe what conformity to hegemonic masculinity might look like in practise and as social psychologists they "wonder about the appropriateness of a definition of dominant masculinity which no man may ever actually embody" (p. 337). Martin

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(1998) suggests that the ambiguous nature of hegemonic masculinity leads to inconsistent application, sometimes referring to a fixed type of masculinity and on other occasions referring to whatever type of masculinity is dominant at that particular time and place. In a similar vein hegemonic masculinity has been criticised for taking a pluralistic approach to gender relations that tends to deemphasize issues of power and domination. As Petersen (2003), notes, "as it became popularised masculinities has sometimes lost its dimension of power and simply come to signify diversity or plurality" (p. 57). At the other end of the scale it has been suggested that the tendency to specify different characteristics of masculinities makes hegemonic masculinity a flawed concept as it essentialises the character of men or imposes a false unity on a fluid and contradictory reality (Hearn, 1996; MacInnes, 1998; Petersen, 2003). As Petersen (2003), notes

> despite scholars' rejection of essentialism, masculinity is often referred to as though it had a definable, distinctive essence… definitions of masculinity often entail little more than the compilation of lists of what are seen to be characteristic masculine qualities or attributes such as aggressivity, competiveness and emotional detachment. (p. 58)

Despite the assertion that hegemonic masculinity utilises an anti essentialist approach to understanding men and masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), it has been suggested that Connell's (1995) theory of four broad categories of masculinities (e.g., hegemonic, subordinate, complicit, and marginalized) acts to "shape research conclusions in a manner that makes it difficult to account for more fluid or ambiguous subjectivities" (Miller, as cited in Pringle, 2005, p. 266). Even Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) acknowledge that "in the huge literature concerned with masculinity, there is a great deal of conceptual confusion as well as a great deal of essentializing" (p. 836).

Aside from concerns of ambiguity and essentialism, it has also been suggested that Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity fails to realistically account for the power relations of everyday life and is essentially dualistic in its nature with masculinities presented as only hegemonic or non-hegemonic (Demetriou, 2001; Miller, 1998; Pringle, 2005; Tomlinson, 1998; Whitehead, 2002). Pringle (2005), in reviewing the work of Messner and Sabo (1990a), concluded that even hegemonic masculinity research that recognized "multiple and dynamically interdependent axes of power" still viewed power "as working in

a manner that either privileged or harmed certain groups of people" (p. 265). This understanding of power within sport reflects Tomlinson's (1998) concern of an "all-or-nothing model" (p. 237), whereby sport is represented as either supporting or resisting hegemonic masculinity. As Miller (1998) observed such an approach makes it difficult to represent an individual whose bodily performances could be interpreted as hegemonic and marginal at the same time. This dualistic model of power (e.g., consent-resistance) has been criticised not only for its failure to accommodate the ambiguities and contradictions of lived experiences but also for its failure to account for change and resistance. Whilst Connell's theory contends that hegemonic forms of masculinity are constantly being contested (Connell, 1987, 2005) it has been suggested that such a dualistic model of power portrays non-hegemonic masculinities as having no effect on the construction of the dominant forms of masculinity (Tomlinson, 1998). As Demetriou (2001) observes, "non-hegemonic masculinities appear only as possible alternatives, as counter-hegemonic forms that exist "in tension with" the hegemonic model but they never penetrate it" (p. 347). Furthermore, as hegemony theory views power as working in a top down manner, whereby the dominant form of masculinity subordinates and marginalises other forms of masculinity, some researchers (Collier, 1998; De Garis, 2000; Demetriou, 2001; Martin, 1998; Pringle, 2005) have questioned whether "hegemonic masculinities can be positive in content" (Martin, 1998, p. 473). Within criminology Collier (1998), contends that a serious defect of hegemonic masculinity is that it acts to exclude "positive" behaviour on the part of men and as a result hegemonic masculinity has come to be associated solely with negative characteristics that depict men as unemotional, independent, non-nurturing, aggressive, and dispassionate. Similarly, Martin (1998) suggests that in other areas of social research there is a tendency to utilise the concept of hegemonic masculinity in a manner that is usually seen as "substantially negative" (p. 473). With regard to sport and gender studies, the prevalence of hegemony based studies has also been attributed to similarly negative understandings of sport and its role in gender and identity construction (De Garis, 2000; Pringle, 2005). De Garis (2000) argued that the idea of sportsmen simply disrupting or contributing "to the gender order" (p.91) is problematic as it creates a bipolar conceptualization making it difficult for researchers to recognize admirable or positive practises within male sporting

culture. Whilst Pringle (2005), acknowledges that hegemony theory can allow for cultural experiences such as sport to be presented in a positive manner he also suggests that hegemonic masculinity research has predominately tended to highlight negative aspects of sport.

Aside from theoretical criticisms, some researchers have expressed concern with the domination of hegemonic masculinity and the subsequent implications of adherence to singular ways of knowing (Pringle, 2005; Petersen, 2003; Star, 1999; Tomlinson, 1998; Whitehead, 1999). In highlighting the need for alternative theoretical perspectives from which to examine sport and masculinities, Pringle (2005) draws on Sparkes' contention that,

> if one voice, or paradigm, dominates then there is real danger that we end up just speaking to ourselves. This can lead to a form of tunnel vision whereby some problems are explored exhaustively while other are not even perceived. (Sparkes, as cited in Pringle, 2005, p. 257)

In offering an alternative to the dominance of hegemonic masculinity it has been suggested that the use of Foucault's ideas and theories may provide new questions, insights and answers for the field of gender and sport studies (Andrews, 1993; Whitehead, 2002; Markula & Pringle, 2006). In this regard, Pringle (2005) suggests,

> …that a turn to Foucault could be advantageous for continued examinations of the complex articulations between sport, masculinities, and relations of power. Rather than justifying what is already known, Foucault's ideas encourage researchers to ask new questions, think differently and allow for the creation of new understandings and possibilities. (p. 273)

Within the field of sport and gender studies, some researchers have attempted to combine aspects of both hegemonic masculinity and Foucauldian theorising, particularly the concepts of hegemony and discourse (Edley & Wetherell, 1997; Light & Kirk, 2000; Light, 2007; Swain, 2006; Wetherell & Edley, 1999). However, Pringle (2005) contends that there are key differences between the two theories that make them relatively incompatible. Whilst Foucault's theories have variously been described as a poststructuralist or postmodernist, Star (1999) considers Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity to be 'tentatively poststructuralist' and Martin (1998, p. 472) considers Connell's theoretical stance to be representative of a "critical realist". Although it could be

argued that both Foucault and Connell have the central intention of "emancipation, that is enabling people to gain the knowledge and power to be in control of their own lives" (Sparkes, 1992, p. 37). The ontological beliefs underpinning both theorists' work are vastly different. Whilst Foucault's theories represent an internal-idealist approach to social reality, Connell's social research is based upon external-realism. This is because hegemony theory dictates that social reality is not simply constructed by the beliefs, ideas, interactions and experiences of individuals but is also structured and shaped by oppressive social structures, historical forces, and economic and material conditions. In this regard, the perceived oppressive social structure of the gender order is central to hegemonic masculinity. As Connell (1987) describes,

> The organization of gender on the very large scale must be more skeletal and simplified than the human relationships in face-to-face milieux. The forms of femininity and masculinity constituted at this level are stylized and impoverished. Their interrelation is centred on a single structural fact, the global dominance of men over women. This structural fact provides the main basis for relationships among men that define a hegemonic form of masculinity in the society as a whole. (p. 183)

It is suggested that such a structuralist approach to understanding gender and identity does little to tell us about men and masculinities. Whitehead (1999, 2002) argues that the underlying "macrostructural" concept of hegemonic masculinity can see only structure, making the subject invisible. Similarly, Miller (1998) suggests that the structuralism of hegemonic masculinity may direct too much attention to the place of gender in the construction of subjectivities by ignoring or failing to account for actions that fall outside the structure of domination, subordination and resistance.

> Does it allow for a time when men are not being men, when their activities might be understood as discontinuous, conflicted, and ordinary, rather than interconnected, functional, and dominant – when nothing they do relates to the overall domination of women or their own self-formation as a gendered group? (Miller, 1998, p. 433)

In this regard, Cocks (as cited in Pringle, 2005) suggests, "it is far too simplistic to represent males as holders of power who wield power self-consciously and with malignant intent and the oppressed sex as powerless, innocent and blind" (p. 269).

In opposition to the structuralist, top-down approach of hegemonic masculinity. Pringle (2005) suggests that a Foucauldian examination of power in the male sport world would not specifically "aim to identify ruling groups but would likely aim to examine the power effects of discourses of gender and the "strategical integration" of these discourses within sporting contexts" (p. 270). Without negating the recognition that sport is influential within gendering processes, Foucauldian theorising rejects a structuralist and repressive understanding of power and "accepts that the exercising of power and resistance within these processes are multifacted" (Pringle, 2005, p. 268).

In summary, social research concerning gender studies has been influenced by a variety of theoretical perspectives. Whilst sex role theory strongly influenced research in the 1970s, Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity has come to dominate research in recent years. The prevalence and domination of hegemony based research within sport and gender studies has led to multiple critiques of hegemonic masculinity. This in turn has led to appeals for new directions and approaches to the study of sport and gender relations. In this regard it has been suggested that the use of Michel Foucault's ideas could "encourage researchers to ask new questions, think differently and allow for the creation of new understandings and possibilities" (Pringle, 2005 p. 273). Whilst acknowledging the valuable contribution that Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity has made to sport and gender studies, I find it difficult to reconcile his "tentatively poststructuralist" understanding of masculinities with my own ontological position of internal idealism and my preference for postmodern research paradigms. Furthermore, I agree with Pringle's (2005) assertion that the continued dominance of hegemonic masculinity within sport and gender studies "risks repetition and redundancy within future research" (p. 273). As such I consider that a turn to Foucault could be advantageous for continued examinations of sport, masculinities and power relations. By utilising Foucault's anti-essentialist understanding of 'the self', and his recognition that discourses constitute power relations as well as unstable, disunited, and fragmented subjectivities, I hope to be able to better understand and reveal the complexities associated with the constitution of gendered subjectivities.

In the following chapter I will review studies that have utilised Connell's, and Foucault's theories to examine rugby, masculinities and identity. As I intend

to examine the influence of rugby participation upon the identity of students in an international school, I will focus my literature review on those studies that have involved international, and school based studies of rugby and masculinities.

Rugby, masculinity and identity

The prevailing perception regarding the relationship between sport and masculinity is epitomized by Whitson (1990) who suggests that sport has become, "one of the central sites in the social production of masculinity" (p.19). Reflecting the dominance of Connell's theory, much of this research has identified sport as a central instrument for the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity (Light, 2007). In particular, body contact, confrontational sports have been singled out (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Pringle, 2003). Whether it is through participation, opposition, resistance, complicity or media consumption, contact sports have been identified as constructing not only individual understandings of masculinity but they have also been shown to support the ascendance of hegemonic masculinity and the continued marginalization and subordination of other types of masculinities (Chandler & Nauright, 1999a; Light & Kirk, 2000; Messner, 1990a, 1990b; Nauright & Chandler, 1999). Studies examining the relationship between contact sports and masculinities have involved a variety of different codes however there is a considerable body of research specific to rugby (Chandler & Nauright, 1999a; Light, 2007; Light & Kirk, 2000; Nauright & Chandler, 1999; Pringle, 2003; Pringle & Markula, 2005). Nauright and Chandler (1999), suggest that for over a century, rugby has been closely linked to concepts of masculinity; whilst Light (2007), contends that "there is now a considerable body of literature identifying the ways in which heavy contact, combative sports such as rugby reproduces hegemonic forms of masculinity across a range of cultures and institutional settings (p. 323).

Within the context of global and cultural settings, the relationship between rugby, masculinities, and identity has been documented in a number of countries particularly England and areas where British settlers predominated (Chandler & Nauright, 1999b). Many of these studies have been conducted from a historical perspective and although they cover a range of different times, cultures and countries, it is generally found that within the context of time and place, the sport of rugby and its cultural practices have acted to privilege, produce and or

reproduce culturally dominant conceptions of masculinity. Dunning and Sheard (1979), Phillips (1999) and Martens (1999) have all respectively illustrated how rugby in Britain, New Zealand and Wales has at different times in history "encouraged the retention of standards of masculinity in which physical toughness, strength and courage were emphasized" (Phillips, 1999, p. 75). Conversely, Terret (1999) found that in the late nineteenth century, rugby in France reflected a form of masculinity that combined the, "aristocratic demand for elegance with the bourgeois emphasis on individual performance" (p. 67). Despite this rugby was still seen to support hegemonic masculinity by espousing the masculine values of the ruling class. "Rugby thus provided the opportunity to demonstrate the qualities of dexterity, speed and quick decision-making that were the prerogatives of the upper classes; in contrast, strength was a value that was neither admired nor sought after" (p. 67). Whilst rugby has been identified as vehicle through which ruling classes have attempted to institutionalise and reinforce their values and beliefs (Chandler, 1999; Terret, 1999), it has also been associated with the establishment and maintenance of a gender order that acts to subordinate women and privilege men. Terret (1999) suggests that in late nineteenth century France, rugby participation contributed to the gender order and subordination of women by providing rugby players with a public forum with which to emphasize their differences "vis-à-vis women and creating places from which they could naturally be excluded or reduced to the role of spectator" (p. 68). Similarly, Andrews, (1999) used rugby to examine how the "masculine hegemony of nationalism works" (p.66). He describes how in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Wales, rugby was "transformed into a high-profile symbol of a vibrant, and self-confident, male-orientated Welsh national ideology" (p. 53). This relationship between rugby and national identity in Wales was seen to reinforce the dominance of the male, and subordination of female sectors of the population. In a similar fashion Bonini, (1999), Grundlingh (1999) and Phillips (1999) have also respectively demonstrated how rugby was used to foster nationalist values of masculinity in Italy, South Africa and New Zealand. Along with the subordination of women, historical analyses of rugby have positioned the game as a proponent of other negative aspects of hegemonic masculinity such as the marginalisation of subordinate masculinities. This includes the like of Maori

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men in New Zealand (MacLean, 1999), and Coloured and African men in South Africa (Morrell, 1999).

Although rugby has been predominately portrayed as reinforcing and reproducing the ideals of hegemonic masculinity, several studies have illustrated situations whereby rugby is seen to act as a point of resistance to hegemonic masculinity. Nauright and Black (1999) argue that the Springbok Tour protest of the 1970s and 1980s created counter-hegemonic openings which "temporarily shook the old white male hegemony." Despite this Nauright (1999) asserts that within both South Africa and New Zealand, "rugby in the professional era is re-emerging in a new form with new levels of cultural power and meaning" and that the "links between rugby and hegemonic masculinity in both societies demonstrate the power of male elites to fend off challenges to historically grounded practices" (p. 241-242). Studies conducted in North America have also identified rugby as a point of resistance to hegemonic values. In the U.S.A, both men and women's rugby is considered as the 'other' in relation to American Football's longstanding hegemony (Chandler, 1999a). Chandler (1999a) suggests that this positioning gives rugby the potential to be a site of resistance to the athletic mainstream. Supporting the view of rugby as a practice of resistance, Donnelly and Young (1985) have argued that, "rugby subculture is a form of resistance to middle-class norms on the part of (mostly) middle class males". Similarly, for rugby-playing non-Americans studying or working in the United States, rugby is seen to provide a site of resistance to cultural assimilation (Chandler, 1999). Reflecting Tomlinson's concerns of a monolithic power structure it is suggested that the powerful associations between rugby and hegemonic masculinity are not so easily discarded. Wenner (as cited in Chandler, 1999) has argued that the strong association between public drinking and rugby in the U.S.A has allowed the sport to function as "the nexus of a holy trinity of alcohol, sports and hegemonic masculinity." Despite rugby's positioning as the 'other' in the relation to hegemonic masculinity, Chandler (1999a) contends that the actions of rugby players both on and off the field do not always relate to a resistive effort, particularly in regard to the domination of women and/or homosexuals, and their own formation as a gendered group. Similarly, Carle and Nauright (1999) suggest that although women in their study who play rugby are:

directly challenging the hegemonic structure that surrounds and defines contemporary sporting cultures… it is clear that the situation for women involved in the playing of these sports is more complex and cannot be reduced to resistant cultural practices. The players, although apparently stretching the boundaries of feminine-appropriate behaviour, conform to male expectations of how they should 'perform' their roles in rugby on and off the field. (p. 146)

Ultimately Chandler (1999a) considers it a limited view that portrays rugby in the U.S.A as always a site of resistance.

Taking a Foucauldian approach Pringle (2003) examined the relationships between rugby, masculinities and identity within New Zealand. Within New Zealand society, Pringle (2003) identified three dominating discourses of rugby that were invested in everyday practises and circulated with particular prominence within male peer groups in school environments. One discourse constituted rugby as the national game, despite the knowledge that the game was played almost exclusively by males. A second discourse acted to identify rugby as a sport specifically for males whilst a third discourse positioned rugby as an exciting but rough sport. These discursive understandings of rugby led Pringle (2003) to suggest that within New Zealand the understanding of rugby as a game for men is grounded in sexist beliefs. Furthermore, Pringle (2003) found that rugby acted to support the dominating ideals of masculinity by promoting the perception that "males should be, or appear to be, tough, relatively unemotional, tolerant of pain, competitive and, at times, aggressive" (p. 233). Despite the significant influence that rugby within New Zealand has upon the understanding of masculinities, Pringle (2003) suggests that this does not result in the simple affirmation and reproduction of dominating discourses of masculinity. In this regard, the cultural dominance of rugby was also seen to act as a point of resistance from which the dominant ideals of masculinity could be challenged. In this manner, the dominance of rugby encouraged some men "to be critical of discourses of masculinity that encourage males to be aggressive, tolerant of pain, hyper-competitive, and unemotional" (p. 237). In reflecting upon these findings Pringle and Markula (2005) suggest that men may act to both disturb and support dominating discourses of masculinity. In this regard, Pringle's (2003) Foucauldian analysis of rugby and masculinities questions the extent to which

contact sports, like rugby, should be primarily regarded as producers of dominant and problematic masculinities.

In summary, studies examining rugby and masculinities at the international level have drawn primarily on Connell's (1987) theory of hegemonic masculinity. These studies have suggested that rugby acts to produce and/or reproduce hegemonic masculinity at the expense of women and subordinated masculinities. Furthermore, any potential for resistance to hegemonic masculinity through rugby is seen to be short-lived or insufficient to influence the dominance of hegemonic masculinity. These findings reinforce Tomlinson's (1998) concern of a monolithic power structure within sport that is immune to change. Adopting a Foucauldian approach to sport and gender issues, Pringle (2003) suggests that rugby acts a complex medium for producing masculinities and as such can be viewed as both reinforcing and undermining hegemonic ideals of masculinity. The scarcity of Foucauldian based examinations of rugby, masculinities and identity reflects the dominance of Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity in relation to sport and gender studies, particularly with regard to heavy contact sports such as rugby. In the following section of this chapter I shall further refine my review of literature by examining studies involving rugby, masculinities and schools.

School rugby and masculinities

Within the context of institutional settings the relationship between school sport and the reproduction and maintenance of hegemonic forms of masculinity has been given considerable attention (Haywood & Mac an Ghaill, 1996; Kimmel & Aronson, 2004; Light and Kirk, 2000; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Swain, 2006;). Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (1996) consider schools as 'masculinity making devices" (p.79) and although Connell (1996), acknowledges that "school is not the only institution shaping masculinities, and may not be the most important" (p. 211), it is considered that schools, individually and collectively, serve as sites in which gender identity is formed (Swain, 2006). For the purposes of this study I will focus on those studies that have examined the relationship between school, rugby and masculinities.

It is widely recognized that the introduction of organized sport into schools originated from deliberate attempts by ruling class hegemonies in the late and 19th and 20th century Britain and America to control the character development of school-aged males (Kimmel, 1990; McKay, 1991; Messner, 1992). With the societal changes of the industrial revolution, including increasing female empowerment it was considered that if boys were to "one day administer the Empire" (Messner, 1992, p. 10) then they would need training and discipline in how to be a man.

> Hence, headmasters in privileged schools in Britain instigated sport not for the mere pleasure of physical exercise, but for the inculcation of ideological values. Through sport, unruly males were taught social control and deference to authority. Through sport, nationalism and social class status were reinforced. Most significantly, through sport hegemonic definitions of what constituted an acceptable male were created. (Burgess et al. p. 2003)

Examining the development of rugby in British public schools in the 19th century Dunning and Sheard (1979) suggest that the social functions underlying the development of rugby were: "facilitating the expression of canalized aggression, providing a traditional sense of masculinity and promoting a male preserve against the erosion of male hegemony" (p.14). Similarly, in charting the establishment of rugby in English public schools from1830-1880 Chandler (1999) notes that rugby was used as an educational tool to achieve Christian muscularity, manliness, morality, nationalism and health as these qualities represented the hegemonic values of the nineteenth-century elite whose son's inhabited the public schools of the time. From a South African perspective, Morrell (1994) identified the ways in which boys' schools in Natal from 1880-1930 supported a physically resilient and often brutal form of masculinity through institutionalized violence, hierarchical practices such as fagging, organized contact sports (rugby in particular), and rigid and often violent enforcement of school discipline. When considering the contemporary relevance of historical examinations of school boy rugby, White and Vagi (1990), suggest that "by retreating to the historically established masculine domain of rugby… men may find a forum to reaffirm masculinity in an unambiguously male arena (p.78). Similarly, Nauright (1999) considers that nostalgia for mythical masculinities of the past plays an important role in the reproduction of hegemonic masculinities in contemporary rugby.

Contemporary examinations of school boy rugby have been conducted in a variety of countries including Wales, England, N.Z, Australia, and Japan. Whilst investigating high school rugby in Japan, Light (1999) suggested that the intense public attention paid to the national high school rugby championships is indicative of the significance of school sport as a form of socialization within the country. Light (1999) describes the national high school rugby championship as a "festival for the celebration of dominant cultural ideals and the spiritual and moral health of the nation's youth" (p. 2). In this regard school boy rugby was identified as a significant site for the embodiment of dominant culture and the construction of hegemonic masculinity" (Light, 1999, p. 3). Although, Light (1999) recognized that much of the masculinity that can be identified in Japanese rugby is derived from the very same ideals of manliness which shape rugby around the world, he also acknowledged that the relationship between native and Western values in Japanese society is dynamic and in a state of constant change. Consequently Light (1999) suggested that changes in the practice of rugby in schools and the type of masculinities that shape rugby in Japan could also occur.

In examining the process of identity-construction for young males in a private, academic focused school, Burgess, Edwards and Skinner (2003) concluded that for many students "everyday efforts to be seen as normal were far more pressing than issues of assessment" (p. 203). Furthermore, sporting prowess not scholastic achievement emerged as the primary point of reference from which students could position their identities. Whilst not drawing exclusively on Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity Burgess et al. (2003) noted that for hegemonic masculinity "to be culturally exalted, the pattern of masculinity must have exemplars who are celebrated as heroes" (p. 202). In this regard, it was suggested that the students in the first XV rugby team provided such exemplars. Members of the first XV were referred to as 'tough' and 'big' and even as 'gods'. The climate of reverence that surrounded these rugby players was fostered through school institutions such as the year book as well as through the admiration of fellow students and teachers alike. In this setting, Burgess et al. (2003) found that rugby shaped not only the identity of those students who participated in rugby but also those students who did not participate in rugby or other sports.

Such is the defining power of sport, that those boys or young men who
avoid sport or refrain from involvement in it are not exempted from its
constituting force, but are on the contrary constituted as particular selves by
that non-involvement. (p. 208)

The socially dominant position that rugby players held in this school led Burgess
et al. (2003) to conclude that teenage males "draw variously on signifying
contexts" in rugby to construct their understandings of who they 'are' and as such,
rugby is strongly implicated in the construction of masculine identities. At the
same time Burgess et al. (2003) observed that despite the seemingly dominant
hegemonic position that the rugby playing students held, they did not benefit
unproblematically from the 'patriarchal dividend' (Connell, 1995, p. 82).
Concerns for the risks they were taking with their health, were either ignored or
reframed as masculinising experiences. As Burgess et al. (2003) note "the
association between aggressive performance in sport and confirmation of
masculinity was thus clearly in evidence" (p. 204). Being part of such a dominant
social group also consumed the identity of the rugby players and precluded other
forms of identification that they might have taken. As rugby players the students
were glorified and constituted as fully fledged individuals solely on the basis of
their identity as members of the first XV. As Burgess et al. (2003), describe this
proved problematic for some players:

Yet, despite the accolades and glorification they received, the members of
the First Fifteen did not have an unproblematic path to self-realisation. For
them sport was a double-edged sword. It accorded them status and
credibility, but it welded them as 'tough uncompromising footballers' to
narratives that linked masculinity with displays of violence and aggression
which were at odds with other expectations about self-presentation
circulating within the school. Consequently, the signifying power of those
narratives, whilst overwhelming, also had the potential to be unfulfilling. (p.
204)

Without referring to Foucault, Burgess et al. (2003), utilise notions of anti-
essentialism, technologies of self, and discourse to examine the problematic
nature of identity experienced by these rugby playing students.

For this student, as for many other young men, the powerful discursive
knowledge associating sport with masculinity had seduced him into

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presenting a corporeal reality of 'the-real-man-as-sports-hero' through ongoing performances of toughness that he mistook as natural. Without the critical knowledge to see his construction of self within the school as a discursive one which he could challenge (Davis, 1989), the student experienced his emotional attachment to football as profound and self-forming. (Burgess, et al., 2003, p. 205)

In studying a group of middle class young men in their final years of school Edley and Wetherell (1997) found rugby to play an integral role in the 'cults' of masculinity within the school. The rugby players were seen to be the most powerful group in the school dominating school life in a number of literal and symbolic ways. Physically the rugby players dominated the common room with boisterous games and symbolically rugby players dominated the school through institutionalized forms of recognition and power. This included an 'honours' system which recognised sporting achievement in a much more explicit way than academic success with each member of the school's rugby team being entitled to wear a distinctly coloured blazer. Furthermore, the rugby players were heavily over-represented in terms of positions of authority within the student body – such as head boy, house captains and prefects. These positions provided not only institutional power, but also the kudos of having been personally selected by the school's head teachers. The institutional practices of the school were seen to both privilege and, to a certain extent, produce a particular version of masculinity which was exemplified by the hegemonic group of rugby playing, 'hard lads' or 'sporty boys'. Unlike Burgess et al. (2003), Edley and Wetherell (1997) viewed this hegemonic group as profiting unproblematically from their position: "As a consequence, school life for them [the hard lads and sporty boys] is relatively straight forward. For the remainder, however, life is much more difficult. They are the ones who are most alienated by the dominant cultural order." Whilst still acknowledging the all encompassing and repressive nature of hegemonic masculinity in the school, Edley and Wetherell (1997), utilised a discursive psychology approach to suggest that non-sporty students manipulated the dominant form of masculinity through talk in order to form alternative masculine identities that were perceived to be equal or superior to the hegemonic form of masculinity embodied by the rugby playing students.

In Connell's (1987, 1995) terminology, the dominant position of the rugby players, the hegemonic group, was challenged by a subordinated or marginalized group – a cultural struggle was thus vividly reproduced in talk. Yet, in this case, there was also complicity. New identities were built in dialogue with the identities which were to be challenged and superseded. (p. 215)

Swain (2006) also observed how students used talk in reference to the dominant group to form their own constructions of masculinity. In studying 10-11 year old students at an independent English school Swain (2006) identifies the ways in which rugby and football (soccer) acted to condition and determine the boy's identities through embodied forms of masculinity. Swain (2006) observed that the boy's bodies were constructed and conferred with certain symbolic values of power and status. "To succeed at the top, high-status sports of football and rugby, boys needed at least four requisite qualities: speed, skill, fitness and strength, and they needed the ability to perform all four qualities incredibly well" (p. 330). Consequently boys in the school were classified and divided by their physicality both by the school and by their own peer group. Grounding his research in Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, Swain (2006) classified as 'hegemonic' the dominant masculinity which was based on "the resource of physicality/athleticism and exemplified in the embodied form of the top sporty boy" (p. 330). Like Edley and Wetherell (1997), Swain (2006, p. 330) found that the majority of the non-sporty boys at the school negotiated alternative or "personalised ways of doing boy" which seemed to be generally acceptable within the peer-group culture, even if these alternative forms of masculinity presented no challenge to the hegemonic form of masculinity.

Although these alternative forms had neither the inclination nor the power to mount any challenge, they also had no desire to imitate the hegemonic form, and they persisted and co-existed independently alongside. If top-sporty boy equated with 'real' boy, these boys did not appear to think of themselves as being any less 'real' for not being able to demonstrate excellence. (p. 330-331)

Light and Kirk (2000), observed the relationship between rugby and a class specific hegemonic form of masculinity that existed in an elite Australian school. Drawing on the work of Bourdieu, Foucault and Connell they identified how a

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dominant hegemonic form of masculinity was reproduced and maintained through a number of different discursive, corporal, and social practices. Whilst Light and Kirk (2000) acknowledged the role that school institutions played in the production of this hegemonic form of masculinity they also suggested that the 1st XV were implicit in maintaining this hegemony by acting as what Connell, et al. (1982) refer to as the policemen, the enforcers of hegemonic masculinity in the school. Light and Kirk (2000) considered that the hegemonic form of masculinity at the school created notions of appropriate masculine behaviour that "were connected to domination through physical force and intimidation" (p. 12) and that it contributed to the "maintenance of existing relations of power between different forms of masculinity and between women and men" (p. 12). Whilst acknowledging that the hegemonic form of masculinity at the school was "continually contested and forced to adapt to challenge through modification" (Light and Kirk, 2000, p. 12) the authors also noted that it had "maintained its hegemony through ongoing adaptation and the reproduction of forms of masculinity that seek to maintain dominance over other, alternate ways of being a man" (p. 12). In response to Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005) reappraisal of hegemonic masculinity which suggested that there is not one universal pattern of hegemonic masculinity but multiple forms that develop within specific circumstances, Light (2007) critically re-examined the data from the Light and Kirk (2000) study. Whilst Light and Kirk (2000) had recognized "some divergence" (p. 333) from the dominant pattern of masculinity at the school, they ultimately saw this pattern as being "reproduced over generations of boys due to its hegemony" (p. 333). After re-apprasing the data Light (2007) challenged this negative, repressive, all-encompassing and unchanging depiction of hegemonic masculinity by suggesting that "although the pattern of masculinity operating at the school was dominant it was internally dynamic and full of contradictions" (p. 335). In this regard Light (2007) identified the positive role that the rugby playing students had in challenging the hegemonic form of masculinity and creating opportunities for counter hegemonic forms of masculinity to develop. In this regard, he concluded that "new forms of counter-hegemonic masculinity… can result from individual and collective agency and can, in turn, embody different forms of masculinity" (p. 336) and "in doing so they may also be able to effect change in the social structures within which they act and live" (p. 334).

Light's (2007) re-appraisal of his earlier data considers the possibility that school boy rugby and rugby playing students may be able to make positive changes to the form of hegemonic masculinity operating within a school. However, the predominate view of hegemonic masculinity based research into school boy rugby portrays rugby and rugby players as integral to the re-production and maintenance of an unchanging, impenetrable and repressive form of hegemonic masculinity, that benefits some whilst marginalising and subordinating others.

Whilst there has been little Foucauldian based research into masculinities (Andrews, 1993; Petersen, 2003), Pringle and Markula (2005) utilised Foucauldian theorizing to draw upon the research of Pringle (2003) in order to examine the articulations between masculinities and men's experiences of rugby union. This study examined the rugby experiences of men including their memories of school boy and adolescent rugby in an attempt to "understand how males develop knowledge about themselves and masculinities through rugby" (p. 475), Pringle and Markula (2005) found that within schools, discourses of rugby which were reciprocally supported by particular discourses of masculinities acted not only to separate boys from girls but also to analyse and differentiate males into various types of masculinities. Whilst acknowledging that the participants understanding of self was not solely "scripted by their rugby experiences" (p. 484) Pringle and Markula (2005) found that teenage males who did not play rugby were envious of the attention and status granted to the rugby players. Non-rugby playing boys found it more difficult to "construct a sense of self around the well-worn masculine traits of competiveness, strength and toughness" (p. 485) and at times their participation in alternative leisure activities, such as soccer, further negated their masculine identities as some of these activities were objectified as feminine and/or homosexual. Pringle and Markula concluded that as the 'rugby nonplayers' did not necessarily have access to some of the stronger discursive resources of masculinity they utilised other discourses "to help construct respectful teenage masculine subjectivities" (p. 485). In this regard, some individuals accessed alternative discourses of masculinity through undertaking activities such as weight training. Others attempted to transform their sense of self by drawing on reverse discourses of rugby. "A reverse discourse of rugby, according to Foucault (1978), often uses "the same vocabulary" (p. 101) as a

dominating discourse but produces and opposing strategy or social effect" (Prinlge and Markula, 2005, p. 486). For example non-rugby playing individuals variously described rugby players as "uncritical thinkers and followers of the crowd" (p. 486), stupid, lacking in confidence, aggressive and primitive. By developing such reverse discourses about rugby players, non-playing individuals are able to "position themselves as somewhat courageous, independent, and intelligent for not playing rugby while simultaneously position rugby masculinity as less worthy" (p. 486). Some individuals justified their non-involvement in rugby through other discourses such as health and personal well-being that they perceived to be more powerful and important than the discourses of rugby. This technique became more prevalent as individuals got older especially in their adult years. This examination of rugby and masculinities through a Foucauldian lens allowed Pringle and Markula (2005) to conclude that,

> although rugby provided an influential context in which the interview participants negotiated formative understandings of masculinities and self, these negotiations did not result in the clear affirmation and reproduction of dominating discourses of masculinity… complex negotiation processes resulted in the constitution of diverse, complex, and seemingly paradoxical understandings of masculinities and rugby. (Pringle & Markula, 2005, p. 491)

Contrary to the majority of sport and gender studies that have utilised hegemonic masculinity as a research tool, this study suggests that "sport does not consistently or unambiguously produce culturally dominant conceptions of masculinity" (p. 472). As such, Pringle and Markula (2005) question "whether popular heavy-contact sports played predominately by males such as rugby, should be primarily represented as producers of dominant and problematic masculinities" (p. 491).

Chapter Summary

In summary, for the past 20 years Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity has been the primary tool for investigating sport and masculinities. Studies that have examined school boy rugby and masculinities through a hegemonic lens have predominately associated school boy rugby and rugby players with the production, re-production and maintenance of an unchanging, impenetrable, repressive and hegemonic form of masculinity that benefits some

whilst marginalising others. Despite this negative outlook recently revised readings of Connell's theories have suggested that hegemony theory as it pertains to sport and gender studies can account for and accommodate change and challenge. However, numerous critiques of hegemonic masculinity have emerged. The majority of these critiques have expressed concern not only with the dominance of hegemonic masculinity but also with the underlying theory and assumptions that support hegemonic masculinity. In light of these critiques, a number of researchers have suggested a turn to Foucault's anti-humanist theorising to help bring new understandings to the complex links between sport, gender and power.

CHAPTER FOUR
Methods

As previously acknowledged, ontological and epistemological assumptions are the starting points or givens that determine what inquiry is and how it is to be practiced (Guba, 1990). With regard to methodology, Henderson (1991) suggests that "the ultimate choice of specific research methods is based on assumptions about one's world view and epistemology" (p. 21).   The integral role of these assumptions is highlighted by Sparkes (1992), who contends that the importance of ontological and epistemological beliefs supersede the often quoted advice that the research problem will determine both the approach and methods of investigation.

> Essentially, ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions which have methodological implications for the choices made regarding particular techniques of data collection, the interpretation of these findings and the eventual ways they are written about in texts and presented orally at conferences. At the most fundamental level this will mean that those operating with different sets of paradigmatic assumptions will see the world in a different way, go about investigating it in different ways and report their findings in different ways. (pp. 14 - 15)

As an internal-idealist with a subjectivist epistemology operating within a postmodern research paradigm I am drawn towards qualitative research methods. My desire to understand the meaning and influence that rugby participation has upon a small group of high school students resonates with Hesse-Biber and Leavy's (2004) recommendation that,

> if you are seeking to understand the meaning or worldview of a particular subject, if you want to listen to the subjective experiences of others and somehow make sense of them, or if you simply are not comfortable with the positivistic nature of "hard" science then you may want to consider a qualitative methodology. (pp. 3-4)

When considering the appropriateness of a qualitative methodology I agree with Guba and Lincoln's (2004) contention that the term 'qualitative' should be reserved for descriptions of types of methods, as opposed to an umbrella like form of research that is superior and all encompassing of differing paradigms.   With

this in mind, my approach to this research project is guided and driven by my views regarding the nature of knowledge and reality, and by the assumptions inherent in postmodernism, as detailed in chapter two. At the same time aspects of this project reflect some of the practices and assumptions that are commonly associated with qualitative approaches to research design.

Research approach

As Henderson (1991) notes, a qualitative approach allows for more specific questions, and relationships to theory, to emerge as the research begins. Therefore, whilst familiarising myself with similar research, I did not enter this project with a pre-determined hypothesis or theory to prove or disprove. Marshall and Rossman (1995) have suggested that qualitative research relies upon four fundamental methods, participation, observation, in-depth interviewing and document review and that when choosing which of these methods to use "the researcher should determine the most practical efficient, feasible, and ethical methods for collecting data as the research progresses" (p.136). This approach acknowledges that the methods selected will depend not only on the paradigm, the general approach, the questions asked, but also upon pragmatic issues such as the resources available, the time, limits to one's own abilities, the focus and priority of the research, and whether breadth or depth is desired (Patton, 2002). From a pragmatic position individual interviews enabled me to gather a large amount of in-depth data within the constraints of my limited resources and time. Furthermore, interviewing as a form of data collection resonates with the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin both my postmodern research paradigm and the use of Foucauldian theorizing. As Kvale (1996) observes, the medium of data collection in an interview is language and as such this resonates with the postmodern focus on language and its role in the construction, constitution, and representation of reality. The use of language as data also sits well with Foucault's acknowledgement of the conversational construction of knowledge/power in discourse and the subsequent role that discourse plays in the constitution of subjectivity. Reflecting Foucault's anti-essentialist understanding of identity, the focus on language shifts attention away from the individual subject suggesting that "there is no longer a unique self who uses language to describe an objective world or to express itself; it is the

structures of language that speak through the person" (Kvale, 1996, p. 43). Finally interviewing is the only way that one can hope to discover and understand the experience of others from their perspective.

> The fact is that we cannot observe everything. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviours that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe how people have organised the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective. Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit. We interview to find out what is in and on someone else's mind, to gather their stories. (Patton, 2002, p. 341)

Selecting interview participants

As I was interviewing high school students, consent was required not only from the participants and their parents but also from the school. Whilst granting me approval to conduct this research the school requested that I only interview students at the end of the school year once their final exams were completed. Whilst this effectively limited my selection of participants to those students who were in their last two years of high school I still utilised 'purposeful sampling' in an attempt to select "*information-rich cases* for study in depth" (p.46). As Patton (2002) states, "information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research" (p. 46). As such this approach to sampling aims to offer "insight about the phenomenon, not an empirical generalization from a sample to a population" (p. 40). To achieve a balanced insight about the phenomenon Patton (2002) suggests that one should aim for maximum variation amongst a sample group as "variation of the sample avoids one-sidedness of representation of the topic" (p. 109). With this in mind I set out to select those students that might best represent the wide variety of rugby experiences possible within the context of the school. As the head rugby coach for all students from nine years of age to eighteen years of age I felt that I possessed enough prior knowledge to select participants that might best represent a variety of rugby experiences. In this regard I purposefully selected ten students

ranging from those who had experienced great success in the game to those who had failed to make a team. I also approached students that had played for several years and those that had only played for one year. I approached students that had been injured, students that had decided to quit playing and students from different cultural and ethnic groups. Of these ten students, two declined to participate and one was forced to withdraw. This left me with seven interview participants. Whilst acknowledging that this sample is designed to gain insight and not to create generalisations about a larger population, given that there were only sixteen students in the varsity rugby team, I felt that a sample size of seven was large enough to represent a wide variety of possible experiences.

Introducing the interview participants

Pollock and Van Reken (2001) have suggested that students in international schools such as the American School of Taiwan often struggle to associate with geographical, cultural or ethnic forms of identity. Many of the participants in this study possessed mixed ethnicities with their parents coming from both different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Many of the participants acknowledged how this factor, when combined with their position as expatriate students, complicated the possible forms of identity available to them. Whilst some students emphatically associated themselves with certain ethnic or national identity others were less sure. Jake considered himself to be "definitely American", Scott regarded himself as "culturally American" whilst Aaron reflected upon the fact that he had spent his whole life in Asia and thus could possibly be conceived of as Hong Kongese or Taiwanese before concluding that "if I had to say with one definite answer it would be American". Max viewed himself as being Australian although he did acknowledge that "Chinese culture does influence me somewhat by living here". Adrien identified himself as French whilst David considered himself to be multicultural. Kevin used the acronym A.B.C to identify himself as an American-born Chinese.

To protect the identity of the participants in this study I have used pseudonyms throughout the presentation of this research. In doing so, I have attempted to select pseudonyms that reflect the cultural and or ethnic origin of the participants' real names. As many of the participants hail from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds it should be noted that the selected pseudonyms are

intended to represent the participants' real names not to describe their cultural or ethnic heritage. Three of the interview participants were students in their final year of high school. David had played rugby for the first time in his life during the previous season. Despite his inexperience David was selected to play for the varsity rugby team and travelled to the end of season tournament. After one season David had decided to spend his final school year participating in arts and drama activities instead of joining the rugby team again. Max had spent one season in the junior varsity rugby team and three seasons playing for the varsity team. Max is an extremely accomplished rugby player and throughout his time playing for the school he had received considerable recognition and several formal awards that acknowledged his success. Max was also an accomplished soccer player and played for the varsity soccer team as well the varsity rugby team. Although initially wanting to play basketball Kevin had not been selected for a team and so in his last year of school he tried out for the rugby team. Despite not having any previous rugby experience Kevin was selected for the varsity team and travelled to the end of season tournament. The remaining four participants were in their second to last year of high school. Aaron had played structured rugby in coached teams for five years. Aaron's family, including his parents and siblings are closely involved with rugby at the school. Rugby is the only high school sport that Aaron participates in. Scott started his rugby involvement with Aaron and has played for five years in the same teams as Aaron. Rugby is the only high school sport that Scott participates in. Adrien had previously played for the junior varsity team and had this season been selected to play for the varsity team; however, he was not selected to travel to the final end of year tournament. Adrien also represented the school in the track and field team. Jake had played in the junior varsity team for one season and the varsity team for one season. As a junior varsity player he had been invited to train with the varsity team but was not selected to travel to the end of year tournament. Despite spending this year as a full time varsity player, Jake was not selected for the end of season tournament. Jake had some previous involvement in high school soccer teams.

Conducting the interviews

Interview times were arranged individually with each participant. All interviews were conducted at school in one of the designated high school

conference rooms as I felt that this provided a comfortable and familiar setting for the participants. All participants took part in one formal interview. The length of each interview ranged from between forty and ninety minutes. The interviews were recorded via audiotape and transcribed verbatim. Each participant received a copy of their interview transcript to check for accuracy and amend if required.

Acknowledging that an interview is "a conversation that has a structure and a purpose" (Kvale, 1996, p. 6), I utilised an interview guide to help formulate a semi-structured approach to each interview. As Patton (2002) describes,

> An interview guide is prepared to ensure that the same basic lines of enquiry are pursued with each person interviewed. The interview guide provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject. Thus, the interviewer is remains free to build a conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversational style but with a focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined. (p. 343)

Utilising an interview guide ensured that I was able to explore areas of interest that I had identified, in relation to my review of literature and my research aims, without forgetting or omitting critical questions. A potential drawback to interview guides is the possibility that important and salient topics may be inadvertently omitted (Patton, 2002). With this in mind I attempted to conduct the interview much more like a conversation, than a formal event with predetermined response categories. This approach respects the advice that whilst a researcher might explore general topics to help uncover the participant's meaning and perspective, they should otherwise respect "how the participant frames and structures the responses" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 101). As a result of this approach it became apparent after my first two interviews that students in the school framed rugby in ways that I had not previously considered. As a result of this discovery I was able to alter my interview guide in order to further explore this area of interest in the remaining interviews.

As a postmodern researcher I am mindful that knowledge construction is a subjective process. As such the interview conversation should be regarded as a site of negotiation and co-construction of meaning between interviewer and respondent (Abell, Locke, Condor, Gibson, Stevenson, 2006; Denzin, 1997;

Kvale, 1996). This understanding of knowledge as a process of negotiation and co-construction recognises that "the conversation in a research interview is not the reciprocal interaction of two equal partners. There is a definite symmetry of power" (Kvale, 1996, p. 126). My position as a teacher at the school and as the head coach of the rugby program further distorts my position of power in relation to the interview participants. My concern with this unequal relation of power was that "interviewees may be unwilling or uncomfortable sharing all that the interviewer hopes to explore" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 102). In order to address this unequal power relation I employed a number of strategies in order to distance myself from my position as a teacher and coach. Firstly as a middle school teacher I did not teach any of the students that participated in this study. Secondly I purposefully selected students that were in their final years of study in the hope that this would give them less reason to withhold their thoughts or feelings. Finally I interviewed participants outside of the rugby season in the last two weeks of school when my position as a teacher and coach may have held less influence upon their responses.

During the interviews I was conscious that both the "interviewee and interviewer negotiate appropriate identities for themselves within an interview interaction, sharing concerns about how to present one's self, one's knowledge and one's similarity or difference from the other" (Abell et al., 2006). In this regard I was aware that my previous relationships with these participants limited the possible identities that I or the participants could assume. For example my position as head rugby coach would have made it very difficult and confusing for the participants if I were to conduct what Kavle (2006) calls an 'actively confronting interview', as a critical interviewer. As such I attempted to distance myself from my identity as a rugby coach and teacher and instead endeavoured to position myself as a fellow rugby player who had shared similar experiences. Accordingly, as I shared my experiences and observations I did not remain neutral or passive throughout the interviews but attempted to convey an attitude of acceptance whereby participants would feel that their information was valuable and useful (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). It has been suggested that such an emphatic approach to qualitative interviewing is akin to 'faking friendship' or 'feigning intimacy' in an attempt to build trust and rapport with interview participants to circumvent their defences in order to get data on tape (Abell et al.,

2006; Kvale, 2006; Sinding & Aronson, 2003). However, I was not overly concerned with this issue as sharing my own experiences and observations as a rugby player included voicing both my support for rugby as well as my reservations about the game including issues regarding injury, dirty play, aggression and the hard and often monotonous training that is required. Furthermore, as I shared my own thoughts and experiences I was mindful that "the participant's perspective on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 101). In this regard I was not particularly concerned with asking leading questions or with the issue that my questions or comments might unfairly bias the participants' responses. Rather, I was primarily concerned with developing a conversation that might help to produce "new, trustworthy, and interesting knowledge" (Kvale, 1996, p. 159).

Despite my prior research and preparation there were some limitations to the interview process. When analysing interview transcripts I occasionally thought of questions or responses that may have drawn more information from the participants. In this regard it became apparent that the quality and quantity of information that I was able to draw from the participants increased markedly from the initial interviews as I improved upon the 'art and technique' of interviewing (Patton, 2002, p. 379). Whilst I consciously acted to minimise the influence that my position of power may have had over the interview process, at times I struggled with the *counter control* that participants exerted upon the interview conversation. As Kvale (2006) describes "interview subjects have their own countering options of not answering or deflecting a question, talking about something other than what the interviewer asks for, or merely telling what they believe the interviewer wants to hear" (p. 485). Working within a postmodern research paradigm, these limitations do not make the interviews void or meaningless. Rather, they serve to remind of us the subjective, socially constructed and incomplete nature of knowledge and the subsequent inability for such knowledge to be turned into universal laws and generalisations.

Interview analysis

After conducting the interviews I personally transcribed the five to six hours of audio-tape recordings. By transcribing the interviews I was able to re-

immerse myself in the interviews at depth. My first hand knowledge of the conversations, as well as my familiarity with the students' accents, vocabulary and jargon allowed me to accurately record the spoken words. Regardless of verbatim accuracy it is acknowledged that transcriptions are interpretive constructions rather than a neutral record of talk (Kvale, 1996). By personally transcribing the interviews I was essentially converting the conversations into a text representation that reflected my interpretation of the intent, feeling and meaning inherent in the interviews. Whilst this may raise issues of concern with respect to the *interviewer's monopoly of interpretation* (Kvale, 2006), I felt that my close involvement with the participants, in the context of their rugby participation, allowed me to achieve some level of v*erstehen* as detailed by Weber (as cited in Patton, 2002).

Whilst analysing the interviews and transcriptions I considered data discovery and data analysis to be an ongoing process within which "theories about what is happening in a setting are grounded in and emerge from direct field experience rather than being imposed *a priori* as is the case in formal hypothesis and theory testing" (Patton, 2002, p. 56). As a result, this approach to research demands greater flexibility and variable treatment of the data (Henderson, 1991). Consequently I utilised an eclectic approach which Kvale (1996) describes as 'ad hoc meaning generation' (p. 193). "In this case no standard method is used for analyzing the whole of the interview material. There is instead a free interplay of the techniques during the analysis" (p.203). This interplay of techniques primarily involved combining inductive analysis techniques with a Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis. Inductive analysis involves "immersion in the details and specifics of the data to discover important patterns, themes and interrelationships" (Patton, 2002, p. 41). This meant repeated listening and reading of the interview tapes and transcripts as well as meaning condensation, identifying themes and coding of the data. As I condensed and coded interview transcripts I was constantly looking for common themes. Having identified several themes I began to explore and confirm how these themes might be used to identify the common or dominant discourses that surround rugby in the school. In this regard I was guided by my understanding of Foucault's concept of discourse and his methods for analysing the workings of discourse, knowledge and power relations.

A Foucauldian method

When considering how to approach and analyse the data from a Foucauldian perspective, I was conscious of Scheurich and McKenzie's (2005) warning; "Do not just "cherry pick" a concept here and a concept there and assume that you are doing archaeology or that you are using Foucault appropriately" (p. 849). In this regard I acknowledge that my methodology does not equate to a geneaological or archealogical analysis in the sense demonstrated by Foucault in his own work. At the same time, this is not my intention, instead I am encouraged by Foucault's assertion that all his books "are little tool boxes. If people want to open them, to use a particular sentence, a particular idea, a particular analysis like a screwdriver or a spanner... so much the better!" (as cited in Prior, 2004). Of all the 'tools' that Foucault detailed in his books, his thoughts regarding discourse and subjectivity are, in relation to the guiding questions of this study, the most appropriate to utilise.

Foucault's understanding of discourse differs from textually (and therefore linguistically) orientated discourse analysis (TODA) (e.g. Fairclough, 2007, p. 37). As described in chapter two, Foucault (1972) defined discourses as specific systems of knowledge/power that act to shape understandings, meanings and perceptions as well as practices, objects and subjects. As Rail (1998) observes Foucault's work has drawn attention to the influence that discourses have on the way people understand and assign meaning to their lives. Subsequently by analysing the discourses that surround rugby at A.S.T I sought to shed some light upon my first guiding question; how do these boys make sense of rugby?

In formulating my 'Foucauldian Method' I have primarily drawn upon the work of Foucault (1972, 1978) as well as Carabine (2001) and Markula and Pringle, (2006). The first step in my analysis was to identify, those statements that were used by the participants within the discursive field of rugby to construct understanding, knowledge, and objects related to rugby and rugby players (Carabine, 2001). When undertaking such an analysis Foucault (1972) suggests that,

> The analysis of the discursive field is orientated in a quite different way; we
> must grasp the statement in the exact specificity of its occurrence; determine
> its conditions of existence, fix at least its limits, establish its correlations

with other statements that may be connected with it, and show what other forms of statement it excludes. (p. 28)

By examining statements concerning rugby, I was interested in identifying both what was said, and what was not said, about the game of rugby and rugby players. To do this, I examined the interview transcripts, the transcript summaries, and the themes that I had previously identified. In doing so I attempted to identify those discourses that surround rugby and rugby players at A.S.T by following Foucault's assertion that,

Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a *discursive formation.*(Foucault, 1972, p. 38)

Having identified several possible discursive formations amongst the participants' constructions of rugby and rugby players I began to look for evidence of an *inter-relationship between discourses* (Carabine, 2001). As Markula and Pringle (2006) observe, discourse as 'an individualisable group of statements' refers to those statements that refer to the same phenomenon, in this case rugby and rugby players. In this regard I was primarily concerned with identifying those statements that, when utilised with others, acted to create knowledge of and about rugby, and rugby players at A.S.T. This not to say that these statments should be viewed as necessarily unified or consistent; it is the interrelationship of complimentary, contradictory, and conflicting discourses that act to construct an objects or concepts such as rugby. As Foucault (1972) suggests, the conditions necessary for the existence of a discursive object such as rugby relies just as much on the disagreement of statements and discourses as it does agreement. "These relations enable it to appear, to juxtapose itself with other objects, to situate itself in relation to them, to define its difference, its irreducibility, and even perhaps its heterogeneity, in short, to be placed in a field of exteriority" (p. 45).

Whilst examining the interview transcripts and statements I was aware that discourses are more than just linguistic phenomena. As Prior (2004) observes, discourses are not just words but also rules and regulations that determine what

can be said and by whom. Thus, when analysing discourses Foucault (1972) suggests that,

> one sees the loosening of the embrace, apparently so tight, of words and things, and the emergence of a group of rules proper to discursive practice. These rules define not the dumb existence of a reality, nor the canonical use of a vocabulary, but the ordering of things. (p. 49)

As such I did not regard these discourses as simple translations between reality and language but as practices that shape perceptions of reality, including knowledge of self and others (Markula & Pringle, 2006). To examine how these discourses of rugby acted to guide and regulate the social practices, and the range of statements that could be used to understand and perceive rugby, I attempted to identify the discursive strategies and techniques that were employed by the participants. "A discursive strategy refers to the ways that a discourse is deployed. It is the means by which a discourse is given meaning and force, and through which its object is defined" (Carabine, 2001, p. 288). Essentially a discursive strategy refers to the way that individuals use particular discourses to promote and circulate knowledge about the object (rugby) and in the process constitute particular subjectivities. In the case of this study it is a device through which the discourse of rugby is put into practise and the subjectivities of the participants are constituted.

When looking for discursive strategies and techniques I searched for absences and silences in the participants' constructions of rugby. By limiting and excluding ways of talking about rugby and rugby players, the participants give strength and force to already recognised discourses of rugby whilst simultaneously preventing the emergence or recognition of alternative or competing discourses of rugby. Recognising the ability of discourses to limit and confine the ways in which a concept or object can be understood I was aware that "discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (Foucault, 1978, p. 101). With this in mind I searched for resistances and counter-discourses. This involved looking for statements and discourses that the participants utilised in an attempt to undermine, pervert, or resist the dominant discourses of rugby that circulated within A.S.T.

Finally, I searched for the possible effects of the discourses that I had identified. Foucault (1978) stated that discourses should be analysed in relation to their *tactical productivity*, that is, researchers should question "what reciprocal effects of power and knowledge they ensure" and, investigate their "strategical integration" (p. 102). I undertook this process in two steps. Firstly I sought to identify the effects of these discourses in relation to rugby at the school. In this regard I was interested to learn how discourses of rugby impacted on the rugby program within the school. This included looking at discursive effects as they related to the community support of rugby and student participation within the rugby program. Secondly I sought to examine the influences that discourses of rugby have upon the subjectivities of the participants. Throughout this analysis I observed Foucault's anti- humanist stance and subsequently regarded 'rugby players' as an object of discourse and the participants in this study as subjects in the discursive field of rugby at the school.

> In the proposed analysis, instead of referring back to *the* synthesis or *the* unifying function of *a* subject, the various enunciative modalities manifest his dispersion. To the various statuses, the various sites, the various positions that he can occupy or be given when making a discourse. To the discontinuity of the planes from which he speaks. And if these planes are linked by a system of relations, this system is not established by the synthetic activity of a consciousness identical with itself, dumb and anterior to all speech, but by the specificity of a discursive practice. I shall abandon any attempt, therefore, to see discourse as a phenomenon of expression – the verbal translation of a previously established synthesis; instead, I shall look for a field of regularity for various positions of subjectivity. (Foucault, 1972, p. 54-55)

Having already identified the discourses of rugby that circulated within the school, I sought to examine how the dominant discourses of rugby and rugby players operated according to a sort of uniform anonymity, on all individuals who undertake to speak in the discursive field (Foucault, 1972). This involved searching for common ways within which the participants constructed rugby players in their discussions as well as looking for those limits and constraints that acted to obscure the possible subject positions that were available to the participants. Whilst this approach reflects Foucault's (1978) belief that the

'subject' is always intimately linked to his/her historical and social context, and is also subject to the discourses that circulate in that context, it is also important to acknowledge that within any setting, there are multiple and competing discourses. As Davies and Harre (2001) acknowledge,

> An individual emerges through the process of social interaction, not as a relatively fixed end product but as one who is constituted and reconstituted through the various discursive practices in which they participate. Accordingly who one is always an open question with a shifting answer depending upon the positions made available within one's own and others' discursive practises and others' lives. (p. 263)

In order to examine the range of possible subject positions available to the participants, I searched the interview transcripts for contradictions, conflicts and discontinuities. Foucault's notion of the constructed self accepts that subjects are capable of critically reflecting on the workings of discourses. Therefore they can act to change their subject positions or subjectivities through exercising "some choice with respect to the discourses and practices" they use or engage with (Burr, 1995, p. 90). Consequently, to identify such actions on the part of the participants I searched for discursive strategies or techniques that the participants used to alter or reinforce their subjectivities.

At varying stages during this process of analysis it became apparent to me that some of the discourses that I had identified were in fact the result of, or extension of, other discourses that circulated within the school. These secondary discourses were then considered to be representative of the effects of other discourses and subsumed into my discursive analysis. Throughout this process I gave preference to describing those discourses that seemed to have the greatest influence upon the discourse of rugby within the school and the subjectivities of the participants in this study.

The triple crisis

Whilst researchers working within postivist and post-postivist paradigms can draw upon pre-established, universally applicable checklists in order to evaluate the validity and reliability of their work there are no such generally agreed upon lists for researchers working within postmodern research paradigms (Smith & Hodkinson, 2005). The absence of such checklists can be traced to

several postmodern sensibilities, not least of which is the refusal to privilege any method or theory (Richardson, 1997). A universally applicable evaluation list for validity would be the antithesis of postmodern qualitative research as it would effectively act as the sole determinant of truth, knowledge and in turn power. As such the challenge for postmodern researchers, particularly those who utilise qualitative methods as I have done, is not to achieve validity and reliability, but instead to address the triple crisis of representation, legitimation and praxis. The crisis of representation acknowledges that qualitative researchers cannot completely capture or textually represent lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), the crisis of legitimation acknowledges that research texts are the subjective construction or interpretation of a researcher and as such there are no objective forms of evaluation from which to judge the quality or worth of research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), and the crisis of praxis emerges from these first two dilemmas. Essentially the crisis of praxis challenges the potential for research to effect change in the world when firstly we do not know whether research texts are telling the truth, and secondly it is not possible to distinguish between good and poor research (Pringle, 1999). In an attempt to address the issues presented by this triple crisis I have drawn upon the continuing debate and discussion that surrounds the evaluation of postmodern research in order to help guide the reader in the process of judging this research.

In passing judgement, decisions of worth should be based upon the paradigmatic assumptions that underpin the research process (Sparkes, 1992). In this regard I would invite the reader to assess firstly whether or not I have comprehensibly detailed my paradigmatic stance, as a postmodern researcher, and to then appraise the structure and coherence of this thesis in light of this paradigmatic position. Secondly, as this research has drawn upon qualitative methods it is important to acknowledge that within "qualitative inquiry, **the researcher is the instrument.** The credibility of qualitative methods, therefore, hinges to a great extent on the skill, competence, and rigor of the person doing fieldwork" (Patton, 2002, p. 14). Consequently the reader must consider my limitations as a researcher and by association the limitations of this study. For this reason I have attempted to clarify and document my personal biases and conflicts of interest so that the reader may judge the ways within which I have framed or represented this research. This process reflects Richardson and St.

Pierre's (2005) concern for reflexivity, an examination of the author's subjectivity as both a "producer and a product" of the research text. Furthermore I have attempted to present the limitations, difficulties and disruptions that have influenced both the research process and the research product. In this regard I have attempted to present the research process as an evolving and dynamic process rather than a predetermined, structured and teological process that leads directly to an inevitable or natural conclusion.

As this research is located within a postmodern paradigm the reader may find it helpful to drawing upon the work of Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) who has suggested several criteria that might be useful for judging postmodern social science research. Firstly Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) suggest that we should ask if this research contributes to our understanding of social life. This includes determining whether the research has demonstrated a deeply grounded social scientific perspective. In this regard the reader should ask if I have stayed faithful to my research paradigm and my theoretical framework. This requires an examination of the entire research process in order to determine whether I have consistently observed postmodern sensibilities whilst also utilising Foucault's tools and methods in a manner that is consistent with his ideas and beliefs. Furthermore the reader should ask if this research seems "true" – "a credible account of a cultural, social, individual or communal sense of the real" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 964). To this end the reader should ask if I have provided enough social, cultural, historical and environmental context in order to understand the experiences of the participants. In a similar manner it is important for the reader to reflect upon the concept of *verstehen*, when examining my interpretations of the contexts, actions and experiences that are presented in this thesis. Finally the reader should consider the 'impact' of this research (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 964). Does this thesis generate new questions or affect the reader emotionally or intellectually?

Writing

Postmodern sensibilities have created uncertainty about what constitutes an adequate depiction of reality. As Lather (1991) argues the age of description has ended. We are in the moment of inscription, wherein writers create their own

situated versions of the worlds studied. As such writing as a means of textual representation is deeply intertwined with the triple crisis (Denzin, 2004).

The postmodern context of doubt distrusts all methods equally, and as a result no one method has a privileged status (Richardson, 2004). Consequently, for researchers working within a postmodern paradigm there are "several different ways of describing, inscribing, and interpreting reality" (Denzin, 2004). When considering how I might textually represent this research through writing I was aware that the 'realist tale' as a style of writing is both frequently utilised and critiqued within the social sciences (Denzin, 2004). The analytical, interpretive and single voiced nature of realist texts tend to bury the subjects voices been beneath layers of analysis (Denison, 1996). At the same time the voice of the author is also excluded from the text as the writer takes on the "omniscient voice of science, the view from everywhere" (Richardson, 2004, p. 475). As a result writers are often "positioned outside, yet alongside those Others they write about, never making clear where they stand in these hyphenated relationships that connect the other to them" (Denzin, 2004, p. 452). Despite these reservations I have chosen to present this research in the form of a 'modified realist' text (Pringle, 2003). Part of this decision revolves around my recognition of the role that writing plays in the process of analysis. As Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) describe, "writing *is* thinking, writing *is* analysis, writing *is* indeed a seductive and tangled method of discovery" (p. 967). The analytical style of writing required by a realist text forces me to discover, manage and make sense of my research data in a structured, ordered and accessible fashion that on the one hand might not meet Richarson and St. Pierre's (2005) standards of aesthetics but on the other hand provides me as a beginning researcher with a grounding and awareness of my data and the possible conclusions that I might draw from it. Secondly, by utilising a realist text to present the findings of this research I make no attempt to pass off this interpretation of reality as anything but my own. Whilst acknowledging that I will draw upon the realist tale, I will attempt to modify this style by reminding the reader of my presence and place as the interpreter and author of the research text. To achieve this I will write in the first person where appropriate and include my own reflections on the participants' comments and the conclusions that I have reached. These actions reflect my desire to shake off the omniscient voice of science and to subsequently produce a

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research text that challenges the presumption of a real world that has been captured by a knowing author.

With regard to writing in social research, numerous references are made to Geertz's (1973) thick descriptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This term is often used to convey the sense that ethnographic accounts should be densely constructed with graphic detailed cultural descriptions (Atkinson & Delamont, 2005). Thick description is used to create rich descriptive texts that draw the reader into the research allowing them to gain greater insight into the events or understandings described so that they might begin to draw their own interpretations about meanings and significance (Denzin, 2004; Patton, 2002).

Whilst acknowledging the intent and benefit of such an approach I do not accept that it is possible to separate description from interpretation. Within a postmodern paradigm these are not mutually exclusive acts. Therefore, it is not my intention to use thick description to represent the participants in this study as unified, autonomous, conscious knowing individuals, who have been uncovered and revealed through the use of rich, thick description. Instead, I will use thick description to describe/interpret for the reader the experiences of the participants and the social, cultural and historical contexts that shape the discourses within which they act. In this regard I hope that the reader is not lead to view these discourses solely through my constructed interpretations of the participants. By avoiding the use of thick description to build essentialist and fixed identities/subjectivities, from which understandings and discourses are examined, I hope that the reader is able to retain some freedom to reflect upon how they themselves might be influenced by the particular contexts and discourses that are described/interpreted in this research.

Whilst acknowledging Kvale's (2006) concerns regarding the *monopoly of interpretation,* for pragmatic reasons I have taken the liberty to re-phrase or tidy-up the participants' conversations. For example the following reply is taken directly from Max's interview transcripts: "Well umm, I guess ahhh... ummm they both , they both watch rugby". In order to make Max's account more reader friendly I would re-present this sentence as "Well, I guess they both watch rugby".

Chapter Summary

In summary I have attempted to illustrate how my epistemological and ontological assumptions underpin the methods that I have utilised in this study. As there is no one method for conducting a Foucauldian analysis I have attempted to provide the reader with enough information so that they might understand how I uncovered and identified discourses and the influences that these discourse have upon the subjectivities of the participants. Whilst acknowledging that there are no definitive lists for judging the worth of postmodern research I do not condone an 'anything goes' approach towards research and knowledge. Therefore I have attempted to present the reader with a critical list of criteria and questions so that they may determine for themselves the worth of this research. Finally I have acknowledged that this thesis is a textual representation and as such is influenced by my own subjectivity both as a producer and a product of the knowledge presented here.

CHAPTER FIVE

Results/Discussion

In this chapter, I will detail the results of my research and discuss the possible implications for the findings. I will start by detailing the discourses of rugby that circulate within the American School of Taiwan. I will then describe the effects of these discourses with regard to the gendered subjectivities of the boys at A.ST.

The construction of rugby at A.S.T

In order to address my guiding research questions I examined the interview transcripts looking for various discourses as well as discursive rules, strategies and techniques that informed any statements made about or relating to rugby and rugby players. With regard to the analysis of statements referring to rugby, I identified three prevailing discourses: discourses of rugby as a masculine sport, discourses of rugby as a low status sport, and discourses of rugby as a foreign/western sport.

As previously noted, discourses and their associated rules and regulations can be regarded as constraining or structuring perceptions of reality including knowledge of self and others (Pringle & Markula, 2005). Thus by examining the discourses that surround rugby at A.S.T, it was my intention to gain some insight into the participants' experiences and perceptions of rugby as well as their gendered subjectivities as male athletes and boys. Whilst I acknowledge that discourses can simultaneously overlap, reinforce and draw upon other discourses I have chosen to individually review each of the three prevailing discourses that surround rugby in at A.S.T. Following this examination, I will discuss the potential power effects of these discourses in relation to the gendered subjectivities of the participants.

Discourses of rugby as a masculine sport

Whilst analysing the participants' interview transcripts, it became apparent to me that the discursive construction of rugby at A.S.T is strongly influenced by discourses of masculinity. From an institutional perspective rugby is firmly and powerfully established as a boys' only sport. Of the ten high school sports offered, rugby is the only sport where girls and boys play different variants of the

game. In this case the boys play ten-a-side full contact rugby whilst the girls play six a side touch. Although this institutional positioning of rugby as a masculine sport could be attributed as the source from which the participants' knowledge of rugby as a masculine sport is derived, Foucault (1978, p. 93) believed that "power is not an institution, and not a structure" and as such any analysis of power should not concern itself with the regulated and legitimated forms of power in their central locations. Furthermore any analysis of power should "not attempt some kind of deduction of power starting from its centre and aimed at the discovery of the extent to which it permeates into the base" (p. 99). Rather Foucault's (1980) understanding of 'power as relations' suggests that power must be analysed as something which circulates in a capillary fashion through the depths of society from individual to individual. Whilst not disputing nor disregarding the influence that such an institutional positioning has upon the participants' understanding of rugby as a masculine sport I sought to identify ways within which the discursive construction of rugby as a masculine sport was circulated, supported or resisted through the participants talk about rugby.

Throughout the interview process many of the participants often utilised the discursive position of American Football as the 'normal contact sport' in order to describe, compare, differentiate and ultimately discursively constitute rugby as a unique contact sport. This was particularly evident when the participants reflected upon their first impressions of the game. Many of the boys compared rugby to American Football, often qualifying the difference between the two games by suggesting that rugby was a much more dangerous and physical game. As Jake said to me, "I guess I was a little intimidated at first, it was like football without pads which is what everybody explained it as. So football was crazy enough but rugby was just more intense". In this manner, the boys discursively identified rugby as a rougher, more dangerous and more exciting sport than American football. Given that American football has traditionally been identified as a standard bearer of masculinity within American culture, this positioning of rugby gives significant power to the discourse of rugby as masculine sport; especially when utilised in an American school such as A.S.T (Sage, 1998; Sabo & Panepinto, 1990).

When describing rugby players many of the participants focussed on qualities such as aggression, physical strength, size, and speed. As David told me,

"every single player has these three qualities, they're fast, they're strong and they're tough". By highlighting rugby's demand for strength, aggression and courage, the participants discursively positioned the game as congruent with perceptions of masculinity and incongruent with those of femininity. As Max said to me, "I think the physical side more than anything enables rugby to kind of have that grip on the manliness tag over other sports". By associating rugby with discourses of masculinity it was easier for participants to focus on traditional masculine qualities such as strength, speed and aggression and to in turn ignore less gender specific qualities such as skill, fitness and intelligence. As Sage (1998) suggests, such strategies act to position sport as a source of male identity and gender division by positioning sport as congruent with perceptions of masculinity and incongruent with those of femininity. In this regard the participants acted to reinforce the discursive positioning of rugby as a masculine sport.

Similarly, when examining the interview transcripts it appeared to me that the discursive construction of rugby as a masculine sport imposed rules and constraints that acted to influence how participants could talk about females in relation to rugby. In this regard Jake was the only student to suggest that rugby was a masculine sport specifically because females were not involved in the game. When explaining to me why rugby was perceived to be a more masculine sport than others Jake suggested that it was because no one had ever heard of a women's rugby team as opposed to tennis which was considered to be "the least masculine sport because you hear so much about female tennis players". When asked to comment on their parent's views regarding rugby, many of the participants reinforced the discursive positioning of rugby as an exclusively masculine affair by portraying their fathers as supportive of rugby and their mothers as opposed to rugby. As Adrien told me,

> My Dad loves the sport, he thinks it's a good thing I'm doing it. My Mom's more worried about my condition. Every time I go home after a game, [she says] 'you shouldn't play you're hurt' and things like that".

Some participants excluded, ignored or were simply unaware of their mother's perspective on rugby. As Scott said to me, "my Mom, she doesn't really have a view on it but my father is really glad that I play". Even when the participants acknowledged that their mothers were supportive of rugby they still acted to

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qualify this support in a way that gave strength to the positioning of rugby as a masculine sport. As Jake said to me, "my dad loves rugby and my mom knows about rugby because he played and she thinks that it's good for me. She will support me but she's also scared to death that I'm going to get killed". In this regard the participants reinforced the discursive construction of rugby as a masculine sport by distancing or disassociating females from the game and thus further positioning rugby as congruent with perceptions of masculinity and incongruent with those of femininity. This finding supports the work of Terret (1999) who suggests that rugby participation contributes to the gender order and subordination of women by providing rugby players with a public forum with which to emphasize their differences "vis-à-vis women", and Pringle (2003) who found that rugby within schools acts "as a dividing practice between males and females" (p. 233).

Within gender studies, the existence of exclusively male environments such as sports teams or workplaces and the male bonding that occurs within such groups has been linked to the development of masculinities (Flood, 2008; Messner, 1990c). For many of the participants one of their favourite aspects of rugby was the bonding and strong friendships that they made as a team. As Scott said to me, "my favourite thing about playing rugby is how tightly knit the team is". Not only was bonding within the team important, but as David explained to me, playing rugby allowed the participants to bond with the unseen but omnipresent 'brotherhood' of rugby playing men throughout the world.

> It's like a brotherhood, there's no blood, there's no finger, well there's no signing anything but it just happens... I, definitely formed a brotherhood with my players, my fellow players ... I think it's kinda like a little cult, it's actually a pretty big cult, it's like this kind of nationwide brotherhood kind of thing you know. (David)

Whilst David was specifically referring to a brotherhood of rugby players, it could be perceived that rugby participation allows him to identify with and draw upon a universal form of masculinity that is recognised by all men. Connell (1987, 1995) has described such a universal type of masculinity as 'the hegemonic form of masculinity'. With regard to discourses of rugby, the significance that the participants placed upon male bonding can be seen to strengthen the discursive construction of rugby as a masculine sport and rugby as a masculizing practice.

As White and Vagi (1990) suggest, through rugby participation, "men may find a forum to reaffirm masculinity in an unambiguously male arena" (p.78).

Messner (1990a, 1990b), Pringle (2003), Sabo and Panepinto (1990) and Young, White and McTeer (1994), have all suggested that within the context of sporting participation, the ability to tolerate pain and injury are closely related to understandings of masculinities. In this regard several participants gave strength to the discursive positioning of rugby as a masculine sport by suggesting that rugby players were less concerned about pain and injury than other athletes. When comparing rugby players to other athletes in the school Adrien told me that, "we're [rugby players] much more violent and we don't fake our injuries". Jake also suggested to me that rugby players in the school were less concerned about injuries than other athletes, "I think injury is less so important in rugby. I'm not as afraid of injury as I used to be because it's not as big a deal in the sport". Thus by suggesting that rugby players were less concerned about pain and injury than other athletes at the school such as basketball and soccer players, the participants gave strength to the discursive position of rugby as a masculine sport.

As previously detailed in my review of literature, links between discourses of rugby and discourses of masculinity have been identified in a variety of different settings (Chandler & Nauright, 1999; Nauright & Chandler, 1999; Pringle, 2003; Pringle & Markula, 2005). Similarly, the participants in this study, through a number of discursive strategies and techniques, actively constructed rugby as a masculine sport. In this regard the school policy of touch for girls and rugby for boys should be viewed not only as producing and transmitting discourses of rugby as a masculine sport but also as one of the prime effects of this discourse. Whilst not all participants actively reinforced the links between masculinity and rugby none of the participants presented any counter discourses that might have positioned rugby as a gender neutral sport, or a sport suitable for girls. In agreement with previous research that has examined the relationship between masculinities, contact sports, and schools, rugby at A.S.T appears to be closely linked to discourses of masculinity (Burgess et al. 2003, Light, 1999, 2000, 2007; Edley & Wetherell, 1997; Pringle, 2003, Pringle & Markula, 2005).

Discourses of rugby as a foreign/western sport

As I examined the interview transcripts it was apparent, within the context of the school, that rugby was positioned as a foreign sport. In this regard, several of the participants highlighted a number of practical reasons as to why the student body tended to view rugby as a foreign game. Foremost amongst these was the limited exposure to the sport that students received. As Max told me, "most kids only learn to play or even get introduced to the sport when they come here and try out for the upper school teams".   Another factor that some participants raised was the lack of cultural significance that rugby was accorded within the school. As Pollock and Van Reken (2001) have acknowledged, students in international schools are often influenced by two cultures, the culture of the school and the culture of the country within which the school is situated. Despite the fact that the school is not situated in America, does not follow any particular American curriculum and is not populated by typical American students or teachers, a number of participants drew upon the powerful discourses that act to constitute the school as an 'American school' in order to position rugby as a foreign sport. As Kevin told me "I think [rugby is] a foreign game because ours is an American school". In this regard football was presented as the 'normal contact sport' from which rugby was described, compared and differentiated as a foreign contact sport. Jake highlighted the privileged position that American Football holds when he told me that "as an American everyone grows up watching football, football is our national sport". At the same time the participants also recognised that rugby was not a popular Asian sport and as such was also foreign to the Chinese culture that circulated within the school. As Adrien said to me, "they [Asian students] view it as a foreign sport; they're more interested in their own sports, basketball, badminton things like that". In this regard the participants discursively constituted rugby as a foreign sport by positioning it as neither an American or Asian sport.

Whilst many of the participants utilised the discursive positioning of American Football as 'the normal contact sport' for boys to play, some participants deployed counter discourses which attempted to position American Football as a foreign sport and rugby as the 'normal contact sport' for boys at A.S.T. For students who had spent most of their lives living outside of America, the powerful discourses that position American Football as the national sport

seemed to be losing their strength. As Aaron said to me, "I don't see football as my sport. I only like rugby and I see that as my sport. Football seems kind of… distant". Some participants also gave strength to this counter discourse by acknowledging that students at the school are exposed to a lot more rugby than American Football. As Kevin said to me, "you see rugby more around here than football so then you just kinda get used to it. I think of it as a very worldwide sport, I think that football is more of a foreign sport".

Practical considerations such as limited exposure, knowledge and experience of rugby can be seen to contribute to the constitution of rugby as a foreign sport. However, within the mixed American and Chinese cultural context of the school, the discursive positioning of rugby as a foreign game is primarily reinforced through the participants' knowledge of rugby as neither an American nor Asian sport. Reflecting the relational nature of power and discourse, the limited exposure to American Football and the mixed cultural context of the school, those discourses that have traditionally privileged American Football as 'the normal contact' sport for Americans may lose their influence and in turn rugby may come to be regarded as 'the normal contact sport' for boys at A.S.T.

Within the context of the school, the positioning of rugby as a foreign/western sport has two significant effects. When compared with other sports in the school, rugby has a relatively large number of foreign participants such as Australian and French students. At the same time its positioning as a western sport provides an avenue for those students who wish to be identified as western. Thus when compared to other teams in the school, rugby has a relatively high number of ethnically mixed or non-Asian participants. Furthermore, as a foreign/western sport rugby does not have access to the privileged discourses that surround traditionally American or Chinese sports, consequently, within the context of the school, it is difficult for rugby to be positioned as a high status sport.

Discourses of rugby as a low status sport

Through my involvement with coaching, and my analysis of the interview transcripts, it was clear that rugby was positioned as a low status sport within A.S.T. When discussing the status of rugby, the participants presented a number of different reason as to why rugby was regarded as a low status sport. Foremost

amongst these was the knowledge of rugby as an unsuccessful sport. Regardless of results during the home season the success of all school teams tends to be measured by their performance at the end of year tournament where they play against other international schools from throughout Asia. The traditionally poor results of the rugby team at this tournament were singled out by some participants as one reason why rugby is accorded such low status within the school. As Max told me, because the team is "known for getting hammered by the other schools [at the end of year tournament] there is a touch of negative perception". Whilst some participants acknowledged that sporting results and status are closely linked, David discussed with me his understanding of Chinese culture and the influence that this has on the status of unsuccessful teams.

> I don't think they [the school community] give rugby enough attention mainly because we've had such a difficult run. I mean we've been last place almost every single year. I think A.S.T is kind of a vain school. If we're not doing well in something we don't acknowledge it. They ignore the bad things and focus on the good things. Which is actually a very, very, Chinese philosophy, you know, focus on the good, don't worry about the bad just ignore it.

Whilst rugby was not the only unsuccessful team in the school, as a 'foreign game', it did not have access to the privileged discourses that acted to accord high status, regardless of results, to sports such as basketball and badminton. As Max said to me, "they [the basketball team] have up and down seasons. One they might be successful, the next they might be down near the bottom again". Despite these fluctuations in form Max suggested to me that basketball was able to retain its position as a high status sport because it is a sport that is popular in both America and Taiwan and as such is considered to be "the pinnacle of American and Taiwanese culture". Similarly Aaron regarded badminton to be "A.S.T's sport" and as such he considered badminton to be "just part of the culture". Within traditional rugby playing countries such as New Zealand rugby is surrounded by similar privileged discourses which act to maintain rugby's position as a high status sport (Latimer, 1998; Star, 1999; Pringle, 2001, 2003). At A.S.T, the absence of such privileging discourses makes it difficult for people to resist, change or even conceive of rugby as anything but a low status sport.

In a similar manner, participants suggested that the low status accorded to rugby is strongly influenced by the fact that most people in the school community do not have the knowledge or experience to understand, appreciate or enjoy rugby. When discussing how students at the school viewed rugby, Jake told me that,

> a majority of students aren't really sure what's going on during the game. After the game they'll ask questions or they'll just not really say anything. They'll be confused most of the time. They don't know whether it was good or bad. We could play crappy and they'd say you played fantastic or we could play absolutely amazing and they'd be like 'you are horrible'.

Once again American Football was positioned as the norm from which to compare, differentiate and understand rugby. Although many of the participants had highlighted the benefits of playing rugby over American Football, Max told me that members of the school community including students, parents, and teachers, probably viewed rugby as inferior to American Football in terms of spectator entertainment.

> It's not as spectacular as American football. They have a three second burst but every burst is spectacular. There's a huge hit or something along those lines. People probably see it [rugby] as a little inferior and more of a mess.
>
> I guess as a spectacle they don't find it as interesting or as fun to watch.

The lack of rugby experience, understanding, and appreciation amongst the school community highlights the limited range of discourses from which people in this setting are able to construct knowledge about rugby. As Max told me, "being American it's harder to understand the culture behind [rugby]". Without access to a wide range of rugby related discourses, particularly those that act to position rugby as a difficult, skilful and courageous game in countries such as New Zealand, rugby at A.S.T was percieved to be a simple game. When describing how students viewed rugby at the school, Scott reported that,

> They might see it as just a game where you run into each other and hit each other. I think it's seen as a very simple game because rugby isn't very big here in Taiwan. I don't think it's viewed as something that is worth spending the time to play or improve upon.

In this regard, the limited range of discourses that surround rugby at A.S.T provide little resistance to the discursive positioning of rugby as a simple and

unskilful game. As Max observed, this led to the negative assumption that to succeed in rugby "you just have to be big. They [the students] don't really understand that skills play just as an important role as strength and speed in rugby". This discursive construction of rugby as a simple and unskilful game further reinforces its position as a low status sport.

Many participants suggested that discursive construction of rugby as a low status sport had resulted in a lack of support for rugby amongst the school community. As Adrien said to me "A.S.T isn't really focussed on rugby here. We have a couple of people focussed on rugby. Everybody else is generally focussed on basketball, badminton". The participants highlighted low attendances at games and team tryouts as one of the major indicators of low support.

The participants utilised a number of different approaches and strategies to resist the discursive positioning of rugby as a low status sport. Many participants suggested that on the rugby team, every player was as equally important and as equally involved as each other. As Aaron said to me, "everybody's involved it's not like football where only the running back gets the glory". Thus the participants acted to discursively construct rugby as a more democratic, equitable and thus superior team sport as opposed to basketball and soccer which were seen as games were one person could take control the game or influence the result. Some participants utilised a reverse discourse to suggest that the continual success of the badminton team acted to degrade the status of badminton and enhance the status of rugby. As Adrien reported:

> yes they [badminton players] do [get respect] but the thing is it's always been a gold medal so after a while people start to expect it to be a gold medal and it kinda loses its [significance], that's why it's such a big achievement for the rugby team to actually not be last.

Whilst practical considerations such as poor results contribute to the position of rugby as a low status sport it is also important to acknowledge that rugby's discursive positioning as a foreign sport precludes it from drawing upon those discourses that act to privilege sports such as badminton and basketball. Furthermore the absence of privileging discourses that might be found in traditional rugby playing settings provides few discursive resources with which to resist or challenge rugby's discursive construction as a simple, unsuccessful, unskilful, non-entertaining and ultimately low status sport. In summary, rugby at

A.S.T is constructed both institutionally and discursively as a foreign/western sport, a masculine sport and a low status sport. In the next section I will discuss how these three discourses of rugby influence the constitution of the participants' identities as discussed.

The discursive construction of rugby players as male athletes

In relation to my second guiding question I was interested to examine how the prevalent discourses of rugby influence the participants' knowledge and understanding of themselves as individuals. Acknowledging Foucault's' scepticism toward any conception of identity that revolves around a coherent or unitary self, I considered the participants in my study to be representative of multiple, shifting and often self-contradictory identities. As such I focussed upon the discourses of rugby at A.S.T and the possible influence that they might have upon the participants' gendered subjectivities. Recognising that individuals consist of multiple subjectivities which change depending upon where one is and what role one plays, I was interested to examine the participants gendered subjectivities firstly as male athletes and secondly as high school boys. In order to examine how the participants understood themselves as male athletes and as high school boys, I paid attention to statements that referred to sport, rugby, rugby players and gender.

As Markula and Pringle (2006) note, subjectivities are "formed within a complex set of discourses in a particular historical and cultural context" (p. 216). When discussing, perceptions of sport, rugby and gender many of the participants positioned their comments within the context of the school as a whole and/or within one of two distinct cultural groups that were perceived to exist within the school. Despite the relatively homogenous appearance of the student body the participants suggested that there were two distinct cultural groups within which students at A.S.T could position themselves. These two cultural groups were known as the Asian group and the Western group. As the school consists of many culturally diverse students, language was used to determine which group a student belonged to. As David said to me

> I think it has a lot do to with the spoken language that the people use. If you
> speak more Chinese than you speak English then you are probably in the

more Asian group. If you speak more English than you speak Chinese then you're probably categorized, like put into the western group

Throughout the interview and analysis process it became apparent that when building identity and status as males, the gendered subjectivities of the participants were strongly influenced by these cultural groups. Whilst all of the participants in this study identified themselves as belonging to the western cultural group, Kevin told me that students at A.S.T can move between groups and that not all students are exclusively associated with one cultural group. When describing this situation he said, "yeah there are two groups. There's also a little group in the middle, like a mulligan. You don't even know where you're going". Kevin himself had once identified with the Asian group but had since moved his allegiances to the western group as he said to me, "I was one of the little Asian ones but I realized I wasn't bright enough {laughs} so I moved over here [to the western cultural group]".

In a similar manner, Pollock and Van Reken (2001) suggest that the cultural identity of international students can shift dramatically depending on the place and context that they are in. For example, whilst students at A.S.T may perceive themselves to be Americans, within the United States those same students may feel more like foreigners than Americans. Even within the context of the school, students' cultural identities may shift. When discussing his own cultural identity Aaron suggested that he did not always feel like a genuine American; however, within certain contexts such as his American History class he felt distinctly more American than other students. As he said to me, "like in history class they'll be like 'so who's American' and you know the Chinese people will be like "well I'm American" but I'll be like well you know...". In this regard American history class was one context were Aaron felt distinctly American especially in relation to the other students in the class.

Previous research that has examined gender and sport within schools suggests that boys who play sports, particularly those sports that are perceived to be traditionally masculine sports, are generally accorded high status amongst their peers (Burgess et al. 2003, Light, 1999, 2000, 2007; Edley & Wetherell, 1997; Pringle, 2003). When considering which sport was perceived to be the most masculine at A.S.T the participants nominated either rugby or basketball. Many of the participants qualified their decision by locating particular sports within the

cultural context of the Asian or Western groups. When considering which sport at A.S.T was the perceived to be the most masculine Scott told me that when,

> looking at what is the more manly sport, I think rugby is up there with basketball.   I think people who have been brought up in an Asian or Chinese environment might go towards basketball while people brought up in a more western environment might go towards rugby.

Within the broader context of the school, some participants considered basketball to be the most masculine sport whilst others suggested that the physical nature of rugby positioned it as the most masculine sport at A.S.T.

Rugby players as low status male athletes

Whilst previous research has suggested that athletes who play traditionally masculine sports such as rugby are accorded greater respect and status than male athletes who play 'less' masculine sports, rugby players at A.S.T did not appear to receive any special status or respect. As Max said to me, "I guess rugby is still probably considered the manliest sport even though it's not highly regarded". When asked to reflect upon which male athletes were the most widely respected at school, all of the participants singled out the badminton and basketball players. As David told me that "it's probably a tie between the basketball team and the badminton team. Badminton because they do so well, basketball because basketball is so popular in Taiwan".

In contrast the discourse of rugby as a low status sport acted in a number of ways to position rugby players as low status male athletes at A.S.T. Whilst, the knowledge of rugby as an unsuccessful sport acted to position rugby players as low status male athletes, the discursive construction of rugby as a simple and unskilful sport also acted to position rugby players as low status male athletes. When telling me how other students at the school viewed rugby players, many of the participants said that students at A.S.T simply saw rugby players as the 'big guys'. The perceived simplicity and lack of skill involved in rugby acted to further devalue the status of rugby players by fostering the perception that anyone could qualify for a varsity rugby position. As Max said to me,

> A.S.T kind of sees rugby as the poor man's option. A lot of kids who, it's kind of harsh to say this, but who don't have the athletic talent to play any

sport even rugby, try and come over to rugby thinking that it's the soft

option, the easy option and that they'll make it.

Whilst all varsity sporting positions in the school were seen to hold some degree of status and respect, the perception that anybody could qualify for the rugby team contrasted sharply with the perceived elite nature of the school basketball players. As Kevin said to me,

I mean come on we [the rugby team] got like what? Forty guys to come out.

They [the basketball team] got eighty guys, for twelve spots. I think when

they get to Varisty it's a lot bigger it's like 'they're the top of the top'.

The perceived skill difference between rugby players and basketball players further reinforced the discursive positioning of basketball players as high status male athletes and rugby players as low status male athletes.

Rugby players as high status male athletes

Although the knowledge of rugby as a foreign sport denied rugby players the opportunity to draw upon the privileged cultural discourses which act to privilege both badminton and basketball players in the school, the participants countered their low status as male athletes in a number of different ways. In order to resist the discourse of rugby players as simple and unskilful many participants highlighted the unstructured nature of rugby and the subsequent demands this placed on players. As Aaron said to me, "it's [rugby] not as structured, there's lots of opportunities and lots of things you can do. It's up to the player's themselves they just have to think it up, the coach really has no input during the game". In this regard rugby was presented as a complicated game for quick thinking players as opposed to simply a physical game for unskilled players. Many of the participants also drew upon the discourse of rugby as a masculine sport in order to counter the discursive construction of rugby players as low status male athletes. This strategy involved two distinct approaches. As the most masculine of sports, it was suggested that rugby players did or should receive extra respect and status as male athletes because they played such a rough and dangerous game. As Max said to me,

I think people have some respect for us in that we are taking on guys that

are far bigger than us. Like [they've] often got that yard extra pace, a good

four inches and a good twenty pounds. So I guess they respect us in that

regard even though our results don't always give us a good reputation.

Secondly it was suggested that the position of rugby as the most masculine sport should accord rugby players greater status in relation to other male athletes in the school, especially those that played sports that were perceived to be less masculine. As Jake said to me,

just because you win doesn't mean you're the best team. I mean they're [the badminton players] playing at a different intensity level. They're not going through the same things rugby players are going through, more strenuous, physical things.   So I guess you can respect people for their areas of expertise, you can respect badminton because they may be good at badminton but you can respect rugby players because they're out playing a tough game.

In this regard the participants actively utilised the discourse of rugby as a masculine sport in order to position rugby players as more masculine and thus worthy of more respect than other male athletes in the school.

Although the participants felt that rugby players were generally regarded as more masculine than other male athletes at A.S.T, this discursive positioning appeared to have varying effects depending upon the context within which it was deployed. Acknowledging the multiple cultural contexts at A.S.T, many of the participants suggested that rugby players were more likely to be viewed as high status male athletes within the western cultural group as opposed to the wider context of the school. This was attributed to the belief that traditional perceptions of masculinity such as size, strength and social reputation were more highly valued in the western cultural group. When discussing which perceptions of masculinity were most highly valued and respected amongst the western cultural group, Adrien told me that "for the foreigners it'd be the big rugby player whose grades were okay but weren't the best and has a lot of friends, is very outgoing". Similarly Kevin told me that, "the foreign thinking is you know, masculine, rugby player, big guy, partying, you know crazy boy". Subsequently, within the context of the western cultural group, the discourse of rugby as a masculine sport acted to enhance the participant's status as male athletes. The prevalent discourses of masculinity that circulated within the western cultural group acted to further enhance the status of rugby players by devaluing the status of other male athletes

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in the school. As Zach told me the badminton boys who were generally highly respected throughout the school were relatively unknown within the western cultural group, "I mean the badminton guys aren't really that respected, at least in the western group of kids".

In summary, the multiple cultural contexts, power relations and competing discourses that surround rugby and masculinities within A.S.T can be seen to have varying effects upon the construction of rugby players as male athletes. Within the general context of the school, the discursive construction of rugby acts to position rugby players as low status male athletes. Conversely within the context of the western cultural group the dominant discourse of masculinity acts to position rugby players as high status male athletes. In the following section of this chapter I will examine the influence that these competing discourses, power relations and contexts have upon the participants' gendered subjectivities.

The discursive construction of boys at A.S.T

When examining the interview transcripts it was clear that the interplay of multiple and competing discourses and power relations significantly influenced the participants' gendered subjectivities not only as athletes but also as boys in the school. Research that has examined the influence of sporting participation in relation to the gendered subjectivities of school boys has generally concluded that traditional or hegemonic forms of masculinity act to privilege sport playing boys at the expense of their non-sporting peers (Burgess, et al. 2003; Edley & Wetherell, 1997; Pascoe, 2003). In this regard many of the participants acknowledged that sporting participation, particularly at the varsity level, could be used by boys to gain status as males at A.S.T. However, it was generally considered that sporting participation did not automatically accord boys higher status as males in the school.

Regardless of which sport garnered the greatest status or respect, many participants suggested that within the school, academics were considered to be more important than sports and as such sporting participation whether it be in a masculine or non-masculine sport had a limited influence on the status of boys at A.S.T. As Scott said,

I think at A.S.T we're not a huge sports school, it's always academics first.

So I think all the sports have kind of become not something that you should

play but something that you could play if you had extra time.

The discourse of A.S.T as an academic school appeared to strongly influence perceptions of masculinity both within the general context of the school and within the two distinct cultural groups. Many participants acknowledged that within the western cultural group traditional perceptions of masculinity accorded sporty boys greater status as males; however, they were also aware that as boys in an academically focussed school, all possible perceptions of masculinity were subject to the powerful discourse of A.S.T as an academic school. When telling me how boys in the western group were generally accorded greater status through their sporting participation Jake was careful to qualify these comments within the discourse of A.S.T as an academic school.

In my group, the people I know and respect, and what my friends respect is

definitely someone who's more so into sports, a jock, and less so into

grades... so I would respect someone who's a good sports player and

probably does decent in school, probably not a 4.0, but someone who's

doing well in school and is able to play a competitive sport.

When discussing which perceptions of masculinity might be most highly respected and valued amongst the Asian cultural group, many of the participants suggested that within this context, boys were predominately judged upon their academic ability. In this regard, status and respect were accorded to those boys who maintained high grade point averages, took difficult course loads, achieved high S.A.T scores or were going to attend prestigious American universities. In relation to academic achievement, the participants considered sporting involvement to be far less effective in terms of building status and respect for those boys that identified with the Asian cultural group. When describing how boys might build status within the Asian cultural group Scott suggested to me that "academics are weighed much more than sports, sports are just something you go do in your free time while academics is what will carry you through life". It was also suggested that other factors such as social reputation and fashion sense were important markers of status for boys within the context of the Asian cultural group. Kevin, who identified as having once associated with the Asian group before joining the western group, suggested that for boys in the Asian cultural

group, masculinity was a complicated balance between academic and social concerns.

> Over here the Asian group is really awkward. I've actually been one {laughs} of those guys. It's the crazy and dumber you are when you're out with your friends the more likely you become popular but at the same time you gotta be pretty smart. That's the weird part because you gotta be crazy *and* smart.

As members of the western cultural group, some participants acknowledged that their perceptions regarding masculinity in the Asian cultural group were not necessarily accurate or definitive and could be conceived of as stereotypical.

When asked to reflect on what might be considered the dominant form of masculinity at A.S.T, the competing discourses and power relations that circulated within the school made it difficult for the participants to identify any singular understanding of masculinity that influenced all male students. Some participants suggested that traditional perceptions of masculinity were universal and as such acted to influence all boys in the school regardless of their cultural identification. As Max said to me, "I think that the general stereotype of the manliest man is pretty cross cultural. It's pretty similar across cultures especially with the Asian kids been influenced by American culture". Max's conception of a "stereotype of masculinity that is all around the world" reflects Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005, p. 850) assertion that global forms of hegemonic masculinity have the "power to reshape local patterns of masculinity".

Other participants suggested that the dominant form of masculinity in the school was more closely aligned to academic status. As David said to me,

> I'd have to say masculinity isn't really represented by physical strength or sports in this school. It's probably academia and talent. If they can play the piano like a god and if they do really well in school then this kid is perceived as really successful and will have a very bright future. They don't really care about 'oh how much this guy can bench' or how many guys he can tackle at once or how fast he can run with the ball, that's not really important to them. What's really important in this culture I find, is if they if have a future, if the child can make something out of their talent. Being able to play a piano and being really good in school that means you'll probably get a really good job.

Still other participants suggested that there was no one singular perception of masculinity and as such there were multiple ways in which boys at the school could build status and respect as males. As Scott said to me,

> From what I've seen there's no real one thing that all the males would try to do. It's very spread out. Many will play sports some will play rugby, most will play basketball or softball and a lot will go for academic stuff.

In summary, the participants in this study did not consider sporting success to be a universal, necessary, or important determinant of masculine identity. Within the two dominant cultural groups of the school, the participants identified different criteria that could be used to determine or position the gendered subjectivities of boys. However, within the broader context of the school it was suggested there were multiple ways within which this could be achieved. Although all of the participants' associated themselves with the western cultural group, the inability to articulate one coherent and unitary understanding of masculinity suggests that the participants' gendered subjectivities are variously influenced by multiple discourses. These discourses include but are not limited to the different discourses of masculinity that circulate within the Western and Asian cultural groups as well as discourses of A.S.T as an academic school.

Chpater Summary

Within the context of A.S.T, rugby and rugby players are discursively constituted as low status objects. The participants in this study actively resisted this positioning through a number of different discursive strategies, techniques and practises. In this regard the participants utilised traditional discourses of masculinity to construct rugby and rugby players as masculine objects in order to alter the power relations that influence their gendered subjectivities as males in the school. The effectiveness of this strategy varied depending upon the context within which it was utilised. Within the context of the western cultural group it was generally perceived that boys who played rugby were able to draw upon traditional discourses of masculinity in order to improve their status both as male athletes and as 'western' boys. Conversely, within the wider context of the school, competing discourses of masculinity as well as the discourse of A.S.T as an academic school negate the participants' ability to draw upon traditional

discourses of masculinity in order to alter the power relations that influence their gendered subjectivities.

In contrast to previous research, that has found sporting participation to be a powerful hegemonic masculine practise that acts to influence the gendered subjectivities of boys (Connell & Messeschmidt, 2005); the multiple discourses and contexts that act to construct and position various forms of masculinity within A.S.T ensure that sporting participation is not the most significant determinate of masculine identity. Consequently at A.S.T it can be seen that there are multiple ways of been a boy, each of which is accorded varying status depending upon the context within which it is deployed. Whilst this suggests that there is not a rigid, structured hierarchy of masculinities that are deployed around sporting ability, the participants in this study did acknowledge that all of the boys' teams were more widely respect and supported than the girls teams. At the same time they acknowledged that those girls' teams that were successful were also highly respected and supported. As Aaron said to me, "at A.S.T, the successful teams, no matter the gender, are placed on a pedestal and given additional respect". In this regard the respect accorded to girls' teams was seen to fluctuate with their results.

CHAPTER SIX
Conclusion

In this chapter I will summarise the main research findings of this study and discuss their implications with respect to current theoretical views regarding sport, rugby, gender and masculinities.

The purpose for undertaking this research was to examine, within the context of an international high school, how boys understand and experience rugby and how this knowledge influences their understanding and experiences of their gendered identity as boys. My motivation for examining these topics stems from my own experiences of rugby. As a boy growing up in New Zealand I was surrounded by a culture that revered rugby. Now, as a rugby coach in a country where rugby is a minority sport I am interested to find out why students decide to play such a rough and foreign game and how they perceive the game in the absence of privileging discourses such as those that surround rugby in countries like New Zealand. Although researchers have detailed the influence of rugby in settings where the game is traditionally established as a respected sport, I was conscious that very little research has examined the relationship between rugby and masculinities in non-traditional settings. As such, it was my intention to firstly examine the discourses that surround rugby within an international school and to then subsequently identify the influences and effects that these discourses have upon the students' knowledge of themselves as boys.

To help focus this examination I formulated two guiding questions:

1. How do rugby players at A.S.T make sense of rugby?
2. How do the participants' experiences of playing rugby and the discourses associated with the game influence gendered subjectivities and relations of power between boys at A.S.T?

In order to address these questions I conducted in-depth interviews with a purposeful sample of seven high school boys, who had at some stage played for the school rugby team. These interviews were analysed using an eclectic approach as well as a Foucauldian understanding of discourse, power and identity. In this regard, I view discourse and power as productive concepts that are able to constitute subjects, power relations and social realities. My analysis was not conducted with the intention of proving or establishing any hypothesis or prior theory, rather it was my intention to examine those discourses that influence the

social world of the participants in this study and their subsequent understandings of self.

An overview of research findings

The boys' interview accounts revealed that rugby and rugby players in the school were discursively constructed as masculine objects. At the same time rugby was discursively constructed as a low status sport and rugby players as low status male athletes. Whilst the participants generally acted to support or reinforce the construction of rugby and rugby players as masculine objects they also engaged in a number of discursive strategies, techniques and practises in order to resist the low status that was attributed both to rugby and rugby players. Despite the perception of rugby as a masculine sport, competing discourses of masculinity as well as discourses of rugby as a low status sport prevented rugby players from assuming any privileged position as boys amongst the wider student body. However, it was perceived that within the cultural context of the 'western group', rugby playing boys were able to draw upon traditional discourses of masculinity in order to elevate their status both as male athletes and as boys.

School boys, rugby and masculinities

The findings of this research support previous studies that have identified links between heavy contact sports such as rugby and how boys experience, construct and negotiate masculinities. Through various discursive practises, techniques, and strategies, rugby playing boys at A.S.T utilised discourses of masculinity to construct rugby and rugby players as masculine objects. At the same time they also attempted to draw upon the discursive constitution of rugby as a masculine sport in order to influence their status as males at the school. Despite this seemingly reciprocal relationship, the findings of this study do not support the suggestion that sport and or sporting participation "clearly helps to produce culturally dominant conceptions of masculinity" (Messner, 1992, p. 151). Whilst previous studies have suggested that "athleticism and sports are principal markers of masculinity in high school", for students at A.S.T, sporting prowess did not appear to act as the primary point of reference from which boys could position their identities (Pascoe, 2003, p. 1424; Burgess et al, 2003). Furthermore, the multiple and competing discourses of masculinity that circulate

within A.S.T prevent any one conception of masculinity, regardless of its links to sport, from becoming culturally dominant.

Research that has examined sport and gender through a hegemonic lens has suggested that dominant forms of masculinity work through hierarchical structures within institutions such as schools to lionise and privilege male athletes who compete in sports involving displays of strength, power, force, skill, and aggression (Burgess et al, 2003; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Edley & Wetherell, 1997; Light, 2007; Light & Kirk, 2000; Messner, 1990a; Pascoe, 2003). Within certain cultural groups and discursive contexts, rugby players at A.S.T were able to utilise discourses of masculinity to elevate their own status at the expense of less 'masculine' athletes. However, the multiple cultural contexts and discourses of masculinity that circulate within A.S.T make it difficult to conceive of any hierarchical structure. To suggest that rugby imposes a hierarchical status upon those boys who identify with the western cultural group ignores the fact that, as previously acknowledged, students at A.S.T do not always identify with any one cultural group. Even those students who primarily identify with one cultural group are still able to shift allegiances from group to another. Furthermore, an anti-essentialist understanding of identity acknowledges that individuals are not the product of stable or consistent selves and as such subjectivities frequently change depending on where one is and what role one takes (Sawicki, 1991). In this regard the cultural identity of students at A.S.T can be seen to be dependent upon both place and context. Consequently, to conceive of a hierarchical structure of masculinities within this school it would have to be asked, not only what type of masculinity a boy embodies but also what culture, what context, what place? And without the stability of an essentialist form of identity it would have to be considered, for how long an individual might occupy all or any of these discursive positions?

In conclusion, this research provides an example of multiple masculinities co-existing and competing in a shifting manner within the same school. In doing so it challenges the assertion that sport acts as a prime determinant of masculinity. Furthermore, this research suggests that within schools, boys are not always forced to construct masculine identities within structured and hierarchical understanding of masculinity.

Appendices

Initial Interview Guide

When did you first become aware of rugby?

What did you think about it then? (has your view changed)

Why did you decide to play rugby?

What do you enjoy about playing rugby? (your best rugby experience)

What are some of the things that you don't enjoy about playing rugby? (your worst rugby experience)

What other sports have you played?
How does playing rugby differ from these sports?

How is been a rugby player different from other team sport players such as basketball, soccer or volleyball players?

What do you think are some of the attributes or important qualities necessary to be a good rugby player?

What are some of the qualities that make you a good rugby player?

What are some qualities that you think would make you a better rugby player?

In N.Z girls play tackle rugby. Do you think that it would be a good idea to change the girls IASAS competition to tackle?

Do you think that it would be a good idea to change the boys IASAS competition to touch?

How do other students view rugby? (How do your parents view rugby?)

What do you think about this?

How do other students view rugby players such as yourself?

Is this a fair representation? Of rugby players in general? Of you?

If you could think back to yourself before you played rugby and the person that you are now how have you changed?

Altered Interview Guide

When did you first become aware of rugby?

What did you think about it then? (has your view changed)

Why did you decide to play rugby?

What do you enjoy about playing rugby? (your best rugby experience)

What are some of the things that you don't enjoy about playing rugby? (your worst rugby experience)

What other sports have you played?
How does playing rugby differ from these sports?

How is been a rugby player different from other team sport players such as basketball, soccer or volleyball players?

What do you think are some of the attributes or important qualities necessary to be a good rugby player?

What are some of the qualities that make you a good rugby player?

What are some qualities that you think would make you a better rugby player?

In N.Z girls play tackle rugby. Do you think that it would be a good idea to change the girls IASAS competition to tackle?

Do you think that it would be a good idea to change the boys IASAS competition to touch?

Do you think that there are two distinct cultural groups within the school?

Which sport do you think is the most masculine sport for boys at T.A.S to play?
(What about for Asian and western students?)

What do boys at A.S.T do to get respect or status?
(What about for Asian and western students?)

How do other students view rugby? (How do your parents view rugby?)

What do you think about this?

How do other students view rugby players such as yourself?

Is this a fair representation? Of rugby players in general? Of you?

If you could think back to yourself before you played rugby and the person that you are now how have you changed?

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