

Netball in the lives of New Zealand Women: An Intergenerational Study

by

Amy Elizabeth Marfell

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Abstract

This thesis explores the netball experiences of a selection of New Zealand women whom have participated or continue to participate in netball during four distinct historical periods. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach, it sheds light on the broader socio-cultural and political changes that have influenced and shaped women's experiences of netball throughout history. Drawing upon data gathered from primary and secondary sources and four focus groups, I examine the lived experiences of women who played netball during the 1940's, 1970's, 1990's and the early 21st century. In so doing I reveal how broader shifts in gender relations have impacted women's netball experiences, focusing particularly on their initial involvement, participation at recreational and competitive levels, and ultimate withdrawal. Moreover, an intergenerational discussion of these women's experiences reveals some of the differences evident between the experiences of women during these four historical junctures. Exploring women's netball experiences in relation to broader social change, time and context both within and across generations, this thesis provides unique insights into the changing nature and dynamics of netball in New Zealand, shifting social constructions of femininity and women's sporting identities, as well as women's unique and diverse experiences and understandings of their participation.

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Table of Contents

Introducing Netball in the Lives of New Zealand Women: A Contextual Analysis	1
An Introduction to this Study	1
<i>My Interest in this Topic</i>	2
A Contextual History of Feminism and Netball in New Zealand	4
<i>First Wave Feminism, Sport and Basketball in New Zealand</i>	4
<i>Second Wave Feminism, Sport and Netball in New Zealand</i>	12
<i>Third Wave Feminism, Sport and Netball in New Zealand</i>	16
<i>Feminism, Sport and Netball: A Summary</i>	23
Significance of this Study	23
Making a Case for Interdisciplinarity	24
Outline of this Thesis	25
A Critical Review of the Literature.....	27
Understanding Women’s Sporting Experiences:	
A Psychological Perspective	28
A Sociological Perspective	33
A Historical Perspective.....	38
Toward Interdisciplinarity.....	43
Theory and Methodology	47
Poststructural Feminism and Women’s Experiences of Netball.....	47
Netball in the Lives of New Zealand Women: The Research Process	52
<i>Using Focus Groups</i>	52
<i>The Participants in this Study</i>	54
<i>Ethical Considerations and Reflexivity</i>	58
<i>Data Analysis and Reporting</i>	61
<i>Interpretive Validity</i>	64
Summary	66
Netball in the Lives of New Zealand Women: Four Generations	67
Netball in the 1940’s	67
Netball in the 1970’s	73
Netball in the 1990’s	80
Netball in the Early 21st Century.....	86
Summary	92

Netball in the Lives of New Zealand Women: An Intergenerational Discussion	94
The Female Sporting Body	94
<i>The Netball Body: Femininity & Athleticism in Women's Sport</i>	96
Playing the Game: Shifting Tensions and Frustrations.....	103
<i>Contextualising Women's Lived Experiences of Netball</i>	103
<i>Opportunities, Pleasures and Constraints</i>	104
Concluding Thoughts	107

References	112
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Appendices	131
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Appendix One: Principal and Netball Convenor Information Sheet	131
Appendix Two: Principal and Netball Convenor Consent Form	134
Appendix Three: Introductory Letter	135
Appendix Four: School-aged Participant Information Sheet.....	136
Appendix Five: School-aged Participant Consent Form.....	138
Appendix Six: Parent Information Sheet	139
Appendix Seven: Parent Consent Form	141
Appendix Eight: Participant Information Sheet.....	142
Appendix Nine: Participant Consent Form	144
Appendix Ten: Focus Group Sample Questions.....	145

Introducing Netball in the Lives of New Zealand Women: A Contextual Analysis

As women's opportunities in sport have increased throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries, women of all ages can be seen occupying greater space in sport and performing with more authority and confidence. Influenced by a myriad of factors, the agency that many women assert during contemporary sport is in vast contrast to the conformity, restriction and governance experienced by women of earlier generations. As the most popular sport for women in New Zealand (Hawes & Barker, 1999; Netball New Zealand, 2010; SPARC, 2010), netball is an exemplary site where this is occurring.

To introduce and contextualise this study, this chapter explores my own research on women's netball experiences at various historical junctures, as well as the dominant narrative of the history of women in sport and the development of netball. I begin this chapter by introducing my own study of women's experiences of netball across time and contexts. Here, I detail the aims of this study and my interest in this topic. Next, I contextualise the history of the development of netball in New Zealand alongside broader socio-cultural changes initiated by the women's movement. In so doing, I demonstrate the interconnectedness between time, context and social change and women's increased opportunities in society, sport and netball more particularly. Following this contextual analysis I discuss the significance of this study, before making a case for interdisciplinarity. Finally, I conclude this chapter by outlining the structure of the remainder of this thesis and summarising the goals of this study.

An Introduction to this Study

In the light of what is known about the development of women's sporting opportunities, this thesis aims to explore the social changes that have influenced women's participation, opportunities and experiences in netball. In so doing, I aim to capture the lived experiences of a selection of New Zealand women who have played netball at four distinct historical periods (1940's, 1970's, 1990's, 2010). Implementing interdisciplinary techniques and methodologies, I examine the unique and diverse experiences of these women in relation to broader socio-cultural and political developments within New Zealand society. Exploring the social and structural changes that have contributed to the increased confidence and

visibility of women in sport, I build on the current research on women's participation in netball by examining how socio-cultural developments across time and contexts have shaped women's netball experiences.

My Interest in this Topic

Throughout my lifetime I have consumed, lived and experienced netball in a multitude of different ways and through various positions within the culture. Each different role has influenced my life and experiences of netball in various and unique ways.

My first experiences of netball occurred before I was even old enough to physically participate. As an enthusiastic future netballer during the early 1990's, my childhood was filled with the netball stories and memories of the women around me. I recall listening to the stories of my grandmother and mother, both enthusiastic and passionate past netball participants and avid spectators of the contemporary game. In particular, I remember passing a ball in the driveway of my grandmother's home and listening to her unique memories. Telling tales of a game she called 'basketball', with 9 players, heavy balls and thick woollen tunics and the chores she would do before games, she reminisced her younger sporting days. Vivid in my mind also, are the evenings spent with my mother shooting goals until nightfall. Here she would tell me about her black canvas ankle boots, her experiences as a representative player and the many hours she would spend every night shooting hundreds of goals. Not only did these stories help me get to know these important women in my life a little better, but their stories emphasised the differences in our lives as they explained the unique social and sporting climates of the eras in which they grew up. Moreover, their memories and stories were some of my first experiences of netball.

It was during the late 1990's that I began playing the most popular sport for New Zealand women. Taking to the frosty courts every Saturday morning in my blue and white netball uniform with blotchy legs, numb fingertips and proud parents lining the sidelines, I braved many harsh winters to become an active member of the netball culture. Progressing from participatory (e.g. Kiwisport) to competitive and representative models of netball, I spent much of my childhood and adolescence entrenched in this sporting context. As the 'national game for New Zealand women' during this time, netball was popular with many young

girls and therefore a traditional sporting choice. Throughout my childhood netball provided the opportunity for sport participation as there was little choice for young girls in the rural town in which I grew up. However, during my adolescence, netball became a way of life, an avenue to meet friends, a means to vent frustrations and a context where I was able to demonstrate ability, competitiveness and skill. As netball became an important site where I could construct my own identity, its significance in my life grew. Although netball had become an important part of 'who' I was, an increasingly competitive model of netball also threatened my confidence, challenged my commitment and abilities as a leader, and strained my body as athletic pressure, the humiliation of being 'benched', and injury became realities of contemporary netball during my adolescent years.

Although netball had become a considerable part of my identity by the 21st century, changes in my own life (e.g. moving regions, attending university, financial restraint) restricted my opportunities for participation beyond my adolescence. No longer able to allocate the time necessary for elite competition due to educational and work commitments, I struggled with leaving a culture that had been such a large part of who I was. Deciding that I could not completely distance myself from this context, I retired from competitive netball and assumed a coaching position. As a coach, I see and experience the netball context from an entirely different perspective. Assuming responsibility for shaping the experiences of young netballers during the 21st century, the pressures and tensions inherent in netball have become more obvious as I have distanced myself from the participant culture. From the insights my coaching role has provided me, I can see vast differences from my own experiences and the passionate and evocative memories of my mother and grandmother.

The assimilation of experiences from these three diverse roles has prompted me to become interested in the netball experiences of women at different historical locations, and motivated me to explore the broader social changes that have facilitated developments within the netball culture and increased women's opportunities to participate more fully and physically in this sport. Moreover, the tendency of the academic sports literature to focus on the sporting experiences of elite players and coaches has caused me to reflect critically on the value of women's everyday sporting experiences and question

why the experiences of women such as my mother and grandmother are too often lost within this field. Such insights have encouraged the formulation of the research question underpinning this thesis; how have broader social changes in New Zealand society influenced women's netball experiences?

A Contextual History of Feminism and Netball in New Zealand

Drawing upon an array of primary and secondary sources, and building upon previous historical narratives of netball and sport in New Zealand (e.g. Hawes & Barker, 1999; Nauright, 1999; Nauright & Broomhall, 1994; Romanos & Woods, 1992), I explore the historical development of netball in New Zealand. Here I contextualise these developments within broader social changes, and particularly changing gender relations and feminist movements. I examine the development of netball and women's opportunities in sport and society during the first wave (1850-1930) second wave (1960's to early 1980's) and third wave (late 1990's to 21st century) feminist movements.

Drawing upon the work of various feminist scholars, I examine the affects of the women's movement and discuss changes in relation to the three waves of feminism. Some have critiqued the idea of waves of feminism (e.g. Mann & Huffman, 2005; Ruth, 1998, Springer, 2002), arguing that such a euphemism downplays the contribution of individuals and small scale action. Here, however, I draw upon the waves metaphor because it facilitates my goal of contextualising the changing nature and dynamics of women's sport and netball experiences. Focusing on some of the key goals and tenets within the three waves of feminism I contextualise the developments in netball within the changing roles of women in New Zealand society.

First Wave Feminism, Sport and Basketball¹ in New Zealand

The development of basketball was facilitated by structural changes initiated by the first wave feminist movement. The first wave of feminism emerged during the late 19th century in the United Kingdom and North America. During this period a

¹ For historical accuracy, the term 'basketball' is used in place of netball in this chapter. As I explain later in this discussion, in New Zealand netball was known as basketball and did not become officially renamed as netball until late in the 20th century.

number of women's groups lobbied for the increased visibility and political rights of females including legal rights for married women, improved educational and employment opportunities for females, and birth control (Aitken, 1980; Banks, 1981, 1987). A particular concern among predominantly white, middle-class feminists was gaining the right to vote. This was namely embodied in the fight for women's 'suffrage' (Banks, 1987; Garrison, 2005; Sharlach, 2009a; Women's Sports Foundation, 2001). Rising in 1850 and drawing to a close in 1930 (Banks, 1987), first wave feminism had many successes in promoting women's presence outside of the domestic sphere and challenging male authorities, particularly law makers and politicians. This time period saw many women's groups and a few men support the idea of lessened gender segregation in various social spheres (e.g. politics, education, the workforce). According to Garrison (2005), this movement promoted a greater "social and legal identity" for women (p. 242).

In New Zealand, first wave feminism was highly influential. Led predominantly by Protestant women, the first wave feminist movement began "transforming what many saw as a less than godly, male dominated culture" that provided little room for female agency (Stenhouse, 2003, p. 314). Much like their English and American counterparts, these women challenged prevailing gender norms to obtain greater equality among men and women (Stenhouse, 1993). Feminists in New Zealand during the mid 19th and early 20th centuries actively challenged the limited rights of women in society, the workforce and politics, such that they were the first nation to achieve suffrage in 1893 (Nauright & Broomhall, 1994; NZine, 1999). Women's groups in other parts of the world achieved similar successes, achieving suffrage in Australia in 1902 (Australian Women's History Forum, n.d.), England in 1918 (The National Archives, n.d.) and The United States of America in 1920 (Imbornoni, 2007). New Zealand first wave feminists were particularly successful in this cause due to the colonial nature of New Zealand meaning many women worked alongside their husbands, coping with hardships in the process (Nzine, 1999). Furthermore, according to Aitken (1980) and NZine (1999), New Zealand women's privileges in education compared to the rest of the world, and their entry into the workforce during the late 19th century aided in the early emergence and success of the suffrage movement in New Zealand. Constructing a number of petitions and hosting eight significant campaigns including women's suffrage and the repeal of the

Contagious Diseases Act (Banks, 1987), New Zealand feminists including Kate Sheppard urged “the gentlemen who confirm the laws which render women liable to taxation and penal servitude” to declare women equal rights so that women could be “treated as reasonable beings” (as cited in Nzine, 1999, p. 1). As women’s status within New Zealand society continued to change, some women also began negotiating new space in sport and physical activity. In so doing, they challenged understandings of the female body as physically inferior and unsuited to sport or exercise.

Feminism and the Moving Female Body

Prior to the rise of first wave feminism, women’s visibility in sport and physical activity was low and their participation was largely contested. Multiple factors limited women’s participation including medical and biological arguments, patriarchal discourse and social conventions (Costa, 2003; Hargreaves, 1993, 2002; Messner, 2002; Vertinsky, 1994,1990). Emerging from the United States and Europe, these social ideologies also significantly affected New Zealand women (Thompson, 2003).

Biological arguments concerning the physical ailments of women and the fragility of the ‘inferior sex’ limited women’s sport and physical activity participation during the early 19th century (Costa, 2003; Hargreaves, 1993; Vertinsky, 1994). Biological arguments like those of anthropologist J. M. Allan in 1869, emphasised the differences between the sexes and the general ill-health of women:

No woman ever passed through life without being ill. She suffers from ‘the custom of women’...every woman is, according to temperament and other circumstances, always more or less an invalid...Nature disables the whole sex, single as well as married, from competing on equal terms with men. (as cited in Vertinsky, 1990, p. 46)

Influential politicians, medical practitioners and educationalists continued to discourage women’s participation in physical pursuits by employing an array of scientific arguments to depict women as “passive victims of their own biology” (Hargreaves, 1993, p. 44). Also restricting women’s participation during this era was the expectation that women’s primary responsibility was to the family and her place was in the home, and restrictive and lavish dress which seriously impaired

women's participation in physical activity during this period (Hargreaves, 1993; Simpson, 2001). Social forms of leisure requiring little vigorous movement (e.g. tennis, croquet) were the only activities available to upper-class women during this time as they did little to disrupt either the masculine nature of physical activity or the 'ideal' image of the physically inferior woman (Hargreaves, 1993).

Prominent developments in women's sport participation occurred during the late 19th century. According to many sport historians new opportunities for women in education facilitated by first wave feminism influenced women's participation in sport (e.g. Costa, 2003; Hargreaves, 1993; Treagus, 2005; Vertinsky, 1994). Women's presence in education prompted a reconsideration of earlier medical and biological ideologies that had restricted women's physical activity (Hargreaves, 1993). Private English and American colleges were the first to promote 'conspicuous recreation' for women in the forms of dancing, croquet and walking (Hargreaves, 1993). However, as more women entered the education system a growing concern over the poor health of women emerged. According to Vertinsky (1994), during the mid 19th century, health reformers called for physical education to play a more significant role in women's education. This saw gymnastics endorsed in most girls' schools as an important form of physical activity. Indeed, such developments mark a time of rapid social transformation whereby the development of education for women was a prerequisite for the development of women's physical activity (Hargreaves, 1993).

Although physical education for women began in schools as mild physical activity in the form of calisthenics, it did not take long before women hungered for more vigorous forms of leisure. Despite first wave feminists ignoring physical pursuits in their efforts, women challenged their status in sport because sports are linked with the body which is "the most conspicuous symbol of difference between the sexes" (Hargreaves, 1993, p. 42). According to Hargreaves (1993), the more women participated in physical pursuits the more they became aware of opportunities for physicality and therefore began to play more energetically. Such changes encouraged broader shifts in the legitimisation of female physical activity. As a result, women became more actively involved in more varied, vigorous and competitive sports during the latter part of the 19th century. Dress reform in Europe and the United States in the 1850's also facilitated young women's participation in more physically demanding sports such as competitive

forms of tennis, cycling, hockey, cricket and basketball (Hargreaves, 1993; Simpson, 2001). As physical pursuits became more accessible to middle, as well as working class women during this period, previous social perceptions of women as weak and physically inferior began to be challenged (Hargreaves, 1993). The struggle over the use of the female body in sport and physical activity during the 19th century was symbolic of broader social issues (Hargreaves, 1993). The exclusion of women from sport symbolised broader social ideas surrounding the marginal position of women in society. However, the agency exerted by women during this period in their efforts to renegotiate understandings of the physically active female body was reflective of the increasing confidence and authority of women brought about by first wave feminism. It was during this period of social change that women's basketball emerged.

Women and Basketball: Developments and Challenges

Developing in the late 19th century, basketball appears to have contributed to significant, widespread changes in women's sport, in terms of participation, opportunity and status. Women's basketball participation also seems to have prompted a reconsideration of many of the misconceptions regarding the physically active female body during this time. Basketball was originally created in the United States in 1891 by James Naismith (Grundy & Shackelford, 2005; IFNA, 2010; Romanos & Woods, 1992; Treagus, 2005). Developed as a men's 9-a-side game, basketball was intended for male baseball and football players to engage in during their off seasons. As a socially enjoyable game posing few risks of injury, basketball was said to have "revolutionised sport" (Hawes & Barker, 1999, p. 1).

As the game gained popularity among men, it also caught the attention of a few key women. Throughout the 19th century, some female college educators were promoting women's involvement in team activities (Costa, 2003). An early publication by Naismith in 1891 in which he outlined the rules of his new game, attracted the attention of Senda Berenson. A gymnastics teacher, Berenson set about modifying the rules to suit her female students (Grundy & Shakelford, 2005). This included abolishing dribbling, snatching and batting and disallowing physical contact of any kind (Grundy & Shackelford, 2005; Treagus, 2005). In so doing, she created an almost entirely separate women's game that attempted to

meet the social expectations surrounding women's sport participation during this time. This was a bold move during a period where ideals of femininity were strict and women's involvement in physical activity was limited. This development increased the visibility of women in sport and signalled a change in direction in women's college sport as women were introduced to more vigorous and competitive physical pursuits (Vertinsky, 1994). As basketball gained popularity among young women in North America, authorities and physical educators in other countries such as England, and later Australia, also introduced the sport where it rapidly became the most popular team sport for women (Jobling, 1994; Treagus, 2005).

Basketball comes to New Zealand. Before the arrival of basketball in New Zealand, other team sports such as rugby and cricket, had been practiced by New Zealand women. However, their inclusion had been resisted due to the traditionally masculine characteristics of these sports and their status as representative of the Victorian cult of manliness (Coney, 1993). Therefore, although basketball was not the first team sport available to New Zealand women, it was the most successful. After watching a game of basketball in Australia, Reverend J. C. Jamieson introduced the 9-a-side game to New Zealand in 1906 (Hawes & Barker, 1999). Prior to its arrival in New Zealand, in 1897, The Otago Witness wrote of the beauty of basketball and its fame in the United States where it was "completely eclipsing lawn tennis, and effectually nipping in the bud the threatened revival of croquet" ("Ladies' Gossip", 1897, p. 44). The success and promotion of basketball in New Zealand, like North America, England and Australia was mostly attributed to the absence of male influence, shifting medical and biological opinions regarding women's frailty, and weakening social restrictions regarding women's sport participation. Due to this, women were able to freely engage in this new sport without offending men's sensibilities (Coney, 1993), nor compromising dominant social ideals of femininity. Less entrenched in traditional gender regimes, basketball offered New Zealand women a potentially more accessible team sport.

A Sport for the Masses: The Rise of Basketball. As in North America and England, military drill and calisthenics had been the dominant forms of physical

education for New Zealand girls during the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Hawes & Barker, 1999). However, shifting medical opinions regarding the female body and the importance and impact of physical activity for females facilitated the inclusion of basketball in primary schools. Basketball flourished among young middle-class women (Taylor, 2001), such that by 1912 the game had taken off and was the first organised sport for young women practiced in multiple centres around New Zealand (Hawes & Barker, 1999). However, this sport did not stay confined to the school yard for long.

With the rise of first-wave feminism, New Zealand women's opportunities increased politically and in the workforce, and their involvement in physical pursuits and sports also increased. By 1921 the first attempts were being made to promote basketball outside of schools, resulting in the advent of Saturday competition (Hawes & Barker, 1999). To support the growing number of women playing netball, local organisations were established in numerous regions including Otago, Wairoa, Wellington and Auckland (Hawes & Barker, 1999). In less than a decade, basketball had progressed from a physical activity for primary-aged school girls to a sport played by an increasing number of young, unmarried women throughout New Zealand. Although the popularity of basketball was growing among New Zealand girls and young women, it remained confined to a narrow demographic because weekend sporting competitions for young women challenged social and patriarchal norms regarding the appropriate use of women's leisure time. Despite such constraints, some women began forming teams such that young working women became increasingly visible on the basketball court during this period (Hawes & Barker, 1999).

As basketball continued to gain popularity among New Zealand women, the sport and participants gained more social support. Positive public perceptions of basketball were reflected in an article in the *Christchurch Sun* in 1926 where it was expressed that "basketball provides splendid exercise for those engaged in it" while maintaining feminine characteristics "which makes it so good a game for girls" (as cited in Nauright & Broomhall, 1994, p. 394). With the support of an array of key agents (e.g. doctors, reformers, politicians and the media), basketball increasingly became accepted as the most suitable sport for girls and young women (Nauright & Broomhall, 1994). These changes allowed the further structural developments and institutionalisation of basketball in New Zealand.

Basketball: An Institutionalised Sport. Basketball underwent rapid growth and development during the early 20th century. In 1923, New Zealand held its first regional basketball tournament. The following year the New Zealand Basketball Association (NZBA) was developed, which prompted an official overhaul of the existing rules of basketball. Subsequently, these developments gave rise to the first national basketball tournament which was held in Dunedin in 1926 (Hawes & Barker, 1999). In fact, the number of female basketball players continued to increase, such that basketball threatened to overtake the popularity of some traditionally masculine sports. Observing the increasing popularity of basketball following the 1929 national basketball tournament held in Christchurch, The Christchurch Press reported the “astounding growth” of basketball in New Zealand and suggested that basketball would soon make rugby “look to its laurels as far as numerical strength is concerned” (as cited in Hawes & Barker, 1999, p. 26). It is this interest in basketball among women, the media, and the general public, as well as women’s increasing opportunities in the labour market and society more broadly, that contributed to basketball becoming recognised as the ‘national game for New Zealand women’ (Hawes & Barker, 1999; Henley, 2004, Nauright & Broomhall, 1994).

The Great Depression slowed the structural developments of netball during the late 1920’s and early 1930’s. In New Zealand society more broadly, the Depression resulted in education deprivation, redundancy, salary and wage reductions, forgone mortgage payments, business closures, hunger, stress and despair (NZine, 2001). Interestingly, however, women’s participation in basketball continued to grow during this period. For many, basketball was a welcomed respite from the harsh realities of everyday life (Hawes & Barker, 1999). Additionally, the Depression also initiated uniform changes. According to Hawes & Barker (1999) regulation black stockings, the instated uniform of the time, were abolished during this period due to financial constraint. As stockings were replaced by white ankle socks, females embraced opportunities to expose a little more flesh than had previously been accepted. This, in combination with women’s increased presence in the workforce (Olssen, 2003), and the changing attitudes concerning women and femininity throughout this period, signalled increasing opportunities for women in society and sport more specifically.

Second Wave Feminism, Sport and Netball in New Zealand

Second wave feminism facilitated many structural changes for women in sport and society more broadly. Emerging in the late 1960's, this movement was prompted by the civil rights movement (Sharlach, 2009b) and attempted to counteract various sources of sexism evident during this time. "Questioning the very ways women are forced to conform to patriarchal norms" (Garrison, 2005, p. 242), second wave feminists employed more radical strategies to initiate changes in various social spaces, including the family, politics, education, the workforce, health and reproductive rights, and sport. According to Garrison (2005) this movement built on the achievements of the first wave but drew upon different strategies in its efforts for "social and legal equality" (p. 242) for women. Unlike the first wave, second wave feminism provoked extensive theoretical discussion about the origins of oppression and the meaning of femininity (Brunnell, 2010). Various strands of feminism emerged including; liberal, radical, Marxist, socialist and cultural feminism (Birrell, 2000; Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1994; Brunell, 2010; Costa & Guthrie, 1994; Lorber, 1997), such that any attempt to create a coherent and consistent feminist ideology was impossible. Despite holding differing opinions regarding the sources of gender inequality, each strand aimed to improve the status of women by deconstructing the origins of oppression.

The second wave was highly successful in increasing childcare, opening family planning clinics, advocating rights for gay and lesbian individuals and increasing awareness of the sexualisation, marginalisation and trivialisation of women (Dann, 1985; Hall, 1996). Feminism in New Zealand was also finding new forms during the 1960's, 1970's and early 1980's (Dann, 1985). Focusing largely on equal pay for men and women in accordance with women's increasing visibility in the workforce, and disrupting the 'cult of domesticity', second wave feminists aimed for liberation, and often employed radical strategies in their efforts to initiate such changes, including public demonstrations (Dann, 1985) and campaigning (Aitken, 1980).

Second-wave feminism had radical effects on women's sporting opportunities and the growth of women's sport (Hall, 2005; Theberge & Birrell, 1994a, 1994b). In North America, the passage of Title IX in 1972 was the key proponent of women's increased equality in the sporting realm and marked the first time that women and girls' access to sport was visible on the public agenda

(Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1994). This legislation was used to contest equal funding, facilities and opportunities for women in American College institutions (Theberge & Birrell, 1994a, 1994b; Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1994; Hall, 2005; Hargreaves, 1993; Heywood & Dworkin, 2003; Grundy & Shackelford, 2005). Although Title IX was not exclusively aimed at sports, due to the unequal sporting programmes for women, its significance in this area was immediately apparent (Theberge & Birrell, 1994b). Sports historian Mary Jo Festle (as cited in Heywood & Dworkin, 2003) argues that the passage of Title IX reflected the tone of second-wave feminism, encouraging women to demand more opportunities, disrupt stereotypes, reclaim their bodies and assert their strength. Despite women's increasing opportunities resulting from Title IX, the dominant masculine model of sport remained. Although Title IX had significantly influenced women's participation in sport, according to Boutilier and SanGiovanni (1994), it was never designed to "transform the structures and processes of sport itself" (p. 103). Therefore, despite their increased participation, women were still expected to conform to the existing male oriented policies and practices of sport (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1994).

The insurgence of the female athlete and the resilience of the male model of sport during the 1970's, prompted some research and interest concerning the 'phenomena' of women in sport (e.g. Felshin, 1975; Hart, 1972). It was at this time that scholarly attention was directed towards the inconsistencies that existed between women and men and the current model of sport. Much of this research however, was conducted in North America and Europe, and was predominantly psychological, focusing on role conflict, gender roles and traits and motives, with little consideration of social processes and broader contextual factors (Birrell, 2000). Therefore, the male model of sport prevailed, and despite women's increased participation in sport, the power and privilege remained with men. Nonetheless, developments initiated by the second wave during the 1960's, 1970's and early 1980's, such as increased opportunities, competition, recognition and athleticism, helped women negotiate new space in an expanding array of sports, including basketball.

Women and Basketball: A Continued Progression

The waves metaphor is a useful heuristic approach for contextualising the development of women's opportunities in sport. However, the development of basketball in New Zealand appears to have gained increasing momentum during a trough of collective feminist political activity. While the first, second and third wave movements are valuable for contextualising the development of women's sport in other countries such as North America, in New Zealand, it seems that the development of basketball did not follow the same patterns as the wave analogy suggests.

Building upon the momentum gained during the first wave movement, basketball continued to flourish in Commonwealth countries such as New Zealand, England and Australia before second wave feminism emerged. At the local level, young working women were enjoying the benefits of organised leisure and the pleasures of participating in a newly competitive sport (Hawes & Barker, 1999). National and international developments also contributed to the growth of the sport. By 1935 multiple tournaments had already been set up throughout Australia and efforts to make international contact had been established (Jobling, 1994). With international competition beginning between New Zealand and Australia in 1938 and the 7-a-side version of basketball (in accordance with the rest of the world) being adopted by New Zealand in 1959, the outlook for the future of New Zealand basketball looked promising. As international competition was proving to be a positive initiative for this sport, the demand for standardised rules increased. So, just one year after adopting the 7-a-side game, representatives from England, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the West Indies met to discuss standardising the rules of the sport. This meeting led to the development of The International Federation of Women's Basketball and Netball which later became the International Federation of Netball Associations (IFNA) (Hawes & Barker, 1999), still in existence today. Formal rules were established at this inaugural meeting which brought to an end the inconsistencies in international basketball. As a result the decision was made to hold a World Championship tournament every four years.

By the time second wave feminism emerged in the late 1960's and early 1970's, basketball was entirely institutionalised. Governed and structured by women, basketball showcased the organisational as well as sporting skills of New

Zealand women and exemplified the struggle of women to gain sporting equality with their male counterparts throughout the male model of sports (Nauright & Broomhall, 1994). During this time almost all individuals permitted to be involved in basketball were women, which as Nauright and Broomhall (1994) insist, aided the development of a women-centred culture of sport.

Although basketball had historically received little attention from men or the media, according to Nauright (1999), the 1960's saw a dramatic increase in the objectification of women's bodies in this sport. Despite second wave feminists encouraging women to seize greater control over the representation of their bodies, the sexualised image of the female basketballer attracted much male attention. According to Nauright (1999), during this time media attention focused on certain players' sex appeal, rather than their physical skills and competency. Although many feminists, athletes and women rejected this, some influential basketballers, including Joan Harnett, accepted the idea of the sexualisation of their bodies. Internalising the media attention, Harnett got "used to [the sexualisation of her body] as it gave netball publicity" (Nauright, 1999, p. 58). From a second wave perspective such attention was not conducive to promoting female basketball players as legitimate athletes within a male dominated sports culture.

In an effort to broaden women's sporting opportunities and increase the visibility of women's sport in positive ways, the first basketball World Championship tournament was held in 1963 in England. Hosting eleven teams including New Zealand, Australia, England, Ceylon, Scotland and South Africa, this event marked the first meeting for many of these basketball teams (Hawes & Barker, 1999). A whole new experience for these women and more importantly a vast change for women's sport, the introduction of such a competition provided the platform for the launching of women's athletic ability and encouraged the recognition of women's sport. Due to the success of this tournament, basketball continued to flourish over the next few years with more international tours and competitions.

Basketball Becomes Netball. As women's participation in basketball continued to increase and the sport cemented its presence in New Zealand sporting culture, conflict between male and female use of the term 'basketball' ensued. Although

both England and Australia had already adopted the term netball, New Zealand had been reluctant to change (Hawes & Barker, 1999). Hawes and Barker (1999) suggest that changing gender roles and women's increasing presence in sport were the driving force behind this change, as males were now participating in men's basketball and were feeling increasingly threatened by the use of this term to describe both a men's and women's game. According to Lance Cross, chairman of the New Zealand Men's Indoor Basketball Association:

The men were forced into [modifying the name of the sport]. 'Basketball' had an image of girls in short skirts and back stockings which did not appeal to red-blooded men. We had to call the game 'indoor basketball' to avoid confusion (as cited in Hawes & Barker, 1999, p. 70).

Men's basketball closely emulated the game invented by Naismith in the late 19th century, whereas women's basketball had significantly evolved. To avoid confusion and minimise tension, a name change occurred. In 1970, New Zealand women surrendered the term basketball and adopted their own title, 'netball', for the game that had been developed by women for women.

Third Wave Feminism, Sport and Netball in New Zealand

Third wave feminism has facilitated increased opportunities for women in sport and netball more specifically. According to many feminist theorists (e.g. Hall, 1996; Heywood & Dworkin, 2003; Thorpe, 2008a), feminism as a social movement came under increasing scrutiny during the 1990's. As Thorpe (2008a) explains, the mass media accused feminists of being man-haters and disrupting a seemingly "egalitarian gender order" (p. 10). The third wave of feminism emerged in this context as a new generation of women began to identify ongoing and new gender inequalities (Heywood & Drake, 1997; Thorpe, 2008b). Third wave feminism focuses on the ways in which race, class, age, sexuality and gender contribute to the complex system of gender oppression (Hattery, 2010; Heywood & Drake, 1997) and addresses many of the criticisms associated with previous waves. In fact, third wave feminists have heavily criticised second wave feminism for its focus on homogeneity, instead of an appreciation of women's differences, individual subtleties and new found hybridity in the 21st century (Pinterics, 2001). In particular, third wave feminists have critiqued second wave feminism for its ethnocentrism as well as its disregard for women of different ages, social classes

and sexualities (Hargreaves, 2004; Hattery, 2010; Mann & Huffman, 2005). Recognising the limitations of a feminist movement driven primarily by white, middle class women, third wave feminists argue for a feminism based on individuality and the appreciation of the diversity of women and the many factors contributing to oppression, an idea which is in contrast to the second wave idea of collective 'sisterhood' (Henry, 2005).

According to some feminist researchers, third wave feminists are more at ease with contradiction (e.g. Hall, 2005; Heywood & Drake, 1997; Heywood & Dworkin, 2003; Thorpe, 2008b). In response to this, the third wave dispels the binaries (e.g. masculine/feminine, strong/weak) that have previously defined what it means to be male and female in an effort to embrace such opposed realities and redefine gender roles (Hall, 2005; Thorpe, 2008b). In so doing, third wave feminists encourage women to embrace multiple identities and challenge traditional beliefs about what it means to be 'feminine' by appreciating the fluidity of women's identities (Cox, Johnson, Newitz & Sandell, 1997; Heywood & Dworkin, 2003; Thorpe, 2008b), in wider society and also in sport.

Third wave feminism has altered much in the sporting realm. Where previous waves have challenged women's rights and visibility and fought for structural changes, third wave feminism challenges women's identity and women's opportunities to create and modify their gendered identities. As Messner (2002) suggests, third wave feminism influences the way we think about feminine physical attractiveness and empowerment, which are no longer viewed as separate entities, but as "lived aspects of the same reality" (p. 18). Therefore, in sport it is now possible for women to embrace once mutually exclusive traits such as athleticism and beauty, or aggression and attractiveness. As Heywood and Dworkin (2003) explain, more women are now participating in traditionally 'masculine' sporting activities (e.g. boxing, rugby and body building) and dispelling mythologies of the weaker sex and assumptions of feminine incompetence by "sweating alongside the men and walking in the same proud way, owning their bodies like never before" (p. 45). In fact, according to Obel (1996, 2002), women's participation in traditionally masculine sports such as body building, challenges both the categorical ways we think about femininity, masculinity and the sporting body as well as challenging the dominant understandings of gender in 21st century society.

In a new era of 'girl power' however, some feminists warn of the contradictions of such attitudes and the dominant neoliberal discourses operating in 21st century society. With their emphasis on consumption and individualism rather than political activism, such discourses have been referred to by Dworkin and Wachs (2009) as "aesthetically depoliticized feminism" (p. 130). According to Heywood (2007) the female athletic image advertises equal opportunities and an 'anyone can succeed on all levels' attitude despite the growing structural inequalities of the global economy. Therefore, despite women embracing opportunities offered by second wave feminism and participating in an array of new sports with a new level of confidence, realistically, their participation and equality here, often do not translate elsewhere.

Challenges to the understanding of the female body and the meaning of 'femininity' brought about by third wave feminism have also prompted some women to experiment with new ways of performing, practicing and representing their bodies in sport. In contrast to second wave feminism, this new strand of gender politics often embraces hyperfemininity in addition to multiple identities, androgyny and contradiction. In this context, some women proclaim that exposing their bodies does not necessarily compromise their rights or authority as sportswomen. Strongly contested by second wavers, this opportunity is applauded by many contemporary women as a celebration of women's sexuality and the feminine athletic body (Dworkin & Messner, 2002; Heywood & Dworkin, 2003; Thorpe, 2008b). Thorpe (2008b) furthers this idea by suggesting that some young women are viewing these images through a third wave lens such that when combined with athleticism they are embracing rather than shunning women's sexuality. Similarly, Heywood & Dworkin (2003) emphasise that for a younger demographic exhibiting a 'hot' body is a sign of valuation rather than devaluation due to social shifts, meaning that embracing one's sexuality carries less stigma than it previously did. These shifts have prompted an 'if you've got it, flaunt it' attitude among some young, contemporary sportswomen (Thorpe, 2008b). However, when adopting an individualistic and entrepreneurial neoliberal attitude, few female athletes reflect critically upon the broader social consequences of their actions.

Netball and Women in the 21st Century

In the contemporary context, netball is enjoyed by women and men of many ages, socioeconomic statuses, races and abilities. Once a predominantly white middle-class women's sport (Taylor, 2001), netball is now enjoyed by a diverse New Zealand population, including an increasing number of Maori and Pacific Island participants (SPARC, 2008). The diverse range of women who participate in contemporary netball include players and coaches at various levels including grass-roots, club, representative, national, international as well as mixed grades in which men and women participate together. Netball is currently the most participated in sport by women in New Zealand (SPARC, 2010), with over 135,000 registered netballers ranging in age from childhood to adulthood (Netball New Zealand, 2010). Netball is also the most popular sport for school aged girls 5-17 years of age (SPARC, 2010) despite the increasing opportunities for young women to engage in a wide variety of traditionally masculine and gender neutral sports.

Netball competitions have been modified to become more accessible to participants from various socio-economic and cultural groups. For example, to accommodate working and family-oriented women, midweek night leagues have been introduced. Furthermore, according to Netball New Zealand (2010) to support the growing number of Maori and Pacific Island participants, and appreciate the contributions these cultural groups have made to netball (e.g. skills, tactics), several initiatives have been implemented. These include the introduction of a Maori and Pacific Island advisory group and a Maori development coordinator within the broader Netball New Zealand establishment (Netball New Zealand, 2010). The following sections discuss the further developments of this sport in the contemporary context, including the dynamics of the game, increasing respect and status for women in netball and rising media coverage.

The Dynamics of the Game: Aggression, Competition, Image. Netball in contemporary New Zealand society appeals to many different groups including players, coaches, spectators and corporate sponsors. At the elite and competitive levels netball is a fast-paced, physical, aggressive sport, radically different from the game introduced in 1906. Initially promoted as a lady-like, non-contact, demure sport, suitable for upholding social ideals of femininity (Hawes & Barker,

1999; Treagus, 2005; Grundy & Shackelford, 2005), the dynamics of netball have changed markedly, as have the ideas surrounding appropriate femininity. Affected significantly by third wave feminist sentiments, the game of netball has evolved in such a way that players are now encouraged to adopt characteristics traditionally defined as masculine, including aggression (towards the ball) competitiveness, strength and agility, with many players (e.g. centres, wing attacks and wing defences) covering great distances during a game. Appreciated by many for its displays of female athleticism, elite level netball draws large crowds whether it is an international, national, club-level or schoolgirl showcase. According to Sky Television “netball has an audience out there” (as cited in Brown & Nichols, p. 1). Indeed, clashes between New Zealand and Australia can be expected to draw up to “7000 netball-mad spectators...Millions more [in New Zealand] and across the Tasman will tune in via home...while the match will also be beamed to the Cook Islands” (Johansen, 2008, p. 1).

As the structure of netball has changed and the physical capabilities of the female athlete are being celebrated by spectators and corporate sponsors alike, uniforms have changed markedly. While initially uniforms were altered due to economic constraints, social and ideological shifts concerning appropriate femininity and the exposure of the female body have facilitated the most recent significant changes. In the 21st century, netball uniforms are designed to both emphasise women’s athletic physique and allow for a broad range of sporting movement. Features of the contemporary netball uniform include lightweight, breathable fabrics, form fitting shape, barely-there length and striking colour combinations. Having gone through multiple design ‘phases’, the netball uniform now reflects athleticism as well as femininity. Changing partly due to the perception that in order to be recognised netball needed to be ‘sexier’ (Taylor, 2001), these changes have helped to modernise the sport.

Netball: International Competition and National Recognition. As women’s sport gained increased visibility during the late 20th and early 21st centuries, women’s opportunities in sport have continued to increase. According to the European based Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation (2008), the increased representation and visibility of women in sport requires women to advocate such changes by involving themselves in institutions responsible for the representation of women

in sport (e.g. media, government and sporting organisations). Although throughout history this has never been easy for women, the changes and increased visibility of women in netball around the globe has been aided by netball's continued governance by women. Both nationally and internationally major developments within the game occurring in the late 20th and early 21st centuries have increased the opportunities of female netballers and increased the competitive nature of the sport.

The inclusion of netball in the Commonwealth Games in 1998 (IFNA, 2010) helped propel the sport into the national and international spotlight. Since netball's inclusion in this prestigious sporting event and its recognition as a serious and competitive women's sport, netball has become a core sport in the Commonwealth Games, with numerous countries competing and New Zealand contesting admirably for the top spot (IFNA, 2010). Another key development within this sport has been the organisation of the ANZ netball championships which was established in 2008 (Netball New Zealand, 2010). With large corporate sponsorships from ANZ, Holden, Asics and Fisher and Paykel, and live television coverage on Sky Television, netball has risen to new levels of athleticism, competition, spectatorship, excitement and also funding. Through the merging of the New Zealand national and Australian national netball competitions, a new and exciting trans-Tasman competition was created. In so doing, netball in Australasia has been launched to semi-professional status for the first time (Netball New Zealand, 2010). Such developments within the sport, although still not on par with some male sports, especially those valued by society (e.g. rugby), mark the increased recognition of female athletes and netballers more specifically in both New Zealand and Australia. These developments have also increased the interest in netball by corporate and media markets.

Netball in the Spotlight: Women's Sport Takes the Fore. The recent developments and achievements of the Silver Ferns – the New Zealand national team, including their 2006 and 2010 Commonwealth gold medal wins and their success at the 2009 World Netball Series, have dramatically increased the media attention given to the sport. While the mass media traditionally paid little attention to women's sport, and in some instances denigrated female athletes, netball has received relatively positive media coverage (Thompson, 2003). In fact, the 1999 Netball

World Cup match between Australia and New Zealand holds one of the largest spectator records ever recorded on New Zealand television (Henley, 2004). Such records dispute Powell's (2009) claims that the sport spectator culture among female sports has not kept up with the participatory one. The increased appreciation of netball as a serious sport, indicated by its inclusion in such prestigious sporting competitions as the Commonwealth games and its increased media attention further contradict this statement. These developments have meant that netball has become difficult to ignore on New Zealand's television screens. In fact, after their recent Commonwealth gold medal win the Silver Ferns dominated the sports coverage, featuring as the leading story on both of New Zealand's major prime-time news channels as delivering "arguably the most incredible netball test of all time" (3sport, 2010, p. 1).

Despite these accomplishments, traditionally masculine sports such as rugby continue to occupy much of the media limelight in New Zealand (Bruce, Falcous & Thorpe, 2007). Central in the argument of many sport theorists is that rugby is seen as fundamental to New Zealand's national character and masculine culture, therefore is given much media attention (e.g. Crawford, 1985; Henley, 2004; Rowe, McKay & Miller, 1998; Thomson & Sim, 2007). This strongly reflects the cultural ideologies that remain surrounding sport and gender in New Zealand society. Across the Tasman, despite its popularity, Australian netball has also traditionally experienced difficulty attracting the kind of media attention afforded to other sports (e.g. Australian Rules Football). However as national competition has increased, the recognition received by netballers from spectators and the media has risen (Jobling 1994; Medhurst, 2009).

Despite ongoing inequalities in terms of media coverage, the increased visibility of netball and its athletes in New Zealand has generated much interest from the grass roots level to corporate sponsors. A number of multinational and other large corporations such as Coca Cola, Fisher and Paykel, New World, the National Bank, ANZ and McCain have endorsed and supported netball in New Zealand. In addition to providing financial support to elite New Zealand netball and its players, these sponsors have in some instances propelled many New Zealand netballers into the limelight. Television advertisements featuring the Silver Ferns have increased the visibility of New Zealand netball and its stars, promoting the game itself and its participants, sometimes even making these

women household names. Often promoted as wholesome, athletic and down-to-earth sportswomen, the Silver Ferns receive recognition both on and off the court, making them prominent and appreciated members of the New Zealand sports community and society in general, and role models for the next generation of netball players.

Feminism, Sport and Netball: A Summary

As feminists have continued to challenge the roles of women in society, the opportunities available for women to participate in sports such as netball have also undergone radical changes. A little over a century ago, being a woman meant restriction, governance and conformity, now some women often embrace the alternative and complex meanings that define not only who they are but who it is possible for them to be. Despite some ongoing inequalities in terms of access, time, and space for sport, the changing ideals surrounding femininity, opportunity and appropriate conduct have opened many doors for the female athlete, enabling participation, recognition and status for some women in sport. Therefore, it is important to recognise how and why these changes have occurred. By exploring the contextual complexities of New Zealand society throughout history and the broader social changes that have facilitated the increasing visibility of women in this social space, it is hopeful that we can gain a better understanding of women's diverse netball experiences and how some women have increased in confidence, authority, and agency in netball.

Significance of this Study

As the contextual analysis demonstrates, netball is an extremely popular women's sport in New Zealand and has contributed significantly to women's opportunities to participate more fully in sport. However, little research has appreciated the importance of netball in New Zealand sporting culture, past and present, or the socio-cultural changes that have occurred alongside its development. To date, research on netball has emerged from a range of disciplinary perspectives including, psychological (e.g. Pates, Karageorghis, Fryer & Maynard, 2003), sociological (e.g. Taylor, 2001), and historic view points (e.g. Treagus, 2005), and from both local (e.g. Nauright & Broomhall, 1994) and global (e.g. Callow & Hardy, 2001) sources. Each discipline has brought new and interesting insights

and increased the knowledge base concerning netball in terms of the psychological skills required for success, its place in society and its rich history. Although offering valuable contributions to our understandings of netball, the current research on this topic falls short of demonstrating the link between women's growing opportunities in netball and the social changes that have facilitated this growth and influenced their experiences.

Throughout the current body of literature on this topic, I am unaware of no research that has examined women's everyday experiences in netball over time and in accordance with broader socio-cultural and political changes in New Zealand. As the contextual analysis presented earlier in this chapter reveals, women's experiences in netball are indeed context-specific, thus, I am hopeful that this study contributes to the field by providing rich insights into the unique and diverse experiences of women in netball at various historical moments. However, such an approach requires abstract thinking and innovative, interdisciplinary research.

Making a Case for Interdisciplinarity

According to Sparkes (1992), in recent years, throughout a range of academic disciplines, there has been an intense debate regarding the nature of research. Due to this, I feel the need to make a case for an interdisciplinary approach early in this study. My beliefs in the usefulness of an interdisciplinary approach are not isolated. Some scholars suggest that there is a compelling argument that in a socially and technologically constructed, complex society, many problems require interdisciplinary solutions (e.g. Salter & Hearn, 1996; Vertinsky, 2009). As Klein (1990) highlights, the drive to focus interdisciplinary efforts on complex problems in a rapidly evolving social world with increasing and complex demands, is by no means a new concept, nor is it unproblematic. This is an argument that has been circulating among many fields since the start of the 20th century. However, more recently, a sense of urgency has emerged as the complexity and magnitude of problems grow and calls for praxis increase (Klein, 1990). According to Vertinsky (2009) "interdisciplinarity, in itself, is no panacea" (p. 48) for the complex problems that researchers face. Interdisciplinarity requires an understanding of the complexity of the objects of inquiry and an appreciation of the demands such complications place on the act of research (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005).

In this research I have employed an interdisciplinary approach to facilitate my understanding of women's netball experiences in various historical junctures. Borrowing from multiple disciplines in the construction of this research (e.g. sociology, history, psychology), I have transgressed research boundaries. I believe such an approach has many values for exploring the experiences of women in netball across time and contexts. Vertinsky (2009) makes a similar argument, suggesting that interdisciplinarity is critical because "the moving body has been represented, endowed with meanings and imbued with power in a myriad of contexts" (p. 45) and can be understood in a multitude of ways (also see Hargreaves & Vertinsky, 2007). Weiss and Glenn (1992) also support this claim insisting that the integration of the sport sciences, especially psychology and sociology is "essential for fully understanding the female sport participant" (p. 148).

Therefore, as I attempt to understand the complexity of women's experiences in netball I do so with an appreciation that a willingness to adopt the theories of others, or at least consider them "can have the valuable effect of preventing us from becoming complacent about the conditions of knowledge...and encourage a growing awareness that there is validity (and utility) in the insights of multiple disciplines" (Vertinsky, 2009, p. 46).

Outline of this Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Following this introductory chapter I review some of the existing psychological, sociological and historical literature on women's experiences in netball and sport more broadly, both locally and globally. This chapter identifies some key findings and the theories and methods adopted by various researchers as well as discussing the utility of these for understanding women's experiences in netball and sport. Furthermore, I make a case for the usefulness of an interdisciplinary approach which addresses some of the gaps in the literature and more specifically explores the interaction between time, context and social change in relation to women's netball experiences. The third chapter in this thesis discusses the theoretical and methodological approaches used in this study. Here I explore the theoretical underpinnings of this thesis and the use of focus groups as a primary data collection method and useful interdisciplinary tool. Additionally, I explain the processes and methodologies associated with

participant selection, data collection and data analysis, as well as providing reflexive comments regarding the research process. The next chapter explores the diverse experiences of each generation of women in this study through four unique contextual narratives. I examine their experiences as emerging netballers, active participants, and also their experiences of withdrawal in relation to broader socio-cultural factors such as women's changing roles and the changing dynamics and structure of netball in New Zealand. The final chapter discusses two of the emerging themes from the findings; the female sporting body and the changing opportunities, pleasures and frustrations of female netball participants. Here, I explore patterns and changes across the generations, examining how broader social shifts in terms of the opportunities of women in sport, the social construction of femininity and the changing structure and dynamics of netball in New Zealand have influenced the netball experiences of these women. Finally, I end this thesis with some important conclusions and discuss the implications of my findings, and directions for future research.

While much is known about the development of women's sports and also the development of netball, little is known about the effects of time, context and social change on women's individual and personal netball experiences. Through the use of an interdisciplinary approach however, it is hopeful that a broader understanding of women's netball experiences can be achieved.

A Critical Review of the Literature

Women's sporting experiences are diverse and complex, thus it should be no surprise that the research is similarly multifaceted. Drawing upon an array of disciplinary perspectives, including psychology, sociology and history, scholars have examined women's sport participation at various levels (e.g. social, youth, amateur, professional), in relation to various sports (e.g. traditionally masculine, feminine and gender neutral), and from global perspectives. Women's experiences in sport have been researched extensively, from anxiety (Williams, 1998), team cohesion (Matheson, Mathes & Murray, 1997), mood and stress (Kerr, Wilson, Bowling & Sheahan, 2005), eating disorders (Muscat & Long, 2008; Smith & Petrie, 2008), familial influences on sport participation (Kay, 2006), identity formation (Mennesson, 2000) and sexism in sport (McGuinnis, McQuillan & Chapple, 2005; Scraton, Fasting, Pfister, & Bunuel, 1999), to feminine oppression, restraint and 'ideal' feminine behaviour throughout history (Davies, 2008; George, 2009; Giuliano, Popp & Knight, 2000; Hargreaves, 1985; Hofman, 2003; Jaggard, 2001).

Despite this large body of knowledge, to date, very few research analyses have focused on women's experiences in netball. Thus, this literature review offers an overview of the current research on women's experiences sport, and where possible, research that directly relates to women's netball experiences. As my project seeks to understand the lived experiences of New Zealand netball players in different historical contexts, I have read broadly and across disciplines. My literature review is structured around three key bodies of research on women's sporting experiences. I begin with a critical review of some key work in the field of sport psychology. Second, I discuss some relevant research within sport sociology, and thirdly I examine literature concentrating on women's sporting experiences from a historical perspective.

The articles selected for this review address issues which are most closely aligned with issues in my study of women's experiences in netball such as motivation, attrition, and socio-cultural factors affecting women's sport participation in different historical periods, and the development of women's sport over time. Emerging from global and local perspectives, as well as examining various sports such as netball, ice hockey, rugby, handball, cycling and soccer,

this research offers different and valuable insights into women's sporting motivations, behaviours and lived experiences. As well as discussing some of the key findings offered by these articles, I also consider some of the theoretical and methodological approaches employed by researchers within these fields. Identifying themes in and across the fields of psychology, sociology and history, I then point to the utility of these approaches for understanding women's experiences in sport and netball more specifically. Finally, I consider some potentially productive ways of moving forward. In particular, I build upon the case made in Chapter One, suggesting the fruitful ways that an interdisciplinary approach could advance our understandings of women's experiences in netball.

Understanding Women's Sporting Experiences: A Psychological Perspective

Sport psychology has traditionally focused on the sporting experiences of young, elite male athletes (Lenskyi, 1994). During the 1970's however, research on women's sporting experiences started to gain the attention of a few psychologists. This was facilitated by the growth of feminism in the social sciences and humanities as well as new opportunities for women in sport at various levels initiated by second wave feminism and subsequent structural changes, such as Title IX in the US, which supported women's sport participation (Birrell, 2000). Sport psychologists have increasingly examined various socio-psychological aspects of women's sporting and physical activity experiences including participation motivation and attrition (Beaudoin, 2006; Hodge & Zaharopoulos, 1992; Guillet, Fontayne, Sarrazin, & Brustad, 2006), imagery and sport confidence (Callow & Hardy, 2001) and flow (Pates, et al., 2003).

Throughout this socio-psychological analysis many key findings surrounding women's participation in sport have been foregrounded. These include information on what draws and entices women to sport and the vastly differing reasons for women's sport participation. For example, such research has discovered that female footballers are highly competitive and intrinsically motivated (Beaudoin, 2006), that females engage in netball for skill improvement, fitness, and social fulfilment (Hodge & Zaharopoulos, 1992), and that value and competence in an activity contribute to lower levels of sport attrition among female handball participants (Guillet et al., 2006). Additionally, research within this discipline has also provided insights into how psychological skills can

enhance women's physical performance in sports. Both Callow and Hardy (2001) and Pates et al. (2003) took this approach in their studies of elite netball players, examining the use of imagery and sport confidence, and flow respectively. In so doing Callow & Hardy (2001) discovered that the types of images netballers use depend on their physical ability and level of confidence. On the other hand, Pates et al. (2003) in their study of flow and goal shooting performance in netball, found a positive relationship between shooting performance, flow and asynchronous music use.

Highlighting some of the socio-psychological and psychological aspects of women's sporting experiences, this research offers much towards an understanding of women's sport participation. However, research on the psychological dimensions of women's sporting experiences has also been limited by some of the theoretical and methodological approaches employed by scholars working within a positivistic paradigm.

Frameworks of the Psychological Approach

Developed in the 18th century, the traditional psychological approach has its groundings firmly rooted in the tenets of positivism (Brustad, 2002; Dewar & Horn, 1992). According to the literature, positivists believe that worthwhile topics of investigation are "measurable, quantifiable and objectifiable" (Brustad, 2002, pp. 23). Suggesting that there can be definitive conclusions drawn about the nature of experience, positivists claim that 'good' psychological research emerges when the researcher can detach themselves from the values and emotions generated by their own make-up, be it their gender, race, socioeconomic status or unique situation (Dewar & Horn, 1992). This suggests that a successful researcher is able to separate themselves from their 'subjects' and study, generating research which is objective and unbiased. More specifically, positivists claim that their research is not influenced by who they are as individuals, but by the goals that they have to generate knowledge and therefore better their science.

The current psychological literature on women's experiences in sport bears the distinct mark of positivism. Hugely influenced by the need to investigate the measurable, quantifiable and objectifiable, this research relies heavily on the use of scientific theories. Developed largely within the field of psychology itself, these theories have been adapted to suit the needs of sport psychologists and

therefore claim to reach conclusions about women's sporting experiences under the guise of the positivist paradigm (Brustad, 2002; Gill, 2000; Kontos & Feltz, 2008). Researchers studying women's sport have relied on various different theories, including achievement-motivation theory (Beaudoin, 2006; Hodge & Zaharopoulos, 1992), flow (Pates et. al, 2003) and Eccle's expectancy value model (Guillet et. al, 2006). In so doing, women's sporting experiences have been compartmentalised in order for researchers to discover the ultimate 'truth' regarding women's sporting motivations and behaviour more broadly.

Similarly, both Beaudoin (2006) and Hodge and Zaharopoulos (1992) utilised achievement-motivation theory in their studies of female football and netball players respectively. This particular theory posits that motivation in sport is a product of either the desire to improve one's skills (task mastery) or a desire to succeed and achieve excellence. Assuming that women's participation was a product of either task mastery or physical accomplishment and independent of other factors, these researchers applied this theory to determine the orientation of motivation and hence the causes for women's participation and behaviour in these sports. In so doing, Hodge and Zaharopoulos (1992) examined the motives of 391 young netballers. Gathering information on what entices young women to become involved in this sport, this particular research recognised the complex motives of women in netball. Additionally, these scholars point to some of the socio-psychological factors that sustain young netballers' participation (e.g. being with friends, thrills and excitement) and also some of the factors that facilitate dropout (e.g. emphasis on winning, lack of fun).

Overtly embedded in the tenets of positivism, the psychological research on this topic has largely utilised quantitative methodologies. Through the desire to accurately measure and quantify experience in terms which can be interpreted to form concrete conclusions, researchers have predominantly opted for reductionist practices including; surveys, questionnaires and inventories (Beaudoin, 2006; Callow & Hardy, 2001; Hodge & Zaharopoulos, 1992; Guillet et. al, 2006; Pates et. al, 2003) as well as scientific trials (Pates et. al, 2003) to 'measure' women's experiences in sport. In an attempt to limit researcher bias, these studies have implemented methodological techniques which reduce researcher interpretation and enable researchers to discover the 'ultimate truth' regarding women's experiences in sport. Although much insight into the behaviour and experiences of

women in netball and sport more broadly has been achieved throughout this research, the theoretical and methodological approaches underpinning this literature have influenced its utility in terms of understanding the complexities of women's sporting experiences.

The Utility of the Psychological Approach

Positivist thought and its research traditions have contributed much to the field. However, critical debate has surrounded the use of this approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1989; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; MacDonald, Kirk, Metzler, Nilges, Schemp & Wright, 2002; Schwandt, 2000). Although Denzin & Lincoln (2005) and Sparkes (1992) argue that positivist methods are but one way of telling stories and that the qualitative/quantitative debate is not concerned with either or, some have critiqued the utility of this approach (e.g. Gill, 2000; Dewar & Horn, 1992).

Once the dominant 'world view' within sport psychology, positivism is now regarded as having "little utility outside of the controlled setting of the research laboratory" (Dewar & Horn, 1992, p. 16) and therefore little significance in terms of examining complex issues such as behaviour and experience. Too often, such research proceeds as if sporting experiences and behaviour exist in a vacuum; paying little attention to the dynamics of human action and interaction and the culture surrounding sport overall. The idea that positivism and the methods and theories associated with this approach provide a narrow and unauthentic view of experience in sport is central to this debate (Dewar & Horn, 1992; McLafferty, 1995). Greenwood and Levin (2005) argue that the use of positivist theories is problematic because through their desire to generalise they separate women's experiences from context. Indeed, throughout the psychological literature on this topic there is little context-specific literature and little consideration for the effects of social constructions of gender, age, culture or race on women's sporting experiences. While some sport psychologists (e.g. Gill, 2000; Dewar & Horn, 1992) have recognised the shortcomings of reductionist practices and the positivist approach, the articles I reviewed tended to examine women's behaviour and participation in sport with little regard for the complex and dynamic culture of this social space. Many problematise this approach, suggesting that an appreciation of the context in which sport takes place is

fundamental for an understanding of experience (e.g. Gill, 2000; Greenwood & Levin, 2005; Thorpe, 2009).

Additionally, many scholars have also debated the merits of traditional quantitative methodologies such as surveys, questionnaires and inventories (e.g. Biddle, Markland, Gilbourne, Chatzisarantis & Sparkes, 2001; Henderson, 1991; Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991; McLafferty, 1995). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994) through the use of quantitative methodologies women's participation in sport is simplified and examined independently from women's own subjective experiences and the meanings, purposes and interpretations of these, which become detached. Suggesting that quantitative methodologies provide little room for individual subtleties and subjectivities, those who critique this approach debate the merits of reductionist practices and objectivist accounts. Throughout the body of literature I reviewed, there was an absence of meaning, emotion, purpose or individual interpretation of women's own experiences, in favour of creating unbiased objectivist and simplified explanations for behaviour. This type of approach results in much description and generalisation of women's experiences in sport. For example, Hodge and Zaharopoulous (1992), in their study of young recreational netball participants, explained that women engaged in netball primarily to improve and learn skills. Employing scientific trials, Pates et al. (2003) found that asynchronous music does improve shooting performance and opportunities to experience flow. Neither of these studies critically examined the influences of context and individual difference.

Due to the shortfalls of this approach there are gaps within the existing psychological literature. The most significant gap is the absence of the examination of contextual factors or an appreciation of macro forces. In so doing, the current psychological research tends to assume that women's sporting experiences exist independently of a broader context, with a profound absence of the examination of environmental, social, political and economic factors, which as the contextual analysis provided in Chapter One demonstrates, have profoundly influenced women's opportunities, experiences and participation in sport. Such an approach is problematic considering the increasingly diverse roles of women in society (e.g. mother, financial provider, employee/employer) and the varied cultural and ethnic populations of sport participants in the 21st century. Horn (2002) supports this idea suggesting that individual behaviour cannot hope to be

understood in the absence of an accompanying examination of the sporting culture and values to which participants subscribe. Therefore, as sport psychology tends to be based in the here and now, Gill (2000) insists, “psychology offers a different perspective on sport and society” meaning “psychologists who attempt to understand individual behaviour without recognising the critical influence of society cannot truly understand behaviour” (p. 228). Such oversights reinforce Dewar & Horn’s (1992) claim that the traditional psychological approach may have little use outside the laboratory and therefore the theoretical and methodological approaches of this research may have little utility for explaining the complexities of New Zealand women’s experiences in netball across time.

Within this body of literature there is also a significant lack of female commentary. Despite some scholars’ use of interviewing (Hodge & Zaharopoulos, 1992), there is still no evidence of women’s voice. Mostly due to the positivistic underpinnings of this research and the surveys, questionnaires and inventories used, data representation within the articles I reviewed largely consists of objectivist representations including tables and figures. As a result, women’s experiences in sport within this psychological literature appear depersonalised and devoid of any real emotion or feeling. This psychological research concerning women’s experiences in sport would be strengthened by the inclusion of women’s voices and the evocation of emotion and understanding which comes from reading detailed and specific accounts of women’s experiences.

Understanding Women’s Experiences in Sport: A Sociological Perspective

Sociological research into women's sporting experiences developed in the 1980's (Markula, 2005). Early feminist scholars, including Jennifer Hargreaves, Ann Hall, Patricia Vertinsky and Susan Cahn critiqued the maleness of previous sociological studies of sport, and set about capturing some of the socio-cultural complexities of women's sport. Building upon this foundation, sociological research on women's sport, by both male and female scholars, has blossomed over the past three decades.

The existing literature on women’s experiences in netball and sport that I reviewed investigates a range of topics including; the influence of culture on women’s netball experiences (Taylor, 2004; Teevale, 2008) and women’s participation and experiences in traditionally ‘masculine’ sports (Auster, 2008;

Chu, Leberman, Howe, & Bachor, 2003; Migliaccio & Berg, 2007; Scraton, Caudwell, & Holland, 2005). Investigating the influences of culture on women's participation and experiences in netball, both Taylor (2004) and Teevale (2008) have highlighted some of the complexities surrounding cultural integration in netball. More specifically, Taylor (2004) has explored the influences of culture on women's netball experiences via an analysis of cultural difference and the tensions surrounding migration, cultural assimilation and acceptance in netball in Australia. In so doing, she examined some of the difficulties women from minority migrant groups have experienced (e.g. access, racial stereotypes, marginalisation) that have restricted their participation in netball in Australia and also detailed some of the factors that supported women's cultural integration into this context (e.g. participating in schools). On the other hand, Teevale (2008) has examined Pacific Island women's participatory experiences and the influences of 'pacific flair' and positional profiling in netball from a New Zealand perspective. Here, she has examined how racial and ethnic stereotyping influenced the opportunities of these women in netball. Revealing the effects of perceived biological and cultural capabilities, Teevale (2008) captures the complexities of being a Pacific Island netball participant, the sporting politics of netball in New Zealand and the implications of racial assumptions. Both of these authors have done well to reveal the tensions surrounding cultural difference and sport participation. Additionally, this body of literature particularly highlights the experiences of women who are minority groups in netball.

The sociological literature on this topic also sheds light on women's gendered experiences in traditionally-defined masculine sports such as rugby, tackle football, ice hockey and soccer (Auster, 2008; Chu et al., 2003; Migliaccio & Berg, 2007; Scraton et al., 2005). Highlighting issues surrounding masculinity, femininity, heterosexuality, homosexuality and gender more broadly, these studies particularly emphasise the social barriers affecting women's participation in male-dominated sports, and how these influence their experiences and behaviour. Pointing to the ways women counteract assumed masculinity and homosexuality in these sports, women discuss the strategies (e.g. dressing in 'feminine' ways, having long hair) they employ to counteract denigration and marginalisation. Additionally, these articles highlight the gendered struggles of women in sport, whereby women's participation in traditionally-defined masculine sports produces

stereotypes of lesbianism and challenges socially constructed ideals of traditional femininity.

The sociological literature surrounding women's experiences in sport and netball more specifically emphasises the importance of understanding women's experiences in sport in a broad and contextual sense, goals which are synonymous with my own study of New Zealand women's experiences of netball. Recognising the complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon of sport and women's participation, these articles highlight the many key factors that influence, oppress and in some instances entice women to become participants. Importantly, this body of research offers insights not possible using the theoretical and methodological approaches of positivism.

Frameworks of the Sociological Approach

Critical sociological studies are often linked to the notion of subjectivity (Amis, 2005; Sparkes, 1992). Grounded in the interpretive paradigm, those adhering to this approach recognise that there are multiple realities and ways to view the social world (Amis, 2005; Sparkes, 1992). As a result, the sociological research concerning women's experiences in sport focuses on the broader context in which women's sporting experiences are created and influenced. Additionally, this approach brings to the fore a multitude of socio-cultural factors that influence women's participation in sport to contextualise women's sporting experiences. In direct contrast to positivism and the traditional psychological approach, sport sociologists believe in examining and understanding sport in terms of the context-specific and subjective qualities of experience.

A popular theoretical approach in the sociological literature on women's experiences in sport was the use of feminist theory to facilitate research and political goals and to identify ongoing gender inequalities and initiate change. Drawing on various strands of feminism and feminist theory, many feminist scholars engage and expand upon a variety of theoretical concepts. Much of the literature surrounding women's participation in traditionally-defined masculine sports such as tackle football (Migliaccio & Berg, 2007), rugby union (Chu et al., 2003) ice hockey (Auster, 2008) and soccer (Scraton et al., 2005) took this approach and brought to the fore the influence of dominant masculinity and appropriate femininity on women's experiences in sport. In so doing, the authors

of these articles examine the obstacles that women face in choosing to participate in often socially 'unacceptable' sports for females. Importantly, the researchers operating within the feminist framework raise awareness of the socio-cultural barriers that women face in sport, detailing the strategies employed by women to challenge and overcome these. Additionally, these articles provide women who are marginalised and ignored because of their sporting participation a voice to share their own gendered experiences of sport.

Another theoretical approach adopted by researchers within this field is cultural studies. According to Ryba and Wright (2005) cultural studies scholars use theory to question "sport practices deconstructively, revealing the constructedness of what [has] been taken up as ordinary and reading actively against the grain of the common sense and taken-for-grantedness of sport as a neutral, apolitical activity" (p. 199). An approach which focuses on the study of culture, society and power relations, through the use of theory, cultural studies provide valuable insights into the complex dynamics of culture and its place in sport (Fisher, Butryn & Roper, 2005; Ryba & Wright, 2005). Throughout the literature I reviewed, many authors explored the power dynamics of sport and the influence of culture, race and ethnicity on women's sporting experiences (Scraton et al., 2005; Taylor, 2004; Teevale, 2008). In so doing, cultural difference was found to influence women's opportunities, experiences and participation in sports which are dominated by white, middle class participants. This approach sheds light on the experiences of those women who are often cultural and ethnic minorities within their sporting codes, thus, making headway away from the tendency to study white, middle class (predominantly male) athletes, as has been a dominant approach in the past.

Feminist and cultural studies offer the possibility of new, interesting and insightful findings. Due to the underpinning tenets of these theoretical approaches and the appreciation of the contextual and interpersonal factors that affect women's experiences in netball and sport more broadly, much new information has been generated that goes beyond the psychological and physiological elements of sport. Stretching towards a broader, more holistic and context specific understanding of sport, society and the culture within which it exists, feminist and cultural studies are proving fruitful for this field in combination with qualitative methodologies.

There are some dominant trends in the methodological approaches employed in the sociological literature on women's experiences in netball and sport more broadly. Most of the articles reviewed utilised in-depth semi-structured interviewing as their primary research methodology (Chu et al., 2003; Migliaccio & Berg, 2007; Scraton et al., 2005; Taylor, 2004; Teevale, 2008). Due to the assumptions of the interpretive paradigm and the appreciation of the unique and subjective sporting experiences of women, these articles attempted to capture the subtleties and nuances evident within each woman's experiences and communicate these throughout the research. In so doing, an authentic, personalised account of women's sporting experiences whereby participants were encouraged to "express their opinions and views in their own words" (Kvale, 1996, p. 1) has been presented in this research.

The Utility of the Sociological Approach

Arguably, in comparison to the traditional psychological approach, a sociological perspective better helps us explore the complex nature of sporting experience. In particular, the sociological approach explores the influences of context on behaviour and experience. Appreciating that women's experiences in sport are influenced and shaped by a myriad of different contexts, some researchers in this field explore the social constructions of the ideal female form (e.g. feminine, heterosexual) and how sport participation challenges or reinforces such constructions. Building upon the psychological literature, this approach not only explores the moving body, but the social and cultural ideologies surrounding it. In so doing, this approach offers a broader view of women in sport, one that is inclusive of the dynamic and multi-dimensional context of sport participation.

Additionally, the use of qualitative methods has proved useful throughout this approach. Through the use of qualitative methods, researchers are able to gather articulated in depth responses which provide a window into the complex, lived experiences of women in sport. Marshall and Rossman (1995) discuss the benefits of qualitative methodological approaches and more specifically in-depth interviewing, stating that interviews enable the researcher to examine and understand the meanings people hold for their everyday activities. Such methods also enable researchers to examine the inconsistencies and contradiction existing in women's sporting experiences, which is a significant strength of this

methodology (Amis, 2005). Foregoing the assumption of an ultimate ‘truth’, instead these researchers have aimed to capture the individual subtleties of women’s experiences to emphasize the differing, dynamic and context-specific experiences of women in sport.

Although this approach has proved useful and insightful for examining the context-specific nature of women’s experiences in sport, the sociological literature has given little consideration to the affects of time and social change. According to Thorpe (2006), time is central to all things sociological and is the medium through which action occurs, social relationships are formed and cultural definitions are created. Despite exploring women’s experiences in sport in terms of contextual factors such as gender and culture, this body of literature has overlooked the changing socially constructed ideologies surrounding these terms. According to some scholars, an emphasis on the dynamic socio-cultural climate of sport participation and experience is fundamental (e.g. Gill, 2000; Thorn, 2002; Thorpe, 2009). While much is known about the broader social and political developments that have increased women’s agency, opportunities and participation in sport and the ongoing structural barriers and constraints, little of the sociological literature I reviewed acknowledged these developments and the implications these have had for women in sport and netball more specifically. Such an approach would prove fruitful and aide an understanding of the broader social context of sport and how changes here have influenced women’s experiences and opportunities for participation.

Understanding Women’s Experiences in Sport: A Historical Perspective

Like other fields of inquiry, sport history has traditionally been a male dominated field. The topics historians study, vary with time and are influenced by contemporary concerns (Polley, 2008). Therefore, not surprisingly, very few historians in sport or other disciplines focused their energies on women before the growth of feminism during the 1970’s (Holloway, 1998). As women’s authority in multiple areas increased, some historians recognised the urgency for the presence of female-centred research in this field (e.g. Hargreaves, 1985; Duffin, 1978). Despite the traditional absence of women in this discipline, Booth (2005) suggests that feminist historiography has contributed much to the field, including the

introduction of unconventional sources (e.g. diary entries, poems) and the centring of gender in historical inquiry.

Historians studying women's experiences in sport have focused on topics such as women's involvement in and the development of netball and the maintenance of femininity (Nauright & Broomhall, 1994; Treagus, 2005), the struggles that have faced women who attempt participation in traditionally 'masculine' sports (Davies, 2008; George, 2009; Hess, 2000) and the broader social opinions concerning women's participation in sport in general (Hargreaves, 1985; McCrone, 1991; Simpson, 2001). Such topics provide a clear picture of women's experiences in sport in terms of the expectations and ideologies surrounding what it means to be female and how these have restricted women's participation throughout history. More specifically, these articles discuss the unique social barriers that women have faced when participating in feminine, masculine and gender neutral sports throughout time. Highlighting women's struggles in sport, the articles reviewed explore the inroads that women have made to be permitted and accepted in the masculine culture of sport. Contextualising women's struggles, some of the articles discuss women's oppression in other areas of social life such as employment, drinking and gambling, also seen as masculine endeavours (McCrone, 1991). Such findings highlight the context-specific nature of women's oppression in sport, bringing to the fore the tendency of sporting practices to model broader social conventions (Pfister, Hartmann-Tews, 2003).

Not surprisingly, biological and social ideologies concerning women's capabilities in sport were a key focus in multiple articles. Here, women's perceived biological and genetic inferiority and domestic roles were well documented as contributing to women's oppression in sport (e.g. Hess, 2000; McCrone, 1991; Treagus, 2005; Simpson, 2001). Simpson (2001) clearly demonstrates the influences of biological and social opinions as barriers to women's participation in sport from a New Zealand perspective. Analysing the 'new woman' of the 1890's, Simpson (2001) demonstrates the influence of women's participation in cycling on the liberation of females during this time. Revealing how women's involvement in this sport challenged biological and social opinions regarding the inferiority of women and 'ideal' femininity by encouraging developments in women's dress and increasing women's confidence

outside of the domestic sphere, this article does well to highlight the broader socio-cultural context of women's sport participation in New Zealand during the late 19th century.

In sum, the historical literature suggests that the development of women's sport and women's participation has been greatly hindered by beliefs suggesting that women were physically incapable of participating safely in many sports, especially those dominated by male participation. Such findings evidence the influence of societal and professional opinions and the impact that these have had on women's experiences in sport. Accordingly, some of these articles detail the debate between female physical educators and male physicians who argue for and against the merits of physical activity and sport involvement for women. Of course, the insights revealed throughout these articles depend on the theoretical and methodological approaches adopted by their authors.

Frameworks of the Historical Perspective

According to Booth (2005), "theory is a thorny subject for historians" (p. 43). Unlike positivists who are guided by the use of strict theories, historians accept a framework of interpretation which sets out questions, directs researchers to certain sources and thereby gives impetus to an inquiry and shapes its outcomes (Booth, 2005; Munslow, 2006). Within this discipline there are two types of historians; reconstructivists and constructivists. While the former suggest that "history is an a-theoretical discipline", the latter maintain that "theory is integral to historical practice" (Booth, 2005, p. 43). Additionally, sport historiography is made up of three genres; reconstructionist, constructionist and deconstructionist. According to Booth (2005, 2006), reconstructionism and constructionism dominate sport history, however for the purposes of this review I will briefly outline all three approaches.

Booth (2005) suggests that reconstructionists operate under the assumptions that they can discover the past as it really was. Emulating the tenets of positivism, inquiry derives from empirical evidence. Rejecting any notion that ideological considerations have the potential to influence their histories, reconstructionists are particularly vigilant of those who mesh ideology with sources (Booth, 2005). While, constructionists promote the use of empirical evidence also, they promote the use of theory in their analyses (Booth, 2005).

Attempting to not only understand the past, but also to interpret it, constructionists build their historical analyses around priori knowledge and in so doing recognise that historians cannot avoid selection in their accounts (Booth, 2005). Responding to the conservative reconstructivist charge that theory predetermines history, constructionists suggest that historians “cannot approach their evidence innocent of presupposition” (Munslow, 2006, p. 23). Diversely, deconstructionists have abandoned the notion of objectivity. Deconstructionists believe that there are no overarching rules for measuring knowledge and hence set about advocating for research on partial and fragmented pasts (Booth, 2005). These different genres have been developed to test truth and knowledge in the field of sport history.

In terms of my own sense making of the existing historical research on women’s experiences in sport, this body of literature appears to be predominantly written from a constructivist perspective. According to Paston, through the use of theory, constructionists believe that historical phenomena are “unique configurations and one-off occurrences: history consists of the ‘stories’ of...individual lives or happenings, all seemingly individual and unrepeatable” (as cited in Booth, 2005, p. 10). Acknowledging the how and why in women’s past sporting experiences including how women have been oppressed in sport (Hargreaves, 1985, McCrone, 1991) and why women’s participation in male dominated sports has been contested (Davies, 2008; Hess, 2000; George, 2009) and using priori knowledge, this body of literature focused primarily on the influences of gender in sport history. Accordingly, much of the historical literature on this topic has adopted a critical feminist theoretical framework (Hargreaves, 1985; Hess, 2000; McCrone, 1991; Simpson, 2001). In so doing, these authors have been influenced by the desire to improve the sporting experiences of women by addressing pertinent issues such as oppression, marginalisation and discrimination. By bringing these issues to the fore of their inquiry, historians operating under the feminist framework attempt to challenge the social construction of sport and interpret the gendered experiences of women throughout time.

Sport historians utilise vastly different methodologies than sport psychologists or sociologists. However, Munslow (2006) suggests that “never before has there been such a vast array of methods available with which to study the past” (p. 19). Wiggins & Mason (2005) report that sport historians primarily

rely on two sources of information; primary and secondary, although, Booth (2005) suggests that “historians generally believe that the more vast the array of primary material, the more dependable the historical knowledge” (p. 82). In accordance with this belief, empirical evidence was gathered from multiple primary sources throughout the historical sports research such as, newspapers and magazines (George, 2009; McCrone, 1991; Nauright & Broomhall, 1994; Simpson, 2001; Treagus, 2005), official documents (Davies, 2008; George, 2009; McCrone, 1991; Nauright & Broomhall, 1994; Treagus) and oral testimony (Nauright & Broomhall, 1994). Additionally, many cited secondary historical sources (Davies, 2008; Hargreaves, 1985; McCrone, 1991; Treagus, 2005). Demonstrating the importance placed on primary sources and various historical artefacts, the historical sports literature used multiple “remnants from the past” (Booth, 2005, p. 82) to construct insightful narratives of women’s experiences of sport throughout history

The Utility of the Historical Perspective

According to Munslow (2006), the central debate surrounding a historical approach is its utility for accurately discovering and representing the content of the past. As history can no longer be viewed as merely a matter of the discovery of the story of the past (Munslow, 2006), more recently, historical accounts have incorporated sociological elements. Examining not only time, but social change also, some of the historical literature (Hargreaves, 1985; McCrone, 1991; Treagus, 2005; Simpson, 2001) has shed light on the “distinctive and essential properties of its object: human agency as mediated by the constitutive contextual frames of historical time and cultural milieu” (Bryant, 1994, p. 15). In so doing, these articles have highlighted the significance of the changing social, cultural and political environments in which women’s sporting experiences have taken place.

Although some of the historical literature has shed light on the changing socio-cultural climates of women’s sport participation, this research offers little understanding of women’s subjective experiences of sport. Deconstructionism, with its abandonment of objectivity and its analysis of fragmented pasts, would have been a helpful framework to understand the unique and gendered experiences of women in sport and to emphasize a female perspective as it was lived (Booth, 2005). Appreciating the diversity that exists in the experiences of

women in sport, such an approach would prove fruitful for this field and account for the differing perspectives women hold of their own past sporting participation.

A Summary of the Psychological, Sociological and Historical Literature

The current psychological, sociological and historical research on women's experiences in netball and sport more broadly, differ in findings, theoretical and methodological approaches and the knowledge that they contribute to this topic. However, for the purposes of understanding women's experiences in sport and netball, each perspective contains shortfalls. Although many of these articles do well to highlight the contextual factors and broader social changes that have influenced women's agency and experiences in sport, an interdisciplinary approach that appreciates time, context and social change simultaneously could further this research.

Recognising the strengths and limitations of the psychological, sociological and historical approaches for understanding women's sporting and netball experiences, I believe there is much potential in more interdisciplinary studies of women's sport participation. Building on my discussion of the benefits of an interdisciplinary perspective in Chapter One, I will now briefly discuss some of the existing interdisciplinary research in this field. Following this I explain how my own interdisciplinary approach which takes into consideration the psychological, sociological and historical elements influencing and affecting women's participation, can address some of the gaps identified in the literature and could benefit this field.

Toward Interdisciplinarity: Understanding Women's Experiences in Netball

Throughout the body of literature surrounding women's experiences in sport and the research concerning netball more specifically, few researchers have employed an interdisciplinary approach. However, there were noteworthy exceptions (e.g. Guilliano et al., 2000; Tagg, 2008a, 2008b).

Giuliano et al. (2000) adopt a psycho-sociological approach to explore the socialisation of women into traditionally-defined masculine sports. Employing questionnaires, these authors examine childhood play activities as predictors of women's sport participation, and in so doing, reveal interesting insights into the interaction of psychological and sociological forces as determinants for women's

participation in often socially ‘unacceptable’ sports for women (e.g. soccer, basketball or track). In so doing this article reveals that a combination of social (e.g. childhood game play, friend choice) and psychological factors (e.g. competitive orientation towards winning) during women’s childhoods influence their choices to engage in ‘masculine’ sports in later life. Pointing to the ways that socially constructed forces and psychological factors affect women’s experiences and choices in sport, this article furthers some of the current literature on women’s participation in traditionally-defined masculine sports (e.g. Chu et al., 2003; Migliaccio & Berg) by exploring not only the way social ideologies (e.g. ideal femininity) influence women’s sport participation, but examining the factors that entice women to become involved. Furthering the current sociological and psychological research on women in sport, this article implores the necessity of studying childhood play activities in association with other aspects of sport socialisation (e.g. family, peers, coaches).

Tagg (2008a, 2008b) also successfully employs an interdisciplinary approach in his analysis of men’s experiences in netball. Using, open-ended interviews (Tagg, 2008a) and textual analysis (Tagg, 2008b), he examines how socially constructed ideologies surrounding gender, masculinity and femininity influence men’s participation in netball, whilst also exploring the development of men’s netball over time and consequently identifying “men’s netball as contested terrain” (2008a, p. 457). Adopting a socio-cultural historic approach, he explores the social barriers that have constrained men’s netball participation and discusses how these have changed over time. In his analysis Tagg (2008b) discusses how despite a seemingly more liberal New Zealand society, stereotypes of homosexuality and decreased masculinity plague male netballers. In addition, he details how competitive male netballers reconcile such stereotypes by participating in physical and aggressive ways which reinforce their masculinity. In so doing, men’s netball participation is explored from multiple perspectives to provide a broad understanding of the dynamic complexities associated with male participation in female oriented sports. Such an approach is useful for understanding how socially constructed definitions of appropriate masculinity and gender have evolved over time and have constrained and supported men’s participation in netball.

How Would an Interdisciplinary Approach Benefit this Topic?

Interdisciplinary approaches incorporating aspects of psychology and sociology and alternatively sociology and history, have been successfully employed in this field and shed light on the complexities of women's and men's experiences in sport. However, I feel that an approach that transgresses the bounds of psychology, sociology and history would prove fruitful for understanding women's unique and context-specific experiences of netball.

Although many implore the value of more interdisciplinary approaches for understanding sporting experiences in historical and contemporary contexts (e.g. Ryba, 2005; Thorpe, 2006; Vertinsky, 2009; Weiss & Glenn, 1992), according to Bauer (1990), differences in epistemologies and definitions of truth restrict this approach. Speaking metaphorically he suggests that

in the realm of intellect and its variety of cultures, we are still at the primitive level of tribalism, complete with xenophobia, much more likely to wage war on other tribes than to regard them as equals worthy of meaningful collaboration (p. 111).

Pointing to the reasons that interdisciplinarity is scarce in comparison to traditional psychological, sociological or historical approaches within this field, Bauer (1990) insists the need for transcending unconscious habits of thought that have restricted research that transgresses traditional boundaries.

In terms of understanding women's experiences in sport, this approach is highly advocated because "the meanings of sport...always have an initial socio-cultural purpose that has been shifting over time to reflect dominant social values and cultural practices" (Ryba, 2005, p. 18). Due to the cultural and social forces acting on women's sport participation, Ryba (2005) suggests that in order to strengthen the research on sport and provide answers to continuously evolving and emerging socio-cultural issues, research must inform and transform via social and cultural theories that reflect the swiftly changing conditions of a (post)modern world.

With this in mind, my own research investigates how socio-cultural values have shifted over time and how a multitude of factors (e.g. political, social, economic, and technological) have affected women's opportunities, agency and experiences in netball. Building on the current psychological, sociological and historic literature on women's experiences in netball, my own approach offers a

selection of New Zealand women an avenue to discuss their netball experiences whilst allowing me to simultaneously explore their experiences in relation to the socio-cultural and political contexts of New Zealand at various historical junctures. This approach has helped me to develop an understanding of the shifting and fluid experiences of women in netball throughout New Zealand history and to examine “the tangled interplay of continuity and change, and the complexity of historical causation and the evidentiary basis of historical interpretation” (Seixas as cited in Ryba, 2005, p. 17-18). Transgressing multiple disciplinary boundaries, this approach attempts to address the shortfalls of each perspective by concurrently examining time, context and social change and capturing the unique historical ‘stories’ of women’s netball experiences throughout time.

To achieve this I employ interdisciplinary theoretical and methodological approaches that have allowed me to explore the differing contexts of women’s netball participation across time. The complexities of these approaches and how I have implemented these techniques will be explored further in the next chapter.

Theory and Methodology

When embarking on this research it was my aim to privilege the voices of New Zealand women and to understand how broader social changes had influenced their experiences of netball. In order to achieve this aim I have drawn upon interdisciplinary theoretical and methodological strategies. This chapter demonstrates how the interaction of theory and methodology has enabled me to explore women's experiences playing netball in New Zealand at four distinct historical periods. Beginning with an overview of the theoretical underpinnings of this study, I discuss the rise of poststructural feminist theory (PSFT). More specifically, I explore how the underpinning goals and tenets of PSFT have informed my study and how I have used intergenerational research to explore the diverse netball experiences of New Zealand women across time and contexts. Following this, I explore the use of focus groups as the primary research method in this project. Next, I introduce the research participants and explore the ethical considerations of this thesis. Offering reflexive comments regarding the research process, I discuss my own personal discoveries and reflections as an emerging researcher and explore some of the ethical issues I negotiated implementing interdisciplinary and intergenerational techniques. Finally, I examine my approach to data representation and analysis and also discuss any issues of interpretive validity that arose during this study.

Poststructural Feminism and New Zealand Women's Experiences of Netball

One of the major aims of this research was to explore the complexities and nuances evident within women's subjective and context-specific experiences of netball. Thus, a poststructural feminist theoretical approach seemed particularly relevant to this project due to its focus on subjectivity and the examination of language and historically, socially and culturally influenced positions in time.

Poststructural Feminism: A Theoretical Approach

Emerging during the 1980's and 1990's, PSFT challenges much prior feminist thought (Freedman, 2003). Referred to by Birrell (2000) as a "synthetic theory" (p. 66), PSFT combines both feminist and poststructural ways of thinking and knowing.

Feminist theory “is a dynamic, continually evolving complex of theories or theoretical traditions that take as their point of departure the analysis of gender as a category of experience” (Birrell, 2000, p. 61). However, not only does this approach place gender at the centre of analysis, it appreciates that we live in a world of increasing complexity, uncertainty and contradiction (Birrell, 2000). Thus, feminist theory is not neat and attempts to abstract from individual lives a pattern of experience through the analysis of personal, lived realities, and the broader social conditions that surround us (Birrell, 2000).

According to Andrews (2000) poststructuralism is concerned with “the necessarily political nature of language, meaning and knowledge” (p. 114). Marked by ‘the linguistic turn’, poststructuralism recognises the power of language and discourse in defining, and on the other hand challenging, social constructions that effect the self/subjectivity in terms of what we do, say and think (Gannon & Davies, 2007). Therefore, poststructuralism rejects the notion that the ‘self’ is a separate entity; rather it is a construct bound by the conflicting social and cultural contextual factors (e.g. race, age, and socio-economic status) in which it operates. This idea is supported by Davies (2000) who emphasises that through a poststructural lens, an individual can never be separate from the social world, but is continuous with it.

Both late 20th century movements, poststructuralism and feminist theory share a certain “self-conscious critical relationship to established philosophical and political traditions” (Scott, 1988, p. 34). While feminism as a social movement has had much impact on the lives of both men and women, challenging the presence of patriarchy (Birrell, 2000; Hooks, 1984; St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000), the combination of feminist theory and poststructuralism has broadened the scope of feminist inquiry. Borrowing tenets from one another, poststructural feminism addresses criticisms concerning the limited focus of feminist theory by incorporating influences of other social factors such as power, class, race and age (Birrell, 2000). More specifically, during poststructural feminist analysis “there is a shift from thinking about ‘patriarchy’, with its emphasis on male control of the structures of society, to the notion of ‘phallogentrism’ which denotes male control of language, symbols, definitions, discourses, sexuality, theory and logocentric thinking” (Wearing, 1996, p. 39).

PSFT suggests that individuals are constructs whose experience of their own subjectivity is a construct mediated by and/or grounded on social discourse far beyond individual control, thus, subjective experiences are determined by macro factors (Alcoff, 1988). Using the history of discourse to attack and deconstruct our concept of essentialism, one of the prime concerns of PSFT is “to refute the notion of one single theory or grand narrative capable of explaining women’s position throughout time and space” (Aitchison, 2001, p. 134). In particular, PSFT denies the existence of an ultimate truth in favour of an appreciation of diversity, fluidity and multidimensionality.

Echoing the focus of poststructuralism, PSFT is predominantly concerned with using language as a tool for understanding women’s subjective experiences through the contestation of social relations and power (Birrell, 2000; Denzin, 2004; Richardson & St Pierre, 2005). In so doing, PSFT rejects the dominant (male) views that attribute women’s experiences to an innate essence of womanhood that unifies women’s experiences (Ferguson, 1993). Rather, PSFT recognises that there can be multiple truths and realities, as women view their own lives and experiences through unique, diverse, culturally and historically located discourses (Gannon & Davies, 2007).

Although many proclaim the usefulness of poststructural feminism for understanding the experiences of women (e.g. Aitchison, 2001; Alcoff, 1988; Birrell, 2000; Bryson, 1992; Ferguson, 1993; Gannon & Davies, 2007), some critique this approach (e.g. Hartsock, 1990). According to Gannon & Davies (2007), some are concerned by the relativism of this approach and its prevention of social action. However, Kenway, Willis, Blackmore and Rennie (1994) suggest that PSFT is a theory which not only recognises the power of discourse and the struggles faced by women, but it acknowledges the “interplay of social forces” and can therefore be implemented as a theory “of and for change” (p. 188-189). Regardless of critiques, Bryson (1992) insists that poststructural feminism is an important theory for application in a “postmodern society that is increasingly characterised by fragmentation, diversity and diffuseness in all spheres of life” (p. 225-26).

PSFT: Key Concepts

While feminists working from a post-structural stand point employ an array of different theoretical perspectives, many share similar understandings of language, discourse and subjectivity. As these concepts are central to the research questions, and methodological and representational approaches employed in this thesis, I offer some brief comments on each of these terms below.

From a post-structural feminist approach, language represents the medium for an analysis of discourse, subjectivity and constructs. According to Weedon (1997), for post-structural feminists “language consists of a range of discourses which offer different versions of the meaning of social relations and their effects on the individual” (p. 82). Moreover, language is viewed as “the forum where actual and possible forms of social organisation and their likely consequences are defined and contested” (Bristol & Fischer, 1993, p. 521). Embedded within language are discourses. In accordance with PSFT, discourses are the “meanings of social reality that shape the way individuals interpret their lived world” and are “the historical, social and political aspect of language” (Bristol & Fischer, 1993, p. 521). Represented in lived realities, voices and stories, it is through discourses that subjectivity and constructs can be examined. According to Weedon (1997) an individual’s subjectivity is constituted in every utterance. Acquired in language and discourse, subjectivity itself is constantly in process and represented in the multiple realities individuals hold for interpretation of their social world (Weedon, 1997). Furthermore, socially and historically situated discourses are the site where the meanings people have for constructs such as ‘femininity’, ‘masculinity’ and ‘sexuality’ are revealed. Put simply, we cannot understand women’s everyday lived subjective experiences in sports such as netball without listening carefully to the stories they tell and the language they use, which are always informed by contextually specific discourses.

Understanding New Zealand Women’s Netball Experiences: A PSFT Approach

The underpinning goals of PSFT have informed this study of New Zealand women’s context-specific experiences of netball. Adopting a poststructural feminist theoretical approach, I recognise the importance of paying attention to the dynamic and multidimensional contexts in which women’s sporting experiences occur. PSFT offered a valuable approach to help capture the diverse

and subjective experiences of a selection of New Zealand's netballers, all of whom have experienced netball in different social, political and historical contexts. Such an approach has allowed me to examine the gendered experiences of the participants in this study as well as acknowledge the complexity of the social spaces, times and contexts in which these experiences were constructed.

One of the fundamental goals of this study is to explore women's multiple and dynamic netball experiences. Thus, a theoretical approach which values women's everyday lived experiences and recognises that women can be active participants in the construction of their own experiences and lives and knowing participants in terms of making sense of their own experiences, while simultaneously operating within numerous sources of power, seemed appropriate (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2007). Although in borrowing from feminist theory this approach has the potential to generate social change, it was not my aim to generate social, political or economic transformation throughout this study. Rather, under the auspices of PSFT it was my aim to accurately capture the dynamic and diverse experiences of netballers from different generations, who have participated at various historical junctures.

PSFT: A Study of Generations

Grenier (2007) suggests that generation remains an under theorised aspect of the exploration of experience. Therefore, in accordance with PSFT, during this project I have attempted to examine the everyday, context-specific, personal realities of netballers from different generations. Moreover, I have aimed to capture the voices and experiences of those whose stories are too often lost in the existing sports literature, that is, the experiences of non-elite and recreational netball participants. Much of the existing research focuses on contemporary athletes or key figures in the sport (see Chapter Two). But, as this project illustrates, although these women have played mostly at local and regional levels, netball has played a significant part in their lives and identity construction.

According to Larkin & Newman (1997), although the primary focus of much intergenerational research has been to "address a geographical separation and the perceived psychological gap between the young and the old" (p. 7), a recent strand seeks to address a variety of social issues that affect or have affected multiple generations. This approach has proved extremely fruitful for my project.

With the aim of understanding how context and social change influence women's netball experiences, I examined the personal and lived realities of netballers from four different historical periods (1940's, 1970's, 1990's and 2010). In so doing, I have explored how these women's socio-cultural and historic location have shaped their experiences of netball. Furthermore, in accordance with PSFT, the use of intergenerational research has enabled me to examine the richness of women's multiple subjectivities and netball experiences and to explore the broader socio-cultural, historical, political and economic environments, and developments within these, that have influenced the netball experiences of women from different generations.

Despite there being no single methodological approach for conducting poststructural research (Guba & Lincoln, 2005), techniques which appreciate the context specific and subjective experiences of these women, and methodologies that help to explore the influences of time, context and social change in regards to women's experiences of netball, have been employed.

Netball in the Lives of New Zealand Women: The Research Process

Poststructural feminists tend to employ qualitative approaches which are inclusive of women and appreciate the multiplicity and individuality of women and their experiences (Oakley, 2000). In alignment with this theoretical perspective, my own research aims to both "develop an account of the world that places women's lives, experiences and perspectives at the centre of analysis" (Hawkesworth, 2007, p. 469) and recognise the importance of making "visible the historical, cultural, social and discursive patterns through which...realities are held in place" (Gannon & Davies, 2007, p. 81). To achieve such objectives, I have utilised focus groups as my primary method of data collection, which has allowed me to explore and appreciate women's unique experiences and the diversity which exists between these in relation to historically and socially influenced positions in time.

Using Focus Groups to Capture New Zealand Women's Netball Experiences

During this study I took the advice of Kvale (1996) who insists that "if you want to know how people understand their world and their life, why not talk to them" (p. 1). Therefore, in an effort to capture the experiences of women in netball during four historical periods I employed focus groups. During data collection I

conducted four different focus group discussions. Each discussion was no more than 90 minutes in length and consisted of women from the same generation (1940's, 1970's, 1990's and 2010's netball participants). During these focus groups I guided the discussion to cover several aspects of these women's netball participation including; motivation to become involved and sustain involvement in netball, likes and dislikes of the sport, how the social context influenced their participation (e.g. women's roles), how family influenced participation (e.g. supports and constraints) and also how these women perceived their own involvement. This research method was particularly useful as it enabled me to talk with each group of women as well as enabling them to talk amongst themselves and generate interesting, similar and conflicting accounts of their experiences. The use of this method allowed me not only to privilege the voices of a selection of women, but to explore the similarities and disjuncture evident between these women's personal experiences of netball. Focus groups as a method of data collection are expanded on below.

Focus Groups

Widely utilised in the market research sector (Kvale, 1996; Marshall & Rossman, 1995), focus groups have more recently, since the mid 1980's, been applied in the social sciences (Morgan, 2004). According to Kamerelis and Dimitriadis (2005) in the broadest sense, focus groups are "collective conversations or group interviews" and can be "small or large, directed or nondirected" (p. 887). A technique which promotes group interaction, the use of focus groups is underpinned by the assumption that the group setting can enhance both the quality and quantity of information provided (Carey, 1994).

Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) suggest that focus groups offer unique insights into the possibilities for critical inquiry during a setting that is already embedded in and with real-world problems. In other words, as women (or men) bring their experiences, interpretations and understandings of the world to the discussion, focus groups become a site increasingly reflective of 'real life', with diversity, disjunctive ideas and multidimensional experiences. As some scholars have argued, focus groups have been popular within feminist research and have been important in the advancement of social agenda for women (e.g. Kamerelis & Dimitriadis, 2005; Madriz, 2000). Although this was not the intent of this study, a

feminist view that “group interviews are particularly suited for uncovering women’s daily experience through collective stories...filled with cultural symbols, words, signs and ideological representations that reflect different dimensions of power” (Madriz, 2000, p. 836-839), was particularly useful. Kamerelis and Dimitriadis (2005) and Morgan (1997) suggest that focus groups are extremely practical because they generate large quantities of data in relatively short sequences of time. Additionally, Kamerelis and Dimitriadis (2005) suggest that a further strength of this approach is the focus groups ability to produce data that are seldom produced through the interview process as a result of powerful interpretive insights and a tendency to “mine the historically sedimented collective memories and desires” (p. 903) of those involved.

Despite their usefulness, there are some potential weaknesses of the focus group approach. Morgan (1997) explains that during the focus group process researchers may influence the group’s interactions. Although he furthers this by suggesting there is no hard evidence that this is more of a risk during focus groups than any other qualitative research processes (e.g. participant observation or individual interviews), researchers must be prepared to respond to this claim. To address this concern, the focus groups I conducted were semi-structured. As can be seen in the focus group guidelines (see Appendix 10), I used a combination of open ended questions and prompts to guide rather than direct the discussion.

Another point of consideration throughout the focus group process is the idea of mutual self-disclosure, or the willingness of participants to share and interact (Morgan, 1997, 2004). While I attempted to influence the dynamics of the focus groups as little as possible by allowing participants to share as much or as little as they felt comfortable, I did not consider the ‘silences’ to be a negative aspect of this process. Rather, in many instances these spoke louder than words and provided indication of the salience of certain topics in the lives and netball experiences of these women.

The Participants in this Study

This study aimed to communicate the personal and multidimensional experiences of a group of New Zealand netballers who played during four distinct historical periods. In so doing a diverse group of women were asked to participate. Due to the historical nature of this research and the time constraints of a Masters, the

involvement of a large number of participants would have proved difficult and problematic. Moreover, as I was not interested in making generalisations about the experiences of all women in netball, but rather capturing some of the rich experiences of a few in particular historical moments, a high participation rate was unnecessary. Therefore, this research examined the netball experiences of 12 New Zealand women ranging in age from 17 to 80 years of age, whom had participated in different historical periods (1940's, 1970's, 1990's and 2010) and in vastly different social contexts. The following sections outline the participants in this study as well as offering a brief discussion of the application of memory in this research.

1940's Netball Participants

My focus group with women who played netball during the 1940s consisted of two women: Betty and Shirley. Betty grew up in Central Hawkes Bay, where she played club and representative netball. She played in the mid court, or centre-centre as it was known. Marrying when she was 23 years of age, Betty has continued to live in Central Hawkes Bay where she has raised four children. Diversely, Shirley grew up on a dairy farm in rural Bunnythorpe. She played primary and secondary school netball where she enjoyed playing in a goal shooting position. After marrying at the age of 20, she moved to Central Hawkes Bay where she raised three girls.

1970's Netball Participants

Rose, Sue and Susanna all participated in netball during the 1970's. Rose is the eldest of seven children and grew up in rural Takapau. As a defence player, Rose participated in primary, secondary, provincial representative, and club netball. Rose has settled in Central Hawkes Bay where she has a thriving career and three children, all very successful in their respective sporting codes. Similarly, Susanna grew up in rural Central Hawkes Bay. A defence player also, Susanna represented Hawkes Bay and was a primary and secondary school representative player. Susanna has had a long and fulfilling career in netball, retiring only three years ago at the age of 47. On the other hand, Sue grew up in urban Central Hawkes Bay. Here, she participated in primary school, secondary school and club netball,

in shooting positions. Married with one child, Sue has spent most of her life in Central Hawkes Bay.

1990's Netball Participants

Hannah, Libby and Sheldine are all in their early 20's and all played netball during the 1990's. Growing up in Te Awamutu, Hannah participated at primary and secondary school levels. Here she played as a goal defence or wing defence before retiring from netball at the end of high school. Libby also grew up in rural Waikato. Participating in primary and secondary school netball, Libby was predominantly a defence player. Additionally, Libby held a coaching position during her high school years. Born in South Africa, Sheldine considers herself a South African- New Zealander. Spending most of her childhood and adolescence living in Tauranga, Sheldine has participated in primary, secondary, club and social netball as a circle defence. At present, all three of these young women are university students and have, or are completing undergraduate degrees. Two of these young women are employed in the hospitality industry, while all three enjoy various social and leisure activities such as horse-riding, going to the gym and snowboarding.

2010 Netball Participants

Initially from Auckland, the Bay of Plenty and various areas of the Waikato, including Tokoroa and Cambridge, Anneke, Chanel, Jeneva and Paris are in their late teens and currently in their final years at a secondary school in Hamilton. They are all active netball players. Anneke has participated in primary, intermediate and secondary grades and was a year nine representative player. Currently, she assumes a shooting position in one of the school's senior teams. Of all the young women from this generation, Chanel has spent the least time participating in netball, taking up the game during her adolescence. Nonetheless, she has excelled in this context and captains the school's senior development team as a talented mid-courter. Both Paris and Jeneva are elite netball participants. Both prominent members of the school's top senior team, these two young women have represented Hamilton City. Additionally, Paris, who captains the school's top team, has represented Waikato in the Under 19's netball side, and Jeneva has played in the Waikato 'A' grade competition.

Relying on Memory

Due to the nature of this study and its use of intergenerational research it is important to note the emphasis being placed on the memories of the participants from the 1940's and 1970's focus groups. For some, this process has required recollections of experiences that occurred up to 70 years earlier. Therefore, I feel that it is important to briefly explore the process of memory and its application to this research.

Throughout feminist studies the concepts of 'experience' and 'memory' remain central to any attempts to interpret women's lives (Cowman & Jackson, 2003). However, according to Keightley (2010), a thorough investigation of "how memory studies should be conducted and what they can offer the social sciences over and above historical research has been lacking" (p. 55). Memory, it is suggested, is a lived process that involves making sense of time and our experiences of it (Keightley, 2010). Such a phenomenon is separate from history and deals with much more personal accounts of the past which are influenced by who we are and how we 'see' the world. Memory studies specifically deal with the use of memory to communicate the past and have been described as non-academic representations of history (Kansteiner, 2002).

My own research has relied heavily on the memories of some women; especially those from the 1940's and 1970's focus groups. During this research I have appreciated the differing perspectives that each woman holds of her own netball participation. Using these to formulate a 'story' of netball within each historical period I have aimed to capture each women's diverse and personal lived experiences which have been influenced by a myriad of social factors. Interestingly, as will be revealed later in this study, while memory influenced the stories told by the participants from the 1940s and 1970s focus groups, the women from the later generations were much 'closer' to their netball experiences in a temporal sense, and thus tended to focus on some of the less positive aspects of the game. It is interesting to consider whether, over time, they will selectively remember the more positive aspects of participation, forgetting less savoury elements of netball. As became apparent in this study, time and context influence the stories women tell about their lives and the language they use to describe their lived netball experiences.

Ethical Considerations and Reflexivity

With ethical approval from the School of Education Ethics Committee I sought consent from a range of individuals for the purposes of this study. Due to the nature of this research there were significant ethical considerations that I had to negotiate throughout this process. Incorporating a diverse range of women including; school-aged girls, family members and the elderly, the ethical considerations required throughout this research were complex and varied.

I began this process by obtaining consent from the principal and netball convenor of the high school in which I hoped to carry out aspects of this research. My role as a current netball coach here presented conflict as the young women I approached may have felt obligated to participate. To avoid this I enlisted the assistance of the netball convenor who approached a wide range of current netballers of differing abilities and backgrounds that I had not had experience coaching. Those interested were made known to me and were sent a formal introductory letter, as well as parental and participant information and consent forms. In these forms I explained the purpose and goals of this study as well as their rights as participants during the research process. Prior to any data collection I ensured that the parent/guardian consent forms had been returned as these participants were minors. I also ensured that all of their questions had been answered and that these young women were satisfied with their participation in this process before commencing the focus group.

I undertook a similar process with all other participants. Importantly however, the 1940's, 1970's and 1990's focus groups consisted of some of my friends and family (e.g. my grandmother, my mother and two friends). To gather further participants I used 'snowball sampling'. Inevitably, because of the small country town in which my family lives and because of my tight friend circle, many participants were known to me prior to this research. However, I conducted the process of gaining ethical consent professionally and formally. To begin, I introduced myself and informed all participants of the nature of this study before gaining formal consent. Prior to data collection I ensured that all participants were sure of their obligations and satisfied that their questions and concerns had been addressed.

Focus groups were conducted at times which suited all participants including; during the day for elderly participants, after office hours for those who

worked during the day and during the lunch hour for the school-aged participants. Additionally, focus groups were held in places of convenience to the women in this study including a private room at the high school and at the homes of the elderly participants who could not drive. During the focus groups, participants were made to feel at ease in each focus group environment. This involved talking over cups of tea with the elderly, relaxing in the lounge of a student flat during the 1990's focus group and discussing netball over lunch with the 2010 participants.

All focus group sessions were tape recorded and each woman received a transcribed copy of their session to read over and make any amendments to if they wished before the data analysis process commenced. All transcripts were signed and returned to me where all women indicated that they were happy for their first names to be used throughout this research. At the outset of this study all participants were made aware of the possibility of an invitation to participate in a follow-up interview and their right to decline. However, because of the rich and plentiful data the focus groups provided me, follow-up interviews were unnecessary.

Reflexivity

Demonstrating reflexivity involves the author's recognition of their subjective position in the research as their historical and geographical situatedness, their personal investments in the research, various biases, their struggles in the processes and their suppression or promoting of certain topics influences the outcomes of the research (Gergen & Gergen, 2000). For Hertz (1997), the reflexive process involves the constant questioning and internal dialogue of the research process. She suggests that reflexive researchers do not simply report, they actively construct interpretations and then question how these came to be. Indeed, my own social, historical and cultural position and of course my sex did influence my choice of research question, the method and theoretical framework I employed, and my analysis of data. Additionally, the relationships I had with some of the participants in this study significantly affected my research approach and hence my interactions with these women.

The 1940's focus group consisted of my own grandmother and a longstanding family friend. Due to this, I found myself negotiating dual roles. During the focus group process I often found myself wondering how these women

perceived me as a female researcher, a concept that I was increasingly aware was new to both of these women and something that was impossible during the era in which they grew up. I also struggled with the fact that both of these women had watched me grow up. These thoughts often made maintaining the role of a researcher difficult and as a result, at times I found myself slipping from the role of a researcher back into my well known roles as granddaughter or friend. To help maintain my role as a researcher I paid particular attention to my image and language, dressing in ways that I believed enhanced my status as a researcher and confirmed my own femininity, and speaking in ways that showed I was educated on the time period and context of New Zealand in which these women's netball experiences took place.

I experienced similar issues during the 1970's focus group which was made up of my mother and two of my friends' mothers. I struggled especially with these women's perceptions of me as a young woman, more than with me as a researcher. I wondered if I had met their expectations, had I made them proud, was this who they expected I would grow up to be, and what they imagined I might be doing? As a result, like the former focus group, I also found myself slipping in and out of multiple roles. Although image had been a significant consideration in the previous focus group, it was less of an issue here as my knowledge of these women as being liberal and contemporary impacted on my thoughts regarding my own image and identity construction as a researcher in the 21st century.

The 1990's focus group posed the biggest challenge to me as an emerging researcher. Consisting of my peers and friends, I found this focus group significantly more challenging to conduct. Central to my difficulty were these women's perceptions of me as a feminist researcher. Such a concept, in my mind potentially threatened my status as a young heterosexual woman, which caused me worry in terms of my friendships and relationships with these individuals. Therefore, throughout this focus group I was particularly careful to emphasise my status as a friend, young heterosexual woman and lastly as a researcher. To emphasise these roles I paid particular attention to my image. Dressing no differently from the way I usually did, I was careful to highlight the temporality of my role as a researcher and that despite this, I was still the same person. My

concerns regarding my image as a feminist researcher perhaps reflect the assumptions and tensions regarding feminism and sexuality.

The final focus group, conducted with current netball participants posed different challenges. While I gained acceptance as a netballer, young woman and even to some extent a researcher, I was restricted by my role of authority as a netball coach and member of staff in the school. This role initially significantly affected the trust these women had in me and therefore the information they were willing to share. To make these women feel comfortable in this setting, my research approach involved emphasising the characteristics of my own identity that these young women could relate to. Therefore, I paid particular attention to my language and dress and was careful to emphasise my own role within the netball culture. Additionally, I found myself joining in the discussion a lot more to show these young women that I could relate to their netball experiences.

Throughout this process I attempted to remain reflexive about the implications of my role as a researcher, grand daughter, daughter, friend and coach, and how these positions may affect the data that I gathered and the way the participants in this study responded to me. Although I do not consider the dual roles I occupied or the roles I chose to emphasise (e.g. heterosexual woman, netballer, or researcher) as harmful to this process, the negotiation of these raised several questions in regards to my approach as an emerging researcher and how my own negotiation of roles affects the data I gather and the questions I ask.

Data Analysis and Reporting

According to Turner (1994) we are obliged to “categorize to some degree the events and phenomena which we encounter in the world if we are to bring any order to our experiences” (p. 196). In light of this statement and in accordance with the underpinnings of PSFT, data analysis in this study was guided by the work of Chase (2005) and what she terms the five “analytic lenses” (p. 656) for interpreting narrative inquiry, which is grounded in language and discourse.

The first lens she describes involves treating narratives, whether oral or written, as a form of discourse. In so doing Chase (2005) suggests narratives become meaning making, whereby past experiences are shaped and ordered and organised into a meaningful whole. During my analysis of the participant’s stories I attempted to make meaning of these narratives by contextualising their

experiences within the broader socio-cultural, political and technological developments during each time period.

The second of Chase's (2005) lenses suggests that narrative researchers should view narratives as verbal action. Building on this point she suggests that "when someone tells a story, he or she shapes, constructs and performs the self, experience and reality" (p. 657) which draws us to the subject positions or social and historical locations from which they speak. During my analysis of the different narratives I paid particular attention to the ways in which the women spoke of certain topics (e.g. questioning these, complaining, defending or celebrating) which provided insights into their thoughts, feelings and interpretations of their netball experiences.

The third lens in Chase's (2005) analytic view urges the researcher to appreciate narratives as both enabled and constrained by a host of social resources and circumstances. Throughout this study, influential others, institutions and social changes were examined as either supporting women's participation in netball or constraining it.

The fourth lens suggests that narratives are socially situated, interactive performances that are flexible, variable, and shaped in part by interaction with the audience. Therefore, during my analysis of the stories of the women in this study I was increasingly aware that these narratives did not represent the truth about their netball experiences. Rather, these tales were a socially constructed and in some instances collective memory of their realities of netball within a particular historical period. Of particular consideration here was the possibility the women in the focus groups may have been consciously and/or subconsciously moderating or changing their stories in interaction with other focus group members.

The fifth and final of Chase's (2005) analytic lenses posits that narrative researchers should recognise their own position in the construction of participant narratives. In support of Denzin and Lincoln's (2000) view that contemporary qualitative researchers should view themselves as narrators as they develop interpretations and find ways to present their ideas, Chase (2005) points to the way that as researchers construct the realities of others, they too develop their own voice. Although during the process of data presentation I attempted to communicate the lived experiences of the participants in this study, my voice and

in turn my interpretation of this data are evident in the narratives I chose to present and how I have presented these.

Representing Women's Voices

According to Sparkes (2002) “there is little uniformity in the way qualitative researchers report their work” (p. 39), or agreed upon written formats, guidelines or stylistic rules. Therefore, a pressing question throughout this process was how best to represent the unique and complex stories of these women’s netball experiences so that their voices and experiences would be privileged and the complexities of their lives could be revealed. Additionally, how could I also contextualise these women’s experiences within broader social and political developments in New Zealand?

During the focus group discussions a clear progression of these women’s experiences came to the fore. Their discussions of their netball experiences seemed shaped around three particular elements: their initial involvement, their participation in the netball context and their withdrawal (or contemplated withdrawal). With the overall objective of capturing these women’s voices and experiences in this study I use numerous, authentic participant quotes from the focus groups to present contextual narratives of these women’s experiences.

According to Onega and Landa (as cited in Patterson, 2008, p. 23) “a narrative is the semiotic representation of a series of events meaningfully connected in a temporal and causal way”. In this research the lived realities of the female participants from this study have been contextualised within broader socio-cultural and political climates, demonstrating how developments here have impacted on and shaped women’s experiences in netball. Supporting this idea, Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou (2008) suggest that “we frame our research in terms of narrative because we believe that in doing so we are able to see different and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning...and to understand more about individual and social change” (p. 1). Importantly, the narrative representations of these women’s experiences of netball have been woven with context and in so doing create a contextual and historical representation of the experiences of the women in this study during the 1940’s, 1970’s, 1990’s and 2010. In the words of Bruner (1986) the narrative representations in this study “strive to put its timeless

miracles into the particulars of experience, and to locate the experiences in time and place” (p. 13).

Throughout this research it is hoped that the lived experiences, understandings and perceptions of the female netballers in this study are conveyed meaningfully. Reflecting the poststructural feminist underpinnings of this study, it was my objective to acknowledge and effectively communicate how the interplay of time, social change and context have influenced and shaped women’s experiences of netball in different historical periods.

Interpretive Validity

Kvale (1989) reports that toward the end of the 20th century the issue of validity in qualitative research came to the fore. Whilst I argued for the value of a PSFT approach for this study, some researchers situated within the positivist and postpositivist paradigms have questioned its merits, suggesting that this approach does not conform to traditional external methods of evaluation (Denzin, 2004).

Poststructural feminists have refuted this claim, arguing that the underpinnings of each field are entirely separate and therefore cannot possibly be compared.

Evidencing this idea and contrasting the two fields, St Pierre (2000) suggests

feminists who are fond of poststructural critiques have given up on finding out “exactly” what is going on. They are sceptical of exactly that kind of question, because it is grounded in descriptions of knowledge, truth, rationality, and subjectivity that humanism put forward centuries ago to make sense of a world very different from the one we live in today, one that many now believe requires different inscriptions (p. 477).

Celebrating uncertainty and attempting to construct texts that don’t impose theoretical frameworks and rigid ways of knowing on the world, poststructuralists are more sensitive to voice and multiple perspectives than their postpositivist counterparts (Denzin, 2004).

Upon considering the issues of validity raised within this research I reflected particularly on the aims of PSFT and the goals of this study. Unlike positivists who believe in the ultimate truth, or as Aitchison (2001) suggests, seek to construct one single theory, I recognised that there are no steadfast rules in this area of inquiry (Sparkes, 2002) and instead implemented an approach that suited the overall aims of this study. The data was presented in a way that aimed to

communicate the voices of the women in this research and as a means to effectively demonstrate the experiences, struggles and lived realities of these women's netball experiences to the reader. Therefore, as Sparkes (2002) supposes "ethnographers do not need to reach a precise, definitive, singular truth in order to have something useful to say" (p. 55).

The arguments of influential scholars in the field of qualitative research and narrative inquiry (e.g. Garratt & Hodkinson, 1998; Reissman, 1993; Rinehart, 1998; Sparkes, 2002) proved particularly useful when problematising the issue of interpretive validity in this study. Although the validity of research has caused much debate among those of differing fields of inquiry, important distinctions between the aims and objectives of research makes a singular definition of validity impossible. Garratt and Hodkinson (1998) question the objectivist definition of validity in relation to assessing the plausibility of subjectivist and personal accounts. Suggesting instead that it may be useful to ask different questions such as; is this research believable based on our own experiences? Interestingly, such questions further privilege the idea of subjectivity.

In defence of attacks on the validity of narrative, Riessman (1993) suggests that a personal narrative is not supposed to be read as an exact representation of what happened, nor is it meant to mirror the world out there. Therefore it is "needless to say, when standard traditional criteria of what makes a good "scientific" or "realist" telling are applied, then [narrative] will always disappoint" (Sparkes, 2002, p. 193). In light of these arguments Rinehart (1998) suggests that it may be useful to borrow criteria to judge the authority of qualitative accounts from the arts rather than pure science and therefore in terms of pragmatism and effectiveness. My own study can be judged in these terms. Aiming to privilege the voices of some New Zealand women and to contextualise their experiences of netball within broader social, cultural and political developments, my research does not aim to draw conclusions about the nature of all women's experiences. Rather, I argue that the representation of data from four focus groups, rich with participant quotes, provides a window into one dimension of their lives at a particular moment in time. The representation of this data does not represent a single 'truth' about women's experiences in netball, but rather provides a few key insights into how a select number of women have experienced netball in their everyday lives. In so doing, this research builds on the existing

knowledge of women's involvement in this sport by giving voice to their unique experiences.

Summary

Methodological decisions and approaches in this research were underpinned by a poststructural feminist theoretical perspective. The combination of intergenerational research, focus groups and the use of contextual narratives to present my data, align with the tenets of this particular theoretical framework and provided a means to investigate women's experiences of netball and the affects of time, context and social change. The decisions made regarding theoretical and methodological approaches in this study reflect the words of Smith (1989) who suggests that "an interpretive researcher... can only choose to do some things as opposed to others based on what seems reasonable, given his or her interests and purposes, the context of the situation, and so on" (as cited in Sparkes, 1992, p. 30). Therefore, the methods I have chosen and the presentation of my data represent my own reflexive interpretation and analysis of issues surrounding the complex nature of experience and how to capture this adequately.

The following chapter demonstrates how the interaction of theory and methodology has enabled me to capture the lived netball experiences of some New Zealand women. Here I present my findings from the four focus groups and bring the voices of the participants in this study into conversation with context.

Netball in the Lives of New Zealand Women: Four Generations

Building on the contextual analysis of the history of netball and feminism in New Zealand in Chapter One and the research surrounding women's sporting and netball experiences reviewed in Chapter Two, this chapter explores the findings from four focus groups with New Zealand women who have played or continue to play netball during four distinct historical periods. While differences and similarities can be observed between women and across generations, these patterns will be explored further in Chapter Five. In this chapter however, I explore some of the complexities and nuances evident within each generation separately. Adopting a feminist perspective, I explore these women's experiences in regards to their emerging involvement as young netball players, their involvement in the netball culture and their experiences of withdrawal (or contemplation of withdrawal). In so doing I provide a generational view of the affects of feminism and broader socio-cultural, political, economic and technological forces affecting women's netball experiences. In an effort to privilege the voices of these women, their 'stories' of netball are told using numerous participant quotes from the focus groups. While these women's experiences are not indicative of all New Zealand women's experiences of netball, they do offer fresh insights into the New Zealand netball culture during various historical moments.

Netball in the Lives of New Zealand Women in the 1940's

In this section I analyse Betty and Shirley's netball² experiences during the 1940's, bringing to the fore the increasing visibility of women during this era and revealing some of the significant social pressures (e.g. appropriate femininity, domestic and familial obligation) experienced by women during this time. In so doing, this section begins with an analysis of their initial involvement, detailing

² Although, the sport now known as 'netball' was officiated as 'basketball' during the 1940's, both Betty and Shirley predominantly refer to their participation in netball. As a result I have chosen to use the term netball to describe the sport that they engaged in. To avoid confusion, the terms 'basketball' and netball' should be regarded synonymously and treated as referring to the same sport where the experiences of netball in the 1940's are represented.

their motivations and some of the constraints and supports acting on their participation. Secondly Betty and Shirley's 'lived' experiences of the netball culture are examined followed by their withdrawal and the social pressures acting on their opportunities for continued participation.

The Emergence of a 'Netballer': Finding Time and Space to Play

Like many other young women growing up in this era, Betty and Shirley's sporting opportunities were limited to a few sports and by little time allocated for participation. In many cases, netball was the only option for winter sport participation, and thus was a popular activity among young women during the 1940's. As Shirley recalls, many young women embraced netball with enthusiasm, with some women organising their own teams:

We just talked about starting up a netball team and we thought we'd have a go. We really wanted to play a sport and have a bit of exercise, you know. So netball was really the only option.

Contrastingly, Betty took up netball later in her youth despite the opportunities available for participation in schools during this time. Her motivations were primarily social. Leaving school at 15, Betty began playing netball in her adolescence, because she enjoyed "being part of a group and the enjoyment and the giggling that used to go on."

With much of the New Zealand population living in rural communities and transport relatively rudimentary, combined with the domestic obligations facing women, it appears that many young girls craved social interaction and social fulfilment as well as opportunities to participate in sport. These needs were often met through participation in netball as Betty explains:

In those days [netball] was an outlet to be with everybody because you went to school and nobody was allowed to come home after school. You had your jobs to do... You went to school, you had your friends at school and that was it.

The opportunities for social interaction created by netball participation during this time were important due to the strict nature of home life and also due to the isolation of rural living because "out in the country you see you never had company" (Shirley).

Like many other young women growing up in this era, Betty and Shirley experienced considerable gender inequalities in all social fields, including the

home, school and sport (Hargreaves, 1993; Paul, 1993; Simpson, 2001). As the following comments suggest, the patriarchal family structure dictated women's behaviour during the 1940's limiting Betty and Shirley's opportunities for participation in netball:

Oh yes you had to tow the line! There was no nonsense, if Mum and Dad said no they meant no! You had your jobs to do before you went [to netball] and Saturday morning was the big wash day...there was the old copper and the scrubbing...and then the big veranda had to be scrubbed with sand soap. And look out if you left any streaks on it (laughs). (Betty)

That's right...Sometimes I was coming home from primary school and helping to milk...I had my jobs to do before [netball]...there would always be a job to do...You know, tidy up in the house, or if there was windows to be cleaned or anything, any work like that. Yes you had to do your share. (Shirley)

As a result, women's sporting experiences were often temporary distractions from their familial and domestic responsibilities. Participating on borrowed time, women's leisure and physical pursuits were always secondary to their household obligations.

In addition to the household obligations that limited women's recreation and leisure opportunities, technological constraints also made access difficult. Both Betty and Shirley described experiencing difficulties accessing netball due to limited transportation. According to Shirley:

Our parents never stopped us going out and playing sport. There were times when it was quite hard... We used to catch the 1 o'clock bus...we had to bike 4 miles to catch this bus ...So we had 4 miles on the bike and 4 miles on the bus...I mean we weren't taxied around in a car. It was the old bike in those days (laughs).

With few alternatives, women worked hard to create time and to travel to netball but "it was either that or stay home" proclaimed Betty.

As young women growing up and experiencing netball in the 1940's, Betty and Shirley's experiences of their initial involvement in this sport were greatly affected by changing notions of femininity, restrictive women's roles and feminine oppression, dominant masculinity, travel constraints and financial hardship, which were prevalent during the 1940's. Such forces also affected their participation in the game of netball itself as well as the broader netball culture during this time.

Women in Action: Negotiating Appropriate Femininity

The composition of teams and the dynamics of netball during the 1940's were relaxed, prioritising participation and social interaction over competition, with many teams consisting of friends and family and women with varying abilities. In addition, the culture of netball during this time also reflected the needs of women, encouraging inclusivity rather than exclusivity and highlighting aspects of team spirit and social interaction within and between teams:

You were all friends before the game, playing against other teams... they would wait for us [to cycle in]. It was terrific, you can see the spirit that there was...it was a lovely atmosphere because if somebody had biked in I'd say "well I'll stand down this Saturday so they can have a turn." It wasn't a matter of putting your best team on. (Betty)

Despite the emphasis on participation and social interaction during the 1940's, female participants still enjoyed competition. "We played to win every time" insisted Betty who explained that despite the amateur nature of the game, competition was still very much an important and enjoyable aspect of netball during this era. While support was rarely evident at games "because they [parents] didn't do it [attend games] much in those days" (Shirley), Betty and Shirley both described receiving support from their parents, particularly their fathers. A plethora of research has explained the significance of parents in contemporary young people's sport participation (e.g. Brustad, 1996; Brustad & Partridge, 2002; Greendorfer, Lewko & Rosengren, 1996), and particularly of fathers in girl's sport participation (Lewko & Greendorfer, 1978; Greendorfer, Lewko & Rosengren, 1996). Supporting the literature, Betty and Shirley described the importance of their parents support for developing a sense of value in their netball participation. According to Betty:

Dad was very supportive...I'd want to do the scissor jump which was common in those days, especially in the goal area...and if I could do the scissor jump nine times out of ten I could reach up and I could hook a ball. Dad used to put a mark up on the wall and he'd have a ruler, "now go, jump girl, jump" he'd say. Dad loved his sports you see and that really did help me a lot. (Betty).

Although women's participation in netball during the 1940's was largely self-motivated, gaining little attention from broader society, some women received support from various sources (e.g. parents, the broader community) which often facilitated their enjoyment and opportunities in this sport.

Women's sport and recreation remained a low priority in broader society, and thus, spaces for such pursuits were often limited. Practicing in the main street due to spatial limitations, Betty experienced significant community support throughout her participation in netball:

The publican used to put his lights on in the hotel and on the outside, Mr. Turner who had one of those shops that sold absolutely everything, he'd put his lights on (laughs) and there was the light that went over the railway line... But we had no court, but then after a while the community of Otane said "we're going to build these girls a netball court."

Such community support was vital during a time where women's sport remained marginalised and largely unsupported in broader New Zealand society.

In accordance with the social expectations surrounding women's behaviour and dress evident during the 1940's, women's netball uniforms reflected perceptions of appropriate femininity:

We had the gym frocks. They were like school uniforms you know with the three pleats ... The pleats all had to be tidy and you all had to be the same length... four inches kneeling... You felt good... It was all very regimented... I don't think anybody ever had to be reprimanded because you took pride in your sport. (Betty)

Netball uniforms were not particularly functional: "the long navy uniform and long white sleeves and long black stockings... could be very hot" and often constrained women's participation, recalled Shirley. As discussed in Chapter One, broader social and economic changes prior to the 1940's influenced women's netball uniforms. These changes were welcomed by Shirley who enjoyed wearing "white tennis shoes and white sockettes, just little ones." As restrictions over the exposure of women's bodies lessened during this period of financial hardship, some women embraced new freedoms to reveal a little more flesh than had been previously accepted (McKergow, 2000).

Despite some changes in regards to women's attire, generally women's participation in netball continued to reflect notions of appropriate feminine behaviour and remained disciplined, regimented and physically confining. Both Betty and Shirley described the game as highly disciplined in terms of movement on the court. Betty recalled, we had to "do three moves in each third... Three passes and no stepping of course" because "you couldn't move... you had that little confined area." Strict rules limited the physicality of the game; women's

movements were small with little or no physical contact such that the game upheld social perceptions of appropriate feminine behaviour.

Due to the social nature of netball and the technological constraints evident during this time, coaches and trainings were often unnecessary or supplementary aspects of the game. As a focus was placed on participation rather than competition, the role of coaches and the function of trainings were minimal and often only existed to facilitate opportunities for exercise:

I had a [coach] who would bike in and coach us... We just used to practice, you know, running in and out, running and skipping and jumping, spreading our hands and doing these sorts of exercises. You know, generally keeping fit... (Betty)

The isolation of rural living during this time also significantly influenced the presence of trainings and coaches as Shirley indicated:

Well to my knowledge I can't remember anybody coaching us! No we had no trainings... I think we sort of just got this team by ourselves. And I think transport had a lot to do with it, you know, to get there and that when you were out in the country was quite hard.

Despite the lack of coaching and difficulties accessing time and space for netball, the support and encouragement experienced by both Betty and Shirley from parents and community members was a positive influence on their enjoyment of netball and shows significant social progress in terms of women's recognition in sport. Despite such support, the social expectations and pressures on women in society, the family and the home continued to restrict women's participation and often initiated withdrawal.

Leaving the Game: Netball for Young, Single Women Only

As social pressures continued to limit women's participation in sport and netball more specifically during the 1940's, women's participation outside of school and into adulthood was often heavily contested. As Betty explains, many young women were expected to withdraw from netball as soon as they married:

It wasn't the done thing for a married woman to play basketball... after I was married I never went up and watched the games then because you had children coming along and we'd just built a new home and helping with the grounds and things like that. It just faded away. My husband played rugby and cricket and as I say the woman's place was in the home in those days (laughs)... the mother had to be home to have that meal on the table.

Reflecting the inequity of men and women during this era, men's participation in sport was permitted to continue long into marriage while the continued participation of women was looked to as a deliberate challenge to notions of appropriate femininity. Married women were expected to prioritise familial and domestic roles over sport and recreation.

Yet, marriage was not the only reason some young women withdrew from sport. As Shirley described, the technological difficulties women experienced accessing netball during this time and the lack of support many young women received, often meant some teams simply disbanded. Although Shirley would have liked to have formed or joined new teams and sports, rural isolation and inequalities existing between men and women, especially in terms of leisure time, restricted her participation:

Our team just broke up. They went their own separate ways... there weren't enough [players] to make another team. I would have liked to have played tennis and I did go down a bit. But then my brother who was helping Dad [with the milking] used to seem to want that day off, and who would have to fill in but me...that's boys for you isn't it? (laughs)

Despite withdrawing for different reasons and under unique circumstances, both Betty and Shirley's withdrawal from netball can be attributed to the gendered social expectations acting on women during this period, particularly social, domestic and familial expectations as well as the expectations of feminine role fulfilment.

Netball in the Lives of New Zealand Women in the 1970's

Rose, Sue and Susanna's experiences of netball demonstrate the diversity and complexity that existed in women's sporting experiences during the 1970's. With the sentiments of second wave feminism in mind, this section describes Rose, Sue and Susanna's initial experiences of becoming involved in netball, followed by a discussion of their experiences playing the game and being involved in the netball culture. I conclude with an analysis of their withdrawal from netball and the associated factors that initiated this response.

The Emergence of a Netballer: 'It's just what Girls Did'

Second wave feminists had made headway encouraging greater equality for women in sport during the late 1960's and into the 1970's such that young women

in the 1970's were starting to benefit from the structural changes they had fought so hard to initiate. As women's opportunities in sport were broadening, the visibility of the active, female sporting body also grew in many Western countries, including New Zealand.

In New Zealand, netball was highly regarded as a popular sport for females, in fact "netball was always put up there on a pedestal. Not like rugby, but it was always New Zealand's ultimate sport for girls" (Rose). As opportunities for women's sport participation increased during this time, "sport was a huge thing... I think because everyone [played]" (Rose). The increasing diversity of players during this period was in vast contrast to previous generations including the 1940's, where sport and netball more specifically were confined to a narrow demographic.

As women's opportunities to participate in sport were increasing, many women were socialised into the netball culture during their childhood:

I came from a family of rep Aunts who played basketball. So yeah they were great encouragement...I remember going away and seeing their black gym frock and thinking "I want to be like them"...If there were games to be watched we were out there supporting and watching the older ones and probably always wanting to be like them. (Rose)

This comment suggests that unlike previous generations, local women became role models to younger generations, inspiring their involvement in this sport.

Although the ways in which the participants in this study became involved in netball varied, these women all recalled thoroughly enjoying their netball experiences. Participating for multiple reasons, it appears women's social needs were often a primary motivation:

I was a social bunny so [playing netball] was always a way to go out with other people, meet people. I made some really, really neat friends through netball and I met lots of interesting people that I would never have crossed paths with if I didn't play netball. (Rose)

Motivated largely by the opportunity to have "relationships with people that you wouldn't normally meet or have anything to do with" (Sue), the participants in this study relished the opportunity for social interaction which is supported by an array of literature on sport (e.g. Recours, Souville & Griffet, 2004; Reed & Cox, 2007) and netball more specifically (e.g. Hodge & Zaharopoulos, 1992). However, learning new skills and demonstrating physical competence were also key motivations for some women as Susanna explained:

[I enjoyed] just playing the game. It's what you loved, you know you loved netball so you were out there doing it again and getting your combinations right. (Susanna)

Yet, female athletes in the 1970's were still expected to perform displays of athleticism deemed appropriate for women. Although women's opportunities were indeed broadening, the underlying assumption regarding women's participation in sport during this time was that female sports participants did so whilst conforming to traditional and stereotypic notions of femininity:

[Netball] was what girls did...From the boys' perspective, they played rugby, we played netball. So I think it was just what girls did. (Susanna)

For Sue, notions of femininity restricted her involvement in sport such that the "only sport for girls was netball. There was no choice. If you weren't playing netball you weren't playing sport."

Despite increasing numbers of New Zealand women participating in netball during the 1970's (Nauright & Broomhall, 1994) and the socialisation of young women into the netball culture, access to this sport remained difficult. Travel constraints still appeared to hinder many New Zealand families during this time as incomes were often low and families were large. As a result, multiple forms of transportation were employed to assist with access to netball. For example, Rose would "walk 3kms to the Onekawa netball courts", whereas Susanna's parents drove her and Sue tended to cycle to netball practices and games.

Women in Action: From Games in Tunics to Trials in Short Skirts

Despite continuing constraints regarding accessibility, second wave feminism increased women's opportunities in sport throughout this time as a result of increases in the social and political activity of females. Such developments influenced the dynamics and structure of netball during this era as well as affecting women's experiences of the New Zealand netball culture. Progressing from a participation-based to a competitive sport, netball began to meet the changing sporting needs of New Zealand women during the 1970's as they gained more authority in other areas of life.

In accordance with broader changes in New Zealand netball during this time, Rose, Sue and Susanna experienced changes in uniform. Reflecting broader

developments in women's opportunities to display the athletic feminine body, such changes were welcomed by many young netballers as uniforms became more functional and fashionable to the player:

I started in a gym [frock], a black, heavy tunic...so I was only in that gym for a couple of years. But then we went to those skirts. That was huge!...And they were short too, because we went from say the gym which was not long, it was above our knee, but these skirts seemed to be short... oh we thought we were posh! (Rose)

The increased functionality and aesthetics of netball uniforms during this time was a positive development in the eyes of most young participants who "remember the freedom, thinking "oh my God", it didn't feel like we had anything on" (Rose). The distinction between sports and school uniforms was a positive change also as "[it was] special, you'd made a team and this was my team uniform... You had something special to wear" (Sue). However, the changes in uniform that occurred during this time not only reflected the broader social developments of femininity and women's rights during this time, but they also coincided with the changing dynamics and structure of netball.

As the number of women participating continued to increase and the sport gained more attention at the local, regional and national level, netball became more competitive, strategic and results driven:

You definitely had your selections and you trialled and you got put into different teams. That was a big thing, you know you were aiming high and if you didn't get in you had to cope with that. (Susanna)

As teams became selected and a greater emphasis was placed on ability, the dynamics of netball teams also began to change. Such changes increased the competition associated with netball and the privilege of making a team as "trials were pretty tough" (Rose).

With competition and performance becoming increasingly important within the netball culture "netball was alive and humming" (Rose), and as Sue expressed, she was motivated by "being a part of a team environment...[playing] my best because we wanted to win". It was her "love of the game" which increased her commitment and often enjoyment.

Due to the increased emphasis on competition and success in netball during the 1970's, the roles of coaches and the functions of trainings were also

changing. As a result, the expectations placed on coaches by players in terms of knowledge and skill broadened:

Our coach was young, in her mid twenties, unmarried, and was enthusiastic about sport and netball in particular. She was supportive...bearing in mind that we were used to having nuns in black habits...totally different to any teacher we had had before. She was competitive...She taught aggression...she added that competitive edge. She taught us that although it was fun to play, winning was good. (Sue)

Meeting the needs of young players and a changing netball culture, coaches were perceived by the participants in this study to have played a more significant role in the netball and broader sporting culture during this time, as did team trainings. Focusing more on “talking about positioning and how the game was going to flow” as Susanna suggested, training sessions became more focused on technique, skill development and strategy. In contrast to previous generations, netball was becoming increasingly focused on competition and outcome. Although trainings were run at the discretion of coaches, they were typically organised with transport and time constraints in mind. Training “during the lunch hour” (Rose) suited many families as buses and restricted transportation often limited women’s access to sport. Such strategies meant that it was easier for the team “to get together for practice and [train] until it was almost like clockwork!” (Sue).

In Rose, Sue and Susanna’s experiences, community support was integral to the development of the game during this period. As netball gained credibility locally, more and more people turned out to support and encourage female netball participants:

When I was playing for Waipawa...we made it to the finals... it was massive...all of Central [Hawkes Bay] sort of turned out because it was a final...there were so many people. I’ve never forgotten it, you couldn’t get a park for miles. (Rose)

As Rose’s comments suggest, netball was a popular spectator sport among communities. Reflecting the increasing status of women’s sport during this era, the presence of sideline support for netballers was growing. As a result, many parents supported their daughters’ netball participation. Susanna remembered her mum watching her, “often [she] was sitting in the car...but she was there”. While Rose described receiving far less family support especially during her high school years, she found the relationships with team-mates to offer important social support: “being in a team was like being in a family.” For Susanna, community

and family were instrumental in assisting and encouraging her prolonged involvement in netball:

There would be support on the sidelines when I was playing as a more mature woman...Husbands, kids, mother (laughs)...The support was invaluable...At times I had my own little support team on the sidelines.

While women's sport received little recognition within broader society during this time, at the local level, communities and families often encouraged and supported female participants.

Despite the increasing visibility of women in various social spheres (e.g. education workforce) and the increasing number of women participating in netball at various levels ranging from primary schools to elite competition, the visibility of netball in the media remained low:

For us to enjoy netball we had to go and watch it because netball wasn't on television, it was rarely written up in papers either, our draws might be in there and maybe when we were selected for reps you might get a photograph in the paper, but not really. I remember there was quite a drive, probably being strong feminists ourselves coming through that era, we would say "why isn't there a write up about our netball?" (Rose)

As Rose's comments indicate, the marginalisation of women and netball in mainstream media and society frustrated some women, especially those who subscribed to the assumptions of feminism during this time. With the growth of second wave feminism during this period, some women began to question the equality existing in sports as well as between the sexes. Such marginalisation confirmed feminist sentiments which challenged women's inferiority and the inequity that existed between males and females in broader society as well as in sport. Seeking alternatives to the current male model of sport, some women during this time questioned the practices and policies of sport in regards to organisation, media coverage and funding allocations.

Where previous generations had been affected by limited opportunities to engage in sports, second wave feminism facilitated women's opportunities to play netball and experience leisure after marriage and later into life. As a result, Rose, Susanna and Sue continued their participation into adulthood. However, this was not always supported by younger generations of women. As increases in participation rates caused a need for integrated grades consisting of a variety of age groups, stereotypes surrounding older women's participation became apparent:

[W]hen I was older playing netball... The young girls were very surprised if you beat them, in fact thrashed a lot of them. They couldn't believe that these 'old girls' could play such a good game of netball. (Susanna)

Demonstrating the misconception of age-based sporting practices, such sentiments echo broader ideas surrounding sport, elitism and the 'able-bodied' (Obel & Kerr, 2007; Ryan, 2008), which in this case appears to be defined by stereotypes surrounding age and ability.

The rise of second wave feminism saw vast changes in terms of the broader culture of New Zealand netball including women's image and the nature of the game. In addition, increasing opportunities for women's sport participation during this period presented interesting challenges to stereotypes of the potential of the older female athlete. However, increasing numbers of women continued their involvement with increasing levels of support. In so doing, many women playing netball during the 1970's and in some instances into the 1980's, 1990's and the 21st century, faced multiple challenges as they attempted to combine sport participation, family and work. Although familial support was high for some women during this time, social pressures (e.g. work, education, family) and limited social progress in terms of gender role shifts forced some women to withdraw their participation.

Leaving the Game: 'Juggling' Multiple Roles and Injured Bodies

As women's opportunities increased in multiple social spaces, the pressure on and workload of women during the 1970's changed. With women participating more fully in a variety of different pursuits (education, the workforce, sport) in addition to fulfilling domestic and familial roles, the idea of the 'double shift' emerged (Beckwith, 1992), which constrained women's leisure time significantly. This idea was reiterated by Rose, who despite experiencing support, discontinued her involvement at forty years of age due to increased social expectations:

I had a supportive family, but I stopped once our eldest started playing Saturday netball. Only because I couldn't juggle it, it was me really... I loved it but I couldn't do the juggling. But I was back at work... and something had to give and I thought "oh well it's going to have to be that."

Although Rose struggled with her increasing roles in multiple social spaces, other women successfully negotiated these changes, including Susanna who withdrew at forty-seven years of age:

When I was playing I had my children all playing so I would normally see their primary games and then go off to my own netball in the afternoon...I decided I was going to play netball because I still saw enough of the kids' sport for it to be Ok in my head to do something for myself...My husband happily took charge of the children.

Indicating signs of broader social shifts in gender relations, some men during this time took on more prominent roles in the home and in the family (Coverman, 1985), although research suggests, despite the increasing presence of women in the workplace and other social spaces this has been slow to change (e.g. Rexroat & Shehan, 1988). Subtle changes like these enabled some women to become more visible in areas such as sport, and as Susanna's experience indicates, often facilitated women's prolonged involvement in netball.

While social pressures, particularly in relation to motherhood, continued to restrict some women participating in netball into adulthood during the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's, Sue's withdrawal was due to the changing physical demands of netball. As netball became an increasingly competitive sport during these decades, as a twenty-three year old she struggled to meet the increasing physical expectations on the body of competitive players:

I had two weak ankles that just kept swelling, which meant pretty much give up. I had weeks and weeks of physio[therapy] and every time I played they just kept swelling. So it was a matter of, this is time...I would have liked to have carried on... it just wasn't going to happen, it was just one of those things you had to come to terms with.

Withdrawing for multiple and complex reasons at various stages in the life-course, Rose, Susanna and Sue's prolonged participation in netball was both fulfilling and challenging. Supported and constrained by multiple factors, it appears that women participating during this time faced new challenges as women's opportunities in sport and society more broadly expanded to accommodate the rising visibility and authority of women during this time.

Netball in the Lives of New Zealand Women in the 1990's

Hannah, Libby and Sheldine's experiences of netball during the 1990's provide insights into the complex lives of young women during this era. More specifically their experiences offer examples of the developing image-related and athletic pressures on young athletes. In line with previous generations, the following discussion explores these young women's experiences of initial involvement,

playing the game and the netball culture of this era, as well as their experiences of withdrawal.

The Emergence of a Netballer: The Appeal of Netball for the Good ‘Kiwi Girl’

In the light of feminist tensions during the 1990’s, women’s opportunities and identities in sport were diversifying. During this time, the sporting opportunities and experiences of these participants appear reflective of both firmly embedded appropriations of traditional femininity and challenges to these.

As netball remained the most popular sport for New Zealand women (Nauright & Broomhall, 1994), some women during this time were drawn to netball because “the older girls all played” (Libby). Acting as role models, the participation of older girls from within schools and peer and family groups often enhanced the likelihood of younger women’s participation. Much like previous generations, the social aspects of netball participation also enticed young players into the game:

All the people in my team weren’t people that I’d hang out with at school but they were all real cool so it was quite cool hanging out with them like that. (Hannah)

Yeah I enjoyed the social part of it...because you’re playing with people you’re not really friends with. That’s what made me want to be involved. (Libby).

Unlike previous generations, parents played a large part in the emergence of these young netballers during this time. As many of the travel constraints that had hindered previous generations disappeared, numerous young netballers relied on their parents for access to and support at games. Living “45 minutes from town”, Libby’s parents drove her to netball every Saturday. Hannah recalls “a lot of dedication [from her parents]” who drove children to and from netball and provided sideline support during games. According to Cashmore and Goodnow (1986), parental support for their children’s physical pursuits became more of a vested interest during the latter part of the 20th century as youth sporting success was reported to reflect parental ability. Therefore, as young women’s opportunities to participate increased during this time, parents became more visible as facilitators of such opportunities.

Although the status of women was continually being challenged in broader society as well as in sport during the 1990’s, many traditional notions of

femininity remained. Despite the murmurings of third wave feminism and its subsequent challenges to traditional meanings of femininity and the expansion of women's sporting choices during the 1990's (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003; Thorpe, 2008b), neither Hannah, Libby or Sheldine experienced such opportunities during their childhoods. According to Hannah, netball was perceived to be "the normal thing for a girl....the 'New Zealand girls' sport." Therefore, netball remained a popular sport among many young women including all three participants who began to play netball in their childhoods:

There was only like 40 kids at my primary school so we had two netball teams. I think that's why I started at 6, because they needed more players because we could only just make a netball team up... There were no other sports to play. (Libby)

As lingering notions of traditional femininity often dictated the sports available to young women during the 1990's, it appears that there was little sporting choice for this group of women until much later in their youths. Initiated by third wave feminism, broadening definitions of femininity provided opportunities during the 21st century for these young women to engage in sports that had traditionally been 'unacceptable' for young women. These included "basketball, athletics and summer hockey" (Libby), "soccer" (Hannah), "lacrosse and rifle shooting" (Sheldine). Despite the expanding sporting options available to these young women, netball remained significant in their lives and an important site for demonstrating physical prowess as stereotypes surrounding "butch" (Libby) hockey and soccer players remained throughout this time.

Women in Action: Aggressive, Athletic Women, and Competitive Parents

As women were becoming increasingly visible as a result of opportunities facilitated by structural changes in education, employment and legal support, the social pressures (e.g. performance, body image, parental expectations) acting on women during the 1990's were becoming more evident in sport. Although third wave feminism "began speaking for itself in the early 1990's" (Thorpe, 2008b, p. 213) these young women appear to have experienced netball almost between two waves of feminism as notions of traditional femininity lingered despite third wave sentiments attempting to redefine feminine practices in sport.

As the physically active female body began to be celebrated during the 1990's, netball uniforms changed continuously to reflect the changes in

athleticism, physicality and aggression of netball as well as an increasing emphasis on the heterosexual feminine image in sport. Libby recalls beginning in a “red polo T-shirt and those black skirts with the pleats and the flat front”, before changing to “plain blue skirts and a netball top” or dresses during her high school years. Libby recalled the changing perceptions regarding the exposure of the female body in netball suggesting “no one really cared how short our skirts were...we could take them up if we wanted to”.

As some young women embraced increasing opportunities to celebrate the female form, others struggled with issues surrounding appropriate feminine image in sport. During this time, the way some young women wore their netball uniforms reflected the conflict surrounding the ‘ideal image’ of the female athlete and particularly the netball player during the late 1990’s. As images of female athletes embracing both their physicality and femininity became more widespread and celebrated in New Zealand and across the Western world, some female netball players experimented with the representation of their own sporting bodies. Embracing opportunities to expose their bodies, some young women “just rolled the top of their skirt up so it was quite short” (Libby). Although some celebrated new opportunities, others were conflicted by lingering notions of traditional femininity and social pressures to embody a new found athleticism. As a result, some women of this era experienced tensions combining sport, athleticism and femininity. Placing emphasis on an athletic rather than feminine identity in netball, Hannah described the ideal netballer, suggesting; “hair up in a bun, no makeup. Like you’re there to play netball. I think you should look fit”.

As opportunities for women to demonstrate physical prowess increased throughout the 1990’s, netball became more aggressive, competitive and elite. “I’ve heard people say that like netball’s not an aggressive sport, and stuff like you don’t get rough in netball but it’s so not true” explained Libby, dispelling the preconceptions and stereotypes surrounding the nature and dynamics of contemporary netball. In fact these young women supported such changes, enjoying the fact that “New Zealanders play aggressive netball” (Sheldine) and “being able to take out your aggression on your partner” (Libby). In contrast to women of previous generations who were physically confined during their netball participation, some young women suggested “if [aggression] is done right it’s done with a certain style, it makes you a better player” (Sheldine). Such

sentiments were shared by all participants from this focus group who relished the opportunity to be aggressive and showcase their physicality on court.

Appreciating the changes in the dynamics of netball and enjoying the opportunity to demonstrate physical prowess, it seems that some women welcomed more physically demanding and competitive netball during this time. Accordingly, the roles of coaches and practices became instrumental in training mental as well as physical strategies and performance skills, as Hannah explained:

In high school we did stuff [at trainings] I'd never done before and that was like all the zoning and that kind of stuff... and actually working the whole court as a team instead of just working pass by pass... we'd actually like sit down for about 20 minutes before we even got into practice.

Despite enjoying the increased competition and physicality associated with netball throughout the 1990's, some women did not enjoy the increased performance pressure that ensued.

As expectations placed on young women in netball and sport more broadly grew, often parents placed increased pressure on young participants. Although parental support was enjoyed by most young netballers during this time, some parents appeared to be unwittingly adding to the social and performance pressures weighing on young netballers:

It was fine until they [parents on the sideline] started interfering...they'd try and tell you to do something that was totally the opposite to what your coach was telling you to do or what you're meant to do, or they didn't know what they were talking about. That was kind of frustrating!
(Sheldine)

Suggesting that "parents are way too competitive" (Hannah), these young women highlighted their frustrations in regards to parental sideline pressure, which is reflective of the shifts in competition and stakes of elite sport and netball more specifically. Such shifts have facilitated an increased emphasis on performance as opportunities to represent provinces, regions and even nations have become realities in youth sport, prompting increased adult attention and resulting pressure on young athletes (Wiggins, 1996). However, such pressure can be harmful. Brustad (1988) suggests that lower perceived parental pressure to excel in sport is associated with greater levels of youth enjoyment. This effect can be seen throughout the experiences of these young women whereby Hannah, Libby and Sheldine described feelings of inadequacy and strain on interpersonal

relationships. Such changes, in some instances, led to these young women's withdrawal from netball during this era.

Leaving the Game: 'I had a Bitch of a Coach'

With performance expectations increasing in netball during the 1990's, Hannah, Libby and Sheldine reported strain on interpersonal relationships. As a coach's role became more salient within the netball context, a positive coach-player relationship appears to have become vital for young women's enjoyment of the game. In Hannah's experiences, failure to upkeep such relationships and the ensuing conflict, resulted in her withdrawal from netball:

I had a bitch of a coach in high school (laughs). She like completely favoured the top players and tournament week was one example. I didn't play, got hardly any game time. I didn't talk to her after that, she was a dick! I haven't played since. That was the ruining moment of my netball career!

Similar sentiments were expressed by Libby who suggested "I'd rather coach now than play" as a result of her experience with negative coach-player interaction. Resulting in both these young women's withdrawal from netball, the negativity they experienced caused low motivation and decreased feelings of enjoyment.

In addition to conflict and the break down of interpersonal relationships, increased performance pressure also appears to result in some young women's withdrawal. A common finding in an array of research (e.g. Brustad, 1996; Robinson & Carron, 1982), such pressures can negatively affect women's enjoyment of sport and cause motivation to decrease. Sheldine's experiences of performance pressure caused her to distance herself from the netball culture. She "enjoyed rowing more than netball after a while" because of the increasing pressure placed on her to perform on the court. As a result, she sought a sport "where it was not based on a team", a sport where she could prove herself in terms of fitness and ability at the individual level. These feelings facilitated her withdrawal from netball and prompted her to look elsewhere in sport to fulfil the needs she had as an athlete.

Although some young women have had negative experiences during their participation in netball that have caused withdrawal, some have been motivated to return to the game. But both Hannah and Libby experienced difficulty re-entering the culture. Libby in particular experienced difficulty due to lack of confidence

brought about by her negative past netball experiences, and issues with accessibility. Feeling apprehensive about returning to netball because she did not know “how good everyone else was going to be”, Libby decided that re-entering the netball culture was too difficult and “too much effort”. Her continued withdrawal was also facilitated by an increase in opportunities outside of sport and netball more particularly. An increase in the sports and leisure pursuits available to women (e.g. yoga, Pilates, gym), and women’s increased opportunities in other areas (e.g. work, education, travel) during the 1990’s resulted in less time to devote to leisure and recreation. Therefore Libby’s educational commitments also hindered her participation as “uni takes up a lot of [her] time”.

The experiences of Hannah, Libby and Sheldine clearly demonstrate the detrimental effects of performance pressure and negative coach-player interaction. Additionally, their unique experiences as participants during the 1990’s bring to fore the increasing image related pressures facing female sports participants. While broader developments within the netball context (e.g. increased competition) are celebrated among many elite participants, these young women’s opportunities appear to have been compromised due to an emphasis on performance over participation and conflicted due to changing ideals of femininity.

Netball in the Lives of New Zealand Women in the Early 21st Century

Anneke, Chanel, Jeneva and Paris’ experiences of netball reveal the broader socio-cultural context of young women’s sport in New Zealand during the 21st century. Clearly exemplifying the interconnectedness of experience, time and context, these young women’s experiences as members of ‘Generation Y’ are unique to the era and context in which they live. Following the same structure as previous sections I explore these women’s initial socialisation into netball, followed by an examination of their experiences of being involved in the netball culture. Finally this part is concluded by a brief section that explores the factors that have lessened these young women’s motivation and caused them to contemplate withdrawal.

The Emergence of a Netballer: Getting ‘Girly’

With more young women participating in traditionally-defined masculine sports in the 21st century, the sporting options available to young women are increasing. As third wave feminism has altered the social construction of ideal femininity, some women are opting to deviate from traditionally feminine sports and are requiring less support in doing so. Such developments mean some young women are instead seeking new and exciting sports and thereby engaging in more physical pursuits such as “hockey and rugby” or “athletics” (Chanel). In contrast to previous generations, young women today are approaching sport with a sense of confidence and entitlement. Not only do they expect to play, they expect social and structural support. Yet, many are unaware of the struggles by women from previous generations to create such opportunities.

The increased confidence of women and the broader range of sports available to young New Zealand women during the 21st century provide more choice in terms of which sports to be involved in. However, the lingering stereotypes associated with traditional views of netball also appear to influence some women’s choices as their opportunities to demonstrate physicality increase. As Chanel pointed out, she distanced herself from the netball culture due to traditional views of netball as a feminine sport. “I thought [netball] was too girly. I was a real ‘tomboy’” explained Chanel in regards to her opposition to becoming involved in the sport during her childhood, despite parental support, access to coaching and spaces to practice and play at her school. Despite Chanel’s initial opposition to participating in netball, later in her life, peer pressure eventually facilitated her involvement because “everyone was trialling for netball”. Notwithstanding the challenges of third wave feminism to traditional femininity, it appears that Chanel in particular found it much easier to challenge appropriate femininity as a child. Acting as a “tomboy” and being involved in rugby and hockey, Chanel found that her sporting choices were not greatly contested. However, as an adolescent, her sporting choices were more important for identity construction. As a result “I got girly” reports Chanel, whose participation in netball as a teenager reflects Malcolm’s (2003) findings which suggest the image related pressures surrounding appropriate femininity and conformity, and its importance in early adolescence.

While Chanel opposed participating in netball during her childhood, other young women actively participated in this sport. Paris in particular recalled her early socialisation into this sport at the age of five, where she “always had a netball on [her], even at home” and was always practicing. Similarly, Anneke remembered the excitement she experienced as an emerging netballer during her childhood and how “everyone wanted to be a shooter or a centre because they got to go everywhere” on the court. The early socialisation of these women into participatory-based styles of netball where “no one knew the rules” (Jeneva) is an important distinction between earlier generations of women, who took netball up much later in their youth.

For this group of young women, some of whom are residents at a boarding school, the role of parents as facilitators for accessing netball appears to have diminished:

My parents don't really come as much, which sucks, but that's because they live, like away... I don't really need them though so it just feels normal (laughs). (Jeneva)

Exhibiting the independence that many young women in the 21st century possess as a result of technological advances meaning young women can now drive themselves to sport, Jeneva relies less on her parents and enjoys the netball experience on her own, which is in contrast to the previous generation. Reflective of the pressures already evident in a rapidly changing New Zealand netball culture, many young women view parental presence as added pressure to perform, feeling they have to “look good and make [parents] proud” (Anneke) in an already competitive and elite environment.

Women in Action: Getting your 'Strut on'

Due to their ages and status as active members of the netball culture, Anneke, Chanel, Jeneva and Paris' experiences as netball participants and young females during the 21st century appear to be influenced by a plethora of socio-cultural tensions. Therefore, their discussion of netball during 2010 focuses predominantly on issues surrounding the image, identity and status of women in netball.

Despite third wave feminists challenging the 'ideal' image of femininity in society and sport, and the celebration of the female sporting body, according to some young women, netball remains “a girl's sport so you should wear girl's clothing” (Anneke). Due to this, conflicts between athleticism and femininity

appear to remain an issue for these young women who recognise the tension and need to negotiate the issues and constraints of looking feminine while simultaneously being athletic and demonstrating physical prowess. Challenging the stereotypes of 'traditional femininity' in netball, these young women appear to have internalised social expectations to embody the new athletic ideal, as thin, toned, and thus competent:

If [netballers are] in full makeup you think why are they wearing that?...And you kind of think they're not good at netball...like if you saw a fat centre (laughs)...like usually a centre is kind of shorter and they look fast. (Anneke)

In addition to recognising the expectations of the athletic ideal, these young netballers used the opportunity provided by the focus group to express their frustration and anger regarding the ongoing sexualisation and objectification of women in netball:

I know some guys just go to check out some bums...Oh it's not nice! Well I don't know if they'd be checking me out or anything but it's not good. Well some girls do put themselves out there! Like hemming up their skirts (Jeneva)

In so doing, these young women resisted their athletic bodies being read as sexual texts by male spectators claiming "they [men] should be watching the sport!"(Jeneva). Although it wasn't revealed in the focus groups, it is interesting to consider whether these young women express similar feminist sentiments in other social spaces such as among their peers or in the school environment.

Clearly aware of the role that their uniforms play in the sexualisation of them as 'objects' as opposed to athletes, as well as the uniforms role in upholding their femininity, these women recognise the pressures and tensions of meeting the 'athletic heterosexual feminine ideal':

[We wear] a tight dress that shows your bum! I was self conscious about my body. Just because yeah, you're doing lots of jumping and stuff but yeah the dresses are alright now...got some nana undies (laughs). I was actually talking about this the other day, like why don't we just wear shorts and tshirt? I guess you wouldn't look like you've got your strut on, not as serious. (Jeneva)

Despite being reflexive of the issues surrounding feminine 'image' and the display of the female body in 21st century sport, these young women do in fact still perform it, albeit because of school sport uniform regulations.

As netball in the 21st century becomes more competitive and physical, and its participants become more agile, athletic and aggressive, these young women are uncertain of the changing dynamics and structure of netball in 2010. Unlike the 1990's participants who relished opportunities for aggression, these young women appear unsure of the current structure of netball and the increased physicality of this sport as integrated grades become vital to accommodate the diversity of participants in the 21st century:

We play clubs and a few schools, but mostly women...It's not very fun when there's cheating and stuff, it's not fair. (Paris)

I find that most of the, not to be mean or anything, but like the Maori teams they get very aggressive and they take you the player out, not the ball... it makes it a bit I don't know, not fun because you can get injured and stuff like that...It's scary sometimes because they [older women] don't like being beaten by school girls...there's a lot of shoving...It makes you kind of think you're not really playing a sport... (Jeneva)

In addition to emphasising the changing structure of netball in New Zealand and the tensions inherent in these young women's participation, such race and age-based comments highlight the need for more intersectional analyses of women's sporting/netball experiences that consider how various dimensions of identity-based inequalities (e.g. class, gender, culture, ethnicity) interact and are played out through sport.

The demanding nature of netball during the 21st century requires the need for more rigorous trainings and knowledgeable coaches. Engaging in "one training session with fitness...and another just like a court one" and appreciating that the "[coach] wants us to be organised" (Jeneva), all four young women recognised the required commitment to multiple organised team trainings as a result of the increasingly competitive nature of this sport.

Although netball has been recognised more fully as a competitive women's sport, it still does not have the status afforded to traditionally-defined masculine sports in New Zealand, such as rugby, which according to Paris is "New Zealand's image." This was a major concern for Anneke, Chanel, Jeneva, and Paris who highlighted the preoccupation of New Zealand sporting culture with the image of "dominant males" (Chanel) and how rugby promotes this, therefore receives more privilege in society and their own school:

Rugby is like a major New Zealand sport and like the All Blacks are pretty much celebrities so yeah...It's going to be like that in schools as

well...It's fine that [the 1st XV are] doing well and everything but they're like celebrities. They get a lot more privileges than what other sports would get. (Jeneva)

Shown here is these young women's critical recognition that netball and women's sport more broadly remains marginalised during the 21st century. As products of the third wave, it appears that these young women feel a sense of entitlement as neo-liberal discourses operate to promote a false sense of sporting equality within their school. In fact, according to Sabo & Messner (1993) such sexual politics are typical in high schools and reflect broader social trends and sex discrimination which highlights the perceived inferiority of women in sport and sports reinforcement of masculinity. However, as the focus group space was used primarily to vent frustrations and tensions, it is unclear whether these young women actively challenge or accept the marginalisation of netball outside of this space.

Leaving the Game: 'Oh I can't be Bothered'

Although all participants from this particular group remained involved in netball during the time of this study, many eluded to negative experiences which had caused them to contemplate leaving the netball culture. Much like the young women from the 1990's focus group, increased competition and pressures (e.g. performance, coach, parental, athletic) caused feelings of low motivation:

There have been a few times when I had to walk away from the team and just go and chill out for a minute (laughs)...[my relationship with my coach has] definitely changed my attitude...I don't like my team...I don't really want to play as much. (Chanel)

Seen here is a drop in motivation and connectedness to the team environment as well as feelings of withdrawal, which as the literature suggests is common in the instance of negative coach-player relationships (e.g. Brustad, 1996; Stewart & Taylor, 2000; Williams, 1998). During a time where young, privileged women have opportunities in various other social spheres (e.g. school, music, work) feelings of inadequacy in one social space can be replaced by feelings of achievement and belonging in another. Therefore, a supportive sporting environment becomes increasingly important to sustain women's participation.

In addition to experiencing interpersonal difficulty, it seems that some young women often experience the pressures of competitive netball and notice the

difference between the participatory style they were socialised into as children and the results driven nature of netball in their youth. Illustrating her awareness of such changes, Anneke suggested “at intermediate you started having trials and sorting out who was good”, which separated the culture of primary school netball from cultures of higher levels at intermediate and high school, placing increased pressure on some young netballers. In some instances, young women experience difficulty adjusting to such changes which increase the pressure as performance and winning became fundamental elements of their participation:

If you’re having like heaps of [losses] and everything and you try and you’re trying really hard in your trainings and everything...and then every game you just can’t win...That’s when you don’t want to go and you’re like “oh I can’t be bothered! (Jeneva)

Although withdrawal had only been considered in these circumstances it is important to note how changes in the netball culture coincide with the needs and wants of its female participants. It is evident from these responses that performance pressure and negative coach player relationships are not conducive to encouraging young women’s participation or a positive and supportive netball culture.

Summary

In this analysis of the lived experiences of female netballers in four different historical periods, it is clear that the broader socio-cultural context influences women’s opportunities, their pleasures and frustrations, the meanings of their experiences and also their interpretations of netball. While there are many similarities between the experiences of each generation, changes in the broader gender norms and values have significantly affected the way each generation has experienced, lived and discussed their netball participation. Although the women’s movement has considerably altered women’s opportunities in sport and society more broadly, there are many ongoing and new inequalities as traditional notions of appropriate femininity appear to be being replaced with new and equally problematic athletic feminine ideals that limit women’s sporting experiences and enjoyment. These broader changes will be further examined in the next chapter. In so doing I will draw upon appropriate literature to further examine changes in the perceived competence and ‘ideal’ image of the physically

active female body and women's different lived experiences and realities of the game, before summarising this study and providing directions for future research.

Netball in the Lives of New Zealand Women: An Intergenerational Discussion and Concluding Thoughts

In an effort to understand how broader social changes have influenced New Zealand women's experiences of netball, this chapter discusses some of the emerging themes from the four focus groups. In the previous chapter I examined women's unique understandings, interpretations and experiences of netball within each historical context. In this chapter, I discuss patterns and changes across generations in relation to two key themes that emerged from the focus groups. Firstly, I focus on the changing social constructions of femininity and the social perceptions of the female sporting body. Secondly, I examine the lived realities of female netballers from the 1940's to today, focusing particularly on changing, as well as ongoing, opportunities, constraints, tensions and frustrations. In so doing, I hope to bring these women's voices into 'conversation' and to identify some of the major changes, as well as commonalities in their netball experiences. Following this, I conclude with a summary of my thesis, including a review of the key findings and the implications of these. I also explore new avenues for future research which build upon findings presented in this study as well as providing final comments on the interdisciplinary nature of this study.

The Female Sporting Body

This section begins by discussing the changing social perceptions of the female sporting body. Following this, I explore the combination of femininity and athleticism in netball. Here, I discuss the increasingly physical nature of netball and the prioritisation of the feminine athletic 'ideal', and the assumed heterosexuality of its participants. During this discussion I point to the ways women's opportunities to construct and modify their own netball identities have changed over time.

Arguments concerning the capability and competence of the female body have significantly influenced women's sporting experiences, ranging from the medical and biological limitations of the female figure and social opinions regarding the unattractiveness of the physically active female form during the 19th century (Costa, 2003; Hargreaves, 1993 & 2002; Heywood & Dworkin, 2003; Theberge, 2000; Vertinsky, 1990 & 1994), to current neo-liberal expectations of women to take personal responsibility for their health via regular

exercise and sport participation (Dworkin & Wachs, 2009; Heywood, 2007). Although some privileged, upper-class women had been permitted to enter the realm of sports during the mid to late 19th century, the physically active female form has continued to be closely surveyed by men, the media and broader society (Choi, 2000; Duncan & Hasbrook, 2002; Hall, 1996; Messner, 2002).

According to many sport sociologists and historians, the physically active female body challenged traditional social constructions of femininity and gender which promoted women as weak and submissive; the emergence of the female athlete disrupted the gender order and challenged the male dominance of sport (Dworkin & Messner, 2002; Theberge, 2000). Cahn (1994) furthers this idea, suggesting that a strong female presence in sport undermines the assumed masculinity of athletic skills and disrupts the notion that sport belongs to males. Therefore, as women have become more visible in an array of feminine, traditionally masculine and gender neutral sports, broader shifts concerning the physical competence of the female body have increased women's agency in this social space. According to Kay and Jeanes (2008), the "freedom and strength that women have been shown to experience through sport has been linked to redefining previous boundaries of the body" (p. 147).

As my research reveals, similar trends are evident in netball. A sport governed and developed by women, netball has empowered many women, including a number of the women in this study, to create some of their own rules and boundaries surrounding the physically active female form. While the women of the 1940's generation were bound by strict notions of appropriate femininity that ensured young women conformed to social rules that restricted their opportunities to demonstrate physicality in sports, some women from other generations have actively challenged assumptions regarding the physically active female form. In particular, in the midst of the second wave feminist movement, some of the women who played during the 1970's and 1980's challenged the perceived boundaries of the female sporting body by participating into their 40's. In contrast to women of previous generations, who withdrew from netball as soon as they married, those playing during the 1970's and 1980's refused to conform to gendered expectations; they organised their work and family responsibilities and negotiated space and time with their husbands, in order to continue playing. Additionally, many of the younger women in this study have exceeded traditional

social expectations by competing in more physical and aggressive ways. Such developments echo broader socio-cultural progressions, whereby the governance and conformity of women has been replaced with expanding opportunities for females in multiple social spaces, including sport.

The Netball Body: Femininity and Athleticism in Women's Sport

As female athletes have continued to gain visibility in the media and society more broadly, the negotiation of various dimensions of identity (e.g. femininity, athleticism, and sexuality) has become increasingly contested (Krane, 2001). According to Dworkin (2008), U.S. society applauds the athletically strong and powerful female and views today's fit woman as embodying power and agency in a manner that challenges historic assumptions regarding the inferiority of the female sporting body. Similarly, Cahn (1994) suggests that contemporary definitions of femininity have evolved to embrace athleticism. However, the younger generations of participants in this study expressed concern regarding the pressures to reconcile often contradictory expectations regarding femininity and athleticism on the netball court. This idea is supported by Krane et al. (2004) who propose that because of the influence of 'hegemonic femininity', which is bound up in heterosexual sex, romance and appearance, sportswomen live a paradox of dual and duelling identities.

Prioritising the 'Feminine Athletic Ideal'

As ideals of femininity have changed, the opportunities for netballers to demonstrate physical prowess and athleticism have increased considerably in contrast to earlier versions of this sport in which female physicality was limited. As a result, netball has progressed from a game in the 1940's where upon landing with the ball "you couldn't move" (Betty, 1940's) to a sport now known as "a fast game" (Susanna, 1970's) where women can be seen "getting a bit rough" (Hannah, 1990's). Today, bodily contact is seen as part of the game and perceived by some to "make you a better player" (Sheldine, 1990's). In contrast, earlier versions of the game forced women to be "careful not to brush anybody with [their] uniforms" (Betty) and emphasised lady-like qualities. Although it appears that feminine aggressiveness, strength and even physical ability are still not wholeheartedly endorsed by wider society, the media and males, some of the

young women in this study applaud and justify these characteristics in sport and netball more specifically, suggesting “it’s alright to be aggressive for the game” (Hannah). Such sentiments regarding women’s enjoyment and legitimisation of physicality are echoed in much of the literature surrounding women’s participation in traditionally-defined masculine and gender neutral sports (e.g. Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar & Kauer, 2004; Chu et al., 2003; Lawler, 2002; Mennesson, 2000; Migliaccio & Berg, 2007). Moreover, the legitimisation of physicality and aggression in netball appears to coincide with changes in the ‘ideal’ image of the netballer.

The experiences of the women in this study highlight the shift from an emphasised feminine image to that of an athletic ideal in netball. Although netball is a sport oriented towards the perceived physical capabilities of females and has traditionally emphasised feminine traits (e.g. cooperation, teamwork, lady-like conduct), recent developments in the level of competition and visibility of the game, has meant contemporary netball players are negotiating contradictory social expectations and sporting requirements regarding athleticism and femininity. Where women of previous generations were negotiating conflicting identities as netballers, daughters, working women and/or mothers, women of younger generations report tensions surrounding the image of the netballer, uniform and body composition.

Issues surrounding the negotiation of the ‘ideal’ image of a netballer appear relevant in the lives of many of the women in this study. While all generations discussed the image of a netballer during each historical moment, ideals surrounding this image differed according to each generation. During the 1940’s the image of a netballer emphasised a traditional feminine ideal, such that netball players “had to be so neat” (Betty) and conscious of their feminine appearance. As social shifts began to change feminine ideals, some women during the 1970’s experienced and enjoyed opportunities to compete in a more physically demanding style of netball, whilst still enjoying the femininity the netball uniform and their participation in “New Zealand’s ultimate sport for girls” (Rose, 1970’s) afforded. However, as structural changes continued to increase the opportunities of women in sport and society more broadly, notions of femininity have continued to change, such that femininity and athleticism are being heralded as no longer mutually exclusive (Cahn, 1994; Messner, 2002).

Despite these changes, the young women from the 1990's and 2010 focus groups appear to have experienced difficulty reconciling expectations to be both feminine and athletic on the court. In so doing, these young women are opting to prioritise their athletic identities. Interestingly, women from the 1990's and 2010 focus groups articulated some resentment toward their peers who perform emphasised femininity and described these women as being 'shunned'. As Anneke (2010) explained, "if [women are] in like full makeup you think why are they wearing that?", while Chanel (2010) proclaimed "what the hell are they doing, do they know they're playing sport?" This idea is in contrast to the older generations who due to the male dominance of sport during the early and mid 20th century and strict social conventions regarding appropriate female behaviour, upheld social and cultural ideals of femininity evident during this time by being "very well behaved" (Shirley, 1940's) and conforming to "the rules" (Betty) surrounding emphasised femininity. The sentiments of the younger women in this study particularly echo the response of participants in Laurendeau and Sharara's (2008) study of female snowboarders and skydivers who "expressed annoyance with women who attempt to portray themselves as attractive" (p. 39) whilst participating in the extreme sports culture, believing that emphasising feminine traits and appearance detracts from physical skill. Similarly, one hockey player from Krane et al.'s (2004) study suggested that nobody was going to give her points for having her hair done. The young women in this study also believed "you're there to play netball" (Hannah) and suggested those who conform to a traditionally feminine ideal threaten their own credibility within the netball context.

As the findings from this study suggest, the exposure of the female body has been problematic for women in netball and society throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Restrictions regarding the exposure of the female body during the 1940's and early 1970's, forced women to participate wearing "long navy uniforms and long white sleeves" (Shirley), skirts that were "four inches kneeling" (Betty) and "really heavy tunics" (Sue, 1970's) which restricted women's movement, thus ensuring the maintenance of characteristics associated with traditional femininity. Today, netballers wear "dresses [that] just cover our arse" (Paris, 2010), which enable a full range of athletic movement, place the athletic female form on display and in some instances, prompt female body

anxiety. The developments of the uniform emphasise an embrace of once contradictory ideals, whereby broader social shifts have legitimised both the increased exposure of the female sporting body and the image of the athletic, physically capable woman. In vast contrast to the women of previous generations who “felt dressed” (Betty) in their netball uniforms and “knew better” (Shirley) than to reveal their bodies, the younger participants in this study who felt uncomfortable about the exposure new uniforms imposed on them, offered contradictory comments regarding the appropriate display of femininity and athleticism on the court. Of course, such comments highlight the cultural and context specific nature of the exposure of the female body whereby what it means to ‘reveal’ the female form has meant different things at different historical junctures. While young female netball players from the contemporary context appear to have more agency to display the body as they choose (e.g. rolling up their skirts), this does not necessarily translate into more empowering sporting experiences. In some cases, young women’s diverse opinions on the most appropriate and acceptable displays of the female netball body cause new tensions and divisions between players that didn’t seem to exist among earlier generations of netball players interviewed for this project.

In addition to rejecting emphasised femininity, the young women in this study stressed the importance of an athletic body. With recent trends in the health, exercise and sport industries, the physically active female body is widely celebrated in many Western and some Eastern countries (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003). Therefore, as Bordo (as cited in Krane, et al., 2004) explains there is often an emphasis placed on the tight, toned body which is seen as the new ‘feminine ideal’ in this social space (Duncan, 1994; Howe, 2003; Markula, 1995). While the image of the physically active female body was not a concern nor was it mentioned in my discussion with the women who played in the 1940’s, this was a key point of discussion for the 1990’s and 2010 participants. Insisting that the ‘ideal’ female netballer “should look fit” (Hannah), “fast” (Libby, 1990’s), “petite” (Chanel) and “toned, slender and agile” (Jeneva, 2010), the younger participants in this study clearly recognised (and reproduced) expectations to conform to this new ‘athletic feminine ideal’. Interestingly, any deviation from this body type (e.g. being overweight) or any embrace of a traditionally feminine identity (e.g. wearing make-up, monitoring one’s appearance), caused women to

be marginalised by other female players in terms of skill and positioned as ‘others’ within the netball culture. This idea is supported by Cox & Thompson’s (2000) research on female rugby participants who “observed and evaluated what their team mates and opposing players did” (p. 13) policing their image and athletic identity. Similarly, the young women in my study highlighted the importance of an athletic body image and explained that “if you see someone playing and they’re bigger, you automatically would think they’re not that good” (Hannah). This comment is contradictory to the opinions of previous generations of women who had suggested the inclusivity of netball, insisting “all shapes, all sizes” (Susanna) of women could participate. Such sentiments demonstrate the changing social ideas surrounding ‘ideal’ body image, femininity and sport, as well as linking strongly to the developing image related culture of society more broadly, which has changed the way the female body is viewed, surveyed and displayed in the 21st century.

A considerable body of sociological literature has examined the tensions experienced by female athletes in traditionally masculine sports and some gender neutral sports, particularly in terms of negotiating social expectations regarding athleticism, heterosexuality and femininity (e.g. Caudwell, 1999; Cox & Thompson, 2001; Harris, 2005; Krane et al., 2004; Mennesson, 2000; Scraton et al., 1999; Scraton et al., 2005). Yet, little attention has been paid to the reconciliation between femininity and athleticism in traditionally ‘feminine’ sports. Findings from the plethora of sociological literature on female athletes within traditionally masculine and gender neutral sports show that many women feel the need to ‘perform’ femininity while engaging in sports. Defined in the literature as ‘emphasised femininity’ (Dworkin, 2003; Dworkin, 2008), this concept involves the embodiment of traits and characteristics that appeal to the desire of men and highlight heterosexuality (e.g. having long hair or wearing pink). However, the contemporary female netballers from this study appear to find ‘emphasised femininity’ unnecessary as their opportunities to demonstrate physical prowess and aggression seem less contested than those women who participate in traditionally-defined masculine or gender neutral sports.

Netball and Assumed Heterosexuality

In contrast to women's participation in traditionally male sports (e.g. rugby) and gender neutral sports (e.g. hockey, basketball) where the sex (e.g. sex testing) and/or sexuality of highly skilled female athletes is often challenged, netball seems to be perceived as a 'safe' sport for New Zealand women. In other words, as a traditionally female-only sport, women's participation, no matter how physically demanding or aggressive, does not seem to pose a serious challenge to the maleness of sport. Interestingly, unlike female athletes in many other sports, female netball players are rarely accused of being men or lesbians.

As netball has traditionally been defined as "a girl's sport" (Anneke, 2010) and women's participation has been encouraged by broader society, there appears to be an assumed heterosexuality in netball. In her discussion of women's sport more generally, Marsh (1996) argues that embedded "cultural rules and expectations surrounding gender and sexual identity often become visible only when they are transgressed, when people break the rules" (p. 271). Therefore, it appears that because netball participation does not threaten contemporary social constructions of femininity by requiring large amounts of traditionally-defined 'masculine' characteristics such as muscle mass (e.g. bodybuilding, weight-lifting), pain tolerance (e.g. rugby, boxing) or risk (e.g. base jumping, snowboarding) for elite performance, the female netballers from the 1990's and 2010 seem to more freely embrace their athletic characteristics and did not report feeling the expectation to conform or 'perform' traditionally feminine identities while on the court. In contrast to much of the research on young women in traditionally male sports (Mennesson, 2000; Scraton et al., 1999; Scraton et al., 2005), the young netball players in this study did not feel they had to prove their heterosexuality or femininity just because they were active and committed athletes, and instead embraced the physical dimensions of the game with vigour. Arguably, contemporary women's athletic identities appear to be less contested in women-only sports such as netball. Such findings are in contrast to much of the literature on women's participation in masculine sports and some gender neutral sports, where tensions surrounding presumed and actual homosexuality/lesbianism and transgender-ism are often ways of marginalising women's participation and success, (e.g. Cox & Thompson, 2000; Davis-Delano, Pollock & Vose, 2009; Mennesson, 2000; Mennesson & Clément, 2003). The

assumed heterosexuality of netball seems to have enabled *some* women to push the traditional boundaries of the female sporting body, by allowing women to compete in increasingly physical and aggressive ways, and by enabling them to modify and experiment with their sporting identities. Of course, it is also interesting to consider how the assumed heterosexuality of netball is interpreted and experienced by lesbian women who do not experience the sport in the same way; the assumed heterosexuality of netball may even be experienced as exclusionary by some women.

In sum, body image, particularly in relation to femininity and athleticism, appears to play a large part in some women's perceptions of themselves and others within the netball culture. As broader social shifts have facilitated the combination of athleticism and femininity and an emphasis on the 'fit' body more broadly, as well as redefined the 'feminine ideal', women's perceptions of the female sporting body have also changed. Although much of the research appears to have overlooked the tensions between athleticism and femininity in traditionally feminine sports such as netball, in the experiences of the younger participants in this study, an emphasis on traditional femininity (e.g. wearing makeup, emphasising sexuality) has been replaced with an embrace of the athletic ideal. Importantly however, some aspects of contemporary femininity (e.g. a thin, toned body) have remained at the fore suggesting that one feminine ideal – the demure, lady-like, submissive woman of the 1940's has been replaced with another – the trim, toned, athletic female in the late 1990's and early 21st century. Thus, we should be careful not to interpret new opportunities/structural changes too optimistically.

Although these women are predominantly competitive and recreational participants, and their sporting experiences differ from those at the elite and professional level (on whom most of the research concentrates), it is clear that many of the same tensions and frustrations regarding image in sport plague these young sportswomen in the 21st century, and indeed shape their experiences. Perhaps more significant however, is the observation that women across generations have struggled to negotiate the changing social constructions and expectations to conform to context-specific feminine ideals, which are brought to the fore on the netball court.

Playing the Game: Shifting Tensions and Frustrations

In accordance with broader shifts that have challenged the social construction of femininity and women's opportunities to demonstrate physical prowess, the dynamics and structure of netball have changed. While some women of earlier generations reported enjoying the social and participatory elements of netball, the younger women suggested there may be less room for such pleasures, as a competitive style of netball predominates beyond childhood. Literature on recreational participation in youth sport and sport participation more generally, suggests that participation and social fulfilment are important motivators in sport (Allen, 2003; Allender, Cowburn & Foster; 2006; Brustad, 1996; McCullagh, Matzkanin, Shaw, & Maldonado, 1993; Reed & Cox, 2007). This idea was particularly emphasised throughout the earlier generations of women whose opportunities in sport were constrained due to the marginalisation of women in physical pursuits. Hence, some women during this time enjoyed, and were motivated by, the participatory and social pleasures that netball offered them to "play a sport and have a bit of exercise" (Shirley). However, as women's opportunities in sport and society have increased and ideals of femininity have shifted, the ways in which women are participating and enjoying netball and sport more broadly, have changed. In the remainder of this part I explore the shifts that have influenced women's experiences of netball in terms of opportunities for participation, pleasures and constraints. I begin by briefly contextualising the changing experiences of the participants in this study within broader social trends. In so doing, I explore how shifts from a participatory to a competitive style of netball link with changes in broader society and sport. Next, I compare and contrast these women's opportunities, pleasures and constraints in netball.

Contextualising Women's Lived Experiences of Netball

As I have argued throughout this thesis, changes in the experiences of netballers from these four historical moments must be contextualised within broader social trends. The change from a participation based to a competitive style of netball can be linked to broader social developments, whereby a local community-focused society has shifted to an increasingly individualistic one that emphasises demonstrating self-reliance and individual achievement over collective effort (Greif, 1994; Kagitcibasi, 1997). Although the older generations suggest that this

change is a positive initiative within the sport proclaiming that “you’ve got to move with the times” (Betty), such changes seem to have diversified the frustrations of some contemporary netballers. Furthermore, these changes can also be related to changes in feminist politics. Here, the collective action that predominated the second wave movement during the 1960’s and 1970’s, has been replaced with the individualist approach of the third wave. As a result, some women in the 21st century challenge feminist issues in more diverse and individual ways which is in vast contrast to the collective and united action that could be seen during the late 20th century.

The shift from a participatory to a competitive style of netball in New Zealand must also be contextualised within broader arguments concerning the switch from amateur to professional sport, or in other words, the ‘corporatisation’ of sport. In fact, Frey and Eitzen (1991) suggest that sport has become more like work than play where the evolution of sport has seen a shift from a “playful participation-oriented activity” to a model that “resembles a corporate form guided by the principles of commercialism and entertainment” (p. 503). This idea is supported by some scholars who point to the way broader shifts in terms of consumerism, capitalism and commoditisation have influenced the dynamics and structure of sporting practices as well as the motives experiences and expectations of male and female participants (e.g. Howe, 2003; McKay & Miller, 1991). Although many of the women from my study are not elite participants, it would appear that the increasingly elite, corporate model of sport has affected the way these women practice and play netball. While young women today have access to opportunities unknown to previous generations, they continue to experience many tensions and frustrations, some new and some familiar to participants from earlier periods. As I explain below, while some of the pleasures and frustrations experienced by female netball players in New Zealand are context-specific, others appear to be common across generations.

Opportunities, Pleasures and Constraints

The women from earlier generations waxed lyrical about their netball experiences. The focus groups involved many tangents in which the women animatedly recalled the joys of playing netball with their friends, the camaraderie with teammates and the community and family support they occasionally received. In

contrast, the young women from the later generations focused primarily on the everyday tensions and constraints of their experiences. Based on these discussions, however, it would be naïve to assume that the netball experiences of previous generations were more positive than contemporary players. As discussed in my Methods chapter, I recognise that the temporal proximity of these women from their netball experiences is likely to influence the way they remember and describe their lived experiences. As a result, the older generations may have romanticised their experiences, selectively remembering more positive aspects while foregoing unsavoury ones (Walker & Skowronski, 2003).

Although the earlier generations remembered some of the aspects of their netball participation fondly, the marginalisation of women's sporting opportunities during the 1940's and 1970's was particularly clear. Suggesting that netball was "the only sport for girls" (Sue), women's participation in physical pursuits was indeed limited. In contrast, some young women in the 21st century are met with a plethora of sporting options. Due to the expanding sporting opportunities available to women and the increasingly diverse ways in which women can use their bodies through sport, there are multiple sites and sources for female pleasure, leisure and recreation in the 21st century (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003). This idea was evidenced by the young women in this study who reported an array of sporting options, participating in "lacrosse, hockey and soccer" (Sheldine) and "rugby" (Chanel), many of which hold the potential for women's transgression across traditionally-defined social and cultural constructions of femininity, and were therefore unavailable to women from earlier generations. Despite the new and exciting sporting options available to women today, the younger women suggested that netball provided a "competitive" (Sheldine) choice where women's new-found sporting prowess could be recognised without marginalisation, because "netball is a girl's sport" (Anneke). Therefore, as women's opportunities in sport continue to increase, the pleasures they experience appear to be diversifying.

As feminist challenges have facilitated increasing opportunities for women in sport and the acceptance of the physically active sportswoman, the dynamics and structure of netball in New Zealand have altered markedly. As many more women are seizing opportunities to demonstrate physical prowess and competency, netball appears to have taken on a new competitive form. Such

developments have initiated many changes in terms of women's participation. Due to the competitive shift, women's motivations and pleasures in netball during the 1990's and 2010 generations seem more directed towards demonstrating physical competency in terms of "learning new plays" (Paris) and setting "goals for the game" (Jeneva), in addition to exhibiting "aggressiveness" (Sheldine) in accordance with changing perceptions regarding the physically active female body and 'ideal femininity'. This is in contrast to women of previous generations who "played for the love of sports" (Shirley) and prioritised "team spirit" and camaraderie over individualistic displays of physical prowess and/or competitive success. Betty offered a good example of such "team spirit" when she described the general understanding that players would voluntarily stand down to ensure their team mates "who had biked in" from rural areas would get time on the court. As netball has become more competitive and results driven, the young women in this study indicate that there may be less room for the participatory pleasures experienced by older generations of women. Instead, demonstrating physical competency, learning new skills and improving athletic ability seem to have been foregrounded as women enjoy opportunities to exert physical prowess. As a result, contemporary netballers appear motivated and frustrated by entirely different and diverse factors in comparison to women of previous generations, and now negotiate new and problematic tensions surrounding their own enjoyment and motivations in netball.

While the increasing popularity and visibility of competitive netball has had a positive effect on the opportunities available to female athletes (e.g. quality coaching, availability of netball courts and organised weekend competitions, funding to travel to competitions), it appears that broader developments in terms of an increased emphasis on performance may impinge upon young women's everyday netball opportunities and experiences of the game. While some women during the 1940's and 1970's experienced difficulty accessing time and space for participation, the younger generations report being constrained by a competitive style of netball. During the 1940's netball "wasn't about putting your best team on" and was played in a "lovely atmosphere" (Betty). However, the women who played during the 1990's highlighted the exclusivity of this sport, suggesting that they "never got any court time" (Libby) or "hardly any game time" (Hannah) due to an overarching emphasis on performance, despite the fact that they "just liked

playing” (Libby). Furthermore, the changing role of coaches and parents appears to have had a significant effect on women’s netball experiences. Suggesting they had coaches who “excelled” (Betty) or were “good mentors” (Rose), the women from earlier generations discussed their appreciation for those individuals who dedicated their time to assist with their netball participation. Additionally, the occasional support of parents who “would sit in the car and watch” (Susanna), was instrumental as women’s sport remained marginalised and underappreciated in wider society. In contrast, some of the younger women in this study expressed resentment towards these individuals suggesting that they had “a bitch of a coach” (Hannah) or coaches who “punish individuals not as a team” (Chanel), and parents who engaged in negative sideline behaviour, which lessened their enjoyment of the game and restricted opportunities for pleasure. Orlick & Zitelsberger (1996) support this idea, suggesting that young athletes “want to play, not watch others play...they want less emphasis on winning and more freedom to have fun” (p. 330). Highlighting the complex dynamics between the desires of athletes and the contemporary model of sport, these comments suggest that although women now have increased opportunities to access netball, an increasingly competitive netball culture may threaten some women’s opportunities for participation and pleasure.

In sum, as women’s opportunities in sport and netball more specifically have increased, the pleasures and tensions experienced by netballers appear to have diversified. While women of previous generations have enjoyed a participatory and inclusive style of netball, some young women today seem to gain pleasure from increasing opportunities to exert physical prowess and demonstrate athletic competence. However, as women’s opportunities to practice sport more aggressively and competitively have increased, new and problematic tensions appear to have emerged.

Concluding Thoughts

This study has highlighted the changing experiences, interpretations and understandings of a selection of female netball participants during four distinct historical periods. More specifically, this chapter has explored the changing social constructions of femininity and the perceived capability of the athletic female

body, as well as the changing frustrations, pleasures and motivations of women in netball over time.

Particularly demonstrated throughout this study are the changing social pressures experienced by women and the complexity of negotiating problematic and often contradictory gendered and feminine identities, which have been brought to the fore during these women's experiences of netball. Throughout time women have negotiated culturally- and socially-defined and context specific appropriations of femininity. However, the underpinning assumptions of these appropriations have changed markedly. Ranging from ideals of the demure, passive, weak woman who is "less physically powerful, less aggressive than [her] male counterparts while retaining more grace, poise, finesse, flexibility and balance" (Scruton, 1992, p. 59), to contemporary definitions which embrace toned, fit and athletic ideals and neoliberal discourses which promote individual responsibility, social definitions of femininity seem to continue to cause tensions surrounding women's identities in netball.

Although broader social developments in terms of women's increased opportunities in multiple social spaces, including sport, have spurred arguments suggesting that today, young women have "the world at their feet" (Harris, 2004, p. 23), such opportunities appear to offer new and problematic tensions in comparison to women of previous generations. As some women transgress historical feminine boundaries in multiple social spheres including sport where demonstrating physicality and aggression was valued by the young women in this study, new ideals regarding femininity begin to find varied, yet equally problematic forms. As the agency of women in sports and society more broadly has increased, it appears that one oppressive and restraining feminine ideal may be being replaced by another which is sometimes equally limiting for female participants. Aapola, Gonick and Harris (2005) suggest that manipulated images and ideals of the female body as thin and perfect can contribute to decreased self-esteem and psychological harm. Although some women in the 21st century appear to be taking more control of their bodies, contemporary social constructions of femininity continue to restrain feminine image instead of diversifying ideals. Additionally, as women's opportunities to demonstrate physical prowess in netball have increased, new tensions surrounding performance pressure and the exclusivity of netball appear to have emerged.

The women in this study have demonstrated agency in a variety of ways, ranging from forming their own teams, biking to and from netball to constructing their own feminine identities in netball. Such examples point to the various ways New Zealand women have attempted to create some of their own boundaries and rules in terms of the physically active female form in netball. However, their reproduction of traditional femininity and the contemporary 'athletic feminine ideal' reveals the continued social and cultural restraint of 'ideal' femininity. Demonstrating that femininity is indeed context specific, the experiences of the young women in this study suggest that changing social constructions of femininity and an increasingly physical and competitive form of netball have not necessarily meant that the experiences of earlier generations are less problematic or marred by less socio-cultural tensions and constraint than older generations of women.

As well as illustrating the importance of context for understanding women's sporting experiences, this thesis also raises a number of questions about how to understand and explain women's netball experiences. My observations regarding the prioritisation of an athletic identity among contemporary netball players prompts questions about the performance and construction of feminine identities in different social spaces such as school, family, the workplace and peer groups. While the young women interviewed for this project proclaimed to embrace athletic identities and reject displays of more traditional femininity (e.g. wearing make-up) on the court, do they embrace more feminine practices outside of netball such that they are consciously performing different feminine identities in various social spaces? While Butler (2001, 2003) has theorized this concept extensively, and others are investigating the phenomenon of identity construction through extensions of Bourdieu's work (e.g. Adams, 2006) and from other theoretical perspectives (e.g. Anderson, 1999; Kelly, Pomerantz & Currie, 2005), the performance of gendered and feminine identities has yet to be explored in relation to netball. Investigating the strategies used by women to negotiate problematic and contradictory feminine identities in various social spaces, including netball, would be both insightful and interesting and provide additional information on the experiences of women in netball. Moreover, such an approach may further challenge the political assumption that femininity exists cross-

culturally (Butler, 2003) by highlighting different forms, pressures and tensions associated with the performance of femininity in multiple social spaces.

I also feel that more intersectional studies that consider gender, culture, sexuality, class and age variables and how they influence women's netball experiences would be a worthwhile avenue for future research. As my study demonstrates, the diversity of netball participants has increased from previous generations. Therefore, I feel it is worthwhile to take a closer look at the effects these variables have on women's netball experiences. This could be achieved through studies that explore the netball experiences of different cultural groups in New Zealand (e.g. New Zealand European, Maori and Pacific Island women) or women of different ages, sexualities, socio-economic groups and/or physical ability levels.

In summary, my study has highlighted some of the complexities and tensions evident in a selection of New Zealand women's experiences of netball, past and present. While this study has only incorporated a small group of New Zealand women, focus groups with women from different generations offered rich insights into their lived netball experiences. Through building on the psychological, sociological and historical research surrounding this topic, my research has not only brought women's unique and personal experiences to the fore, but, through the use of an interdisciplinary approach it has demonstrated the interconnectedness between women's experiences of netball and time, context and social change. Although such an approach has provided highly useful in this study, such a technique does not come without challenges. I approached this study with the ambitious aim of understanding the importance of time and context on women's netball experiences. I identified various gaps in the existing literature, including a lack of research on non-elite New Zealand women's netball participation. I also found few studies employed interdisciplinary approaches to explain changes in women's sport participation over time. Based on my own experiences working within an interdisciplinary framework that drew upon psychological, sociological and historical approaches to understand and explain women's netball experiences, I recognize the difficulty of such an approach such that the gap in the literature takes on new meaning. Perhaps interdisciplinary research is rare due to the difficulty of speaking across disciplines with different ontological and epistemological assumptions? Indeed, attempting to do justice to

both the macro-contextual factors that influence women's netball experiences in different historical junctures, and the everyday, individual micro-level experiences of netball participants, posed many theoretical, methodological and representational challenges.

The use of intergenerational research and focus groups proved to be particularly challenging for this study. As was explored in Chapter three, the implementation of focus groups with women of various generations required constant adaptation, ethical consideration and reflexivity. Challenging the way I approached and conducted this research, such techniques tested my thinking, theorizing and problematising of various concepts and more importantly, how to represent these women's everyday lived experiences of netball adequately and meaningfully. Although, this approach has proved difficult and trying at times, the insights it has provided and the personal realities it has communicated show the utility of such an approach for understanding the broader context-specific nature of women's netball experiences.

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Appendices

Appendix One:

PRINCIPAL AND NETBALL CONVENOR INFORMATION SHEET

Dear (Name),

I am currently carrying out research for my thesis as part of a Master in Sport and Leisure Studies degree through the University of Waikato. I am writing to you to ask for your permission to conduct a part of this research in the school.

Brief Outline of the Research Project

For the purpose of this study I will be interviewing women from four separate generations concerning their experiences engaging in netball. I am interested to discover how the game of netball has changed and what this means and has meant for New Zealand women. To achieve this aim I wish to research the experiences that New Zealand women had/have when engaging in netball and compare and contrast these over time. I am also very interested to discover how the game of netball impacts on women's lives, for example how women create their identity through netball and how the game impacts on other identities and roles they have such as being a wife or daughter.

I plan to study this topic from an intergenerational perspective comparing the game of netball over time from the 1940's to today using four generations of New Zealand women who were/are involved in the sport. From this I hope to discover how changes in New Zealand culture and women's rights have shaped the game of netball and vice versa. I am interested in talking to year 12/13 students about their own experiences to gain a first-hand insight into these topics.

Your Students' Involvement

I am seeking consent for 2-5 of your female year 12/13 students to be involved in one focus group discussion with myself, the interviewer. The focus group will last no more than 90 minutes, will be conducted at the convenience of the students and no class time will be missed. The aim of this focus group is to discuss the participants' experiences in netball so that I can develop a broader understanding of the issues associated with their participation and the way that they perceive their own involvement. I have attached a copy of the focus group outline so that you can see the general direction of the discussion to help inform your decision. I would like to audiotape the focus group so I can correctly record what is said. Participants will be provided with a transcribed copy of the focus group so that they may verify its accuracy and also erase any comments made by them that they are uncomfortable with. The participants have the right to withdraw from involvement in this study at any time up until the focus group transcripts have been returned. They may also decline to participate in certain aspects of the discussion if they wish to. Should you consent to your student's involvement in this research you too have the right to withdraw your consent up until the focus group transcripts have been returned. To do so you may contact me directly via email or phone. At the commencement of the focus group, students may be asked to attend a follow-up interview which will be no more than one hour in length.

However I will only be conducting one follow-up interview per focus group so not all students will be required for this. Participants have the right to decline this invitation also.

Process for Recruiting Participants

I will be asking the netball convener for ideas on suitable participants for my research. From here I will send an email/letter to these individuals outlining my research and a request for any interest in being a participant. If interest is shown from a student they will be sent a parental consent and information sheet to gain their parent's support in their participation as well as a participant information and consent form for them to fill out themselves. Each student will be well informed of my intentions and measures will be taken to ensure that any foreseeable harm does not impact on the students. Once these have been returned the student will be an official participant in my research and will be asked to attend one focus group meeting as explained above. I plan to involve 2-4 students in total in my research and am aiming to involve only those in years 12 and 13. At the commencement of the focus groups, students may be asked to participate in an individual interview. I will be interviewing only one student, however interest in participating in the interview will be sought from all participants from the focus group. Students will have the right to decline this invitation and participation will be entirely voluntary.

Confidentiality

I will not name the school in any way throughout my research nor will I name any students unless they have given consent to do so. Students will be provided a pseudonym so that student confidentiality will be maintained unless otherwise arranged. The data collected will be used to write my Masters thesis for the degree of Master of Sport and Leisure Studies at Waikato University and may also be used in a conference presentation and/or journal publications. Participants will be informed of the various uses of this information. If this information is required for any other purpose I will contact the participants for their consent prior to its use. The tapes I will make of the focus groups I conduct will not be included in the research; however excerpts from the transcriptions will be used to write the article.

Participants' Rights

As a participant each student has the right to;

- Refuse to answer any particular question, or withdraw from the research at any time before the transcribed data has been returned.
- Ask any further questions or seek any further information about the study
- Be given access to her individual transcript to make any changes if need be and a summary of the findings from the study when it is concluded

Records

All records from the interviews will be kept confidential. They will be archived until a final grade for the assignment has been given in accordance to University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Regulations. The audio recordings will be kept secure during the research process. Any other use of the recordings will not occur without your permission. An electronic copy of the report will be made widely available to you via the Australasian Digital Thesis (ADT) database.

Contacting the Researcher

If you have any concerns about ethical matters or other issues related to the research, please contact either;

Amy Marfell
247b Dey Street,
Hamilton
Ph: 027 350 2606
Email: aem19@waikato.ac.nz

Dr. Holly Thorpe
Department of Sport & Leisure Studies
University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105, Hamilton, NZ
Email: hthorpe@waikato.ac.nz

All aspects of this research are voluntary and no pressure will be placed on students to be involved by myself or any other party. If there are any issues you wish to discuss regarding this research please do not hesitate to call or email either myself or my supervisor Dr. Holly Thorpe. I have attached copies of both the participant and parental information and consent forms explaining the key aspects of this research such as ethical issues, process and the nature of the study.

If you agree to me carrying out this research within the school and to your students' participation in this research, please sign the following consent form and return the form to me by [date].

Regards,

Amy Marfell
aem19@waikato.ac.nz
0273502606

Appendix Two:

PRINCIPAL AND NETBALL CONVENEROR CONSENT FORM

I have read the **Information Sheet for Principal and Netball Convener** and am satisfied that my questions have been answered fully and honestly. I agree to the schools and student's participation under the conditions set out below:

- 1) I have received sufficient information regarding the nature of this research and understand the aims of this research and the student's and schools involvement
- 2) I understand the identity of this institution will be kept confidential and will not be revealed at any time throughout this research
- 3) I understand that the students involved will receive student confidentiality and will only have their identities revealed if they consent to doing so.
- 4) I am aware that no class time will be used to conduct this research
- 5) I understand that student recruitment will be carried out in association with the netball convener and will aim to involve year 12/13 female students only.
- 6) I understand that if any ethical concerns arise I can contact the primary researcher, Amy Marfell (email: aem19@waikato.ac.nz) or the researching supervisor, Dr. Holly Thorpe (email: hthorpe@waikato.ac.nz)

Please complete the relevant details below,

Signed: Date.....

Appendix Three:

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Dear (Name)

My name is Amy Marfell and I am a Masters student at The University of Waikato studying in the Sport and Leisure Studies department. I am currently conducting research on women's experiences in netball and the impact that this has/had on their lives. I am talking to women from a range of age groups about many topics associated with netball (e.g. role models, uniforms, social roles, family involvement, team mates etc.). In doing so I hope to understand how the game of netball has changed over time and therefore how women's experiences playing netball have changed also.

I am writing to you to ask you to become a participant in this research. If you should choose to participate you will be asked to attend one focus group meeting with 2-4 other women of a similar age to yourself. The focus group will be audio taped, will last approximately 90 minutes and will be held at a time that suits all participants. Participants may also be asked to be involved in a follow-up interview lasting no more than 60 minutes. Further details of the interview process will be provided on the participant information sheet.

If you are interested in becoming a participant please reply to this letter and I will then send you a participant information sheet and consent form. For those participants under the age of 18 I will also send an information letter and consent form for your parents to read and sign. These sets of forms need to be returned to me either via email or post by the date stated at the bottom of the form.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to ask

Regards,

Amy Marfell
aem19@waikato.ac.nz
0273502606

Appendix Four:

SCHOOL-AGED PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Dear (Name)

Thank you for your interest in being a participant in my research. I am conducting research for my Masters thesis on New Zealand women's experiences in netball. This letter is a follow-up to the interest that you have shown to participate in my study. I would like to formally invite you to become a participant in this study and participate in a focus group interview.

What I will be studying

I am interested to find out how the game of netball has changed and what this means and has meant for New Zealand women. To achieve this goal I wish to research the experiences that New Zealand women had/have when playing netball and compare these over time. I am very interested to find out what women enjoy or dislike about playing netball, who their role models are, how their family supports them etc. I will be interviewing women from a range of age-groups for this research.

Your Involvement

If you agree to take part in this research I will be asking you to come and discuss with me and two or three other girls of your age what it is like to play netball. I will be asking you questions about your uniform, your coaches, team-mates, family support, role models etc. You don't have to talk about anything that you don't want to and the discussion will last no more than 90 minutes. I will be tape recording what is said. If you agree to take part in this research you can change your mind at any time up until we have had the focus group discussion and I have given you a copy of what was said to check and sign to return to me. Once we have discussed together your experiences playing netball you may be asked to attend a follow-up interview which will be no more than one hour in length. This interview will be for me to ask any further questions that I might have about what you have already told me. This is only a possibility as I will only be conducting one per focus group discussion so you may not be needed for this. You have the right to say no if you don't want to do this if asked

Confidentiality

In my research I won't be using your real name, unless you want me to. This means that I will give you a false name so that people won't know who you are when I write my final report. We can talk about this more if you have any questions. The information I collect from the discussion will be used to write my Masters thesis for the degree of Master of Sport and Leisure Studies at Waikato University and may be used in a conference presentation and/or journal publications. I will ask your permission if I need to use the information for anything else. The tapes I will make of the focus group and interview discussions I conduct will not be included in the research; however a written copy of the interview will be used to write the article.

Participants' Rights

As a participant you;

- Don't have to talk about anything you don't want to.
- Can pull out of the study at any time up until we have had our discussion and you have signed and returned a written copy of what was discussed
- Can ask questions about anything
- Change anything that you have said on the written copy of the focus group and interview discussion

Records

I will keep all the information from the discussion in a safe place. Information will be stored until a final grade for the assignment has been given in accordance with University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Regulations. The audio recordings will be kept secure during the research process. Any other use of the recordings will not occur without your permission. An electronic copy of the report will be made available to you.

Contacting the Researcher

If you have any concerns about anything related to the research, please contact either;

Amy Marfell
247b Dey Street,
Hamilton
Ph: 027 350 2606
Email: aem19@waikato.ac.nz

Dr. Holly Thorpe
Department of Sport and Leisure Studies
University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105, Hamilton, NZ
Email: hthorpe@waikato.ac.nz

If you agree to participate in this research, please sign the following consent form and return the form to me by [date].

Regards,

Amy Marfell
aem19@waikato.ac.nz
0273502606

Appendix Five:

SCHOOL-AGED PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read the **Information Sheet for school aged participants** and am satisfied that my questions have been answered fully and honestly. I agree to my participation under the conditions set out below:

- 1) Amy Marfell will conduct a face-to-face focus group discussion with me and two-three other participants of my age about my experiences as a Netballer. This focus group will be recorded on audio-tape and will last not longer than 90 minutes. As a participant, I do not have to answer any questions that I don't want to or talk about any topic that I don't want to. I can also ask that certain parts of the focus group discussion not be recorded. After having read the written copy of the focus group discussion, I can delete any statements from myself that I am uncomfortable with.
- 2) I understand that Amy Marfell will keep all audio recordings in a secure location for the duration of the research process. These will be destroyed after the final grade for the assignment has been finalized.
- 3) The transcribed audio or written data collected by Amy Marfell will be used in Masters thesis. I understand that any other use of the audio or written data will not take place without my permission.
- 4) I understand that, my identity will be protected in the final copy of this research through the use of a false name (pseudonym) unless I give permission for my identity to be revealed.
- 5) I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time before the focus group transcript which I will be given to read through and sign has been returned.
- 6) I understand that if any concerns arise or I have any questions I can contact the primary researcher, Amy Marfell (email: aem19@waikato.ac.nz) or the researching supervisor, Dr. Holly Thorpe (email: hthorpe@waikato.ac.nz)
- 7) I understand that my participation may be required for a follow-up interview once the focus groups have been conducted.

Please complete the relevant details below,

Signed: Date..... Age.....

Appendix Six:

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Parent/Caregiver

I am conducting research for the fulfilment of my Master of Sport and Leisure Studies degree through the University of Waikato and am investigating New Zealand women's experiences in netball.

Brief Outline of the Research Project

For the purpose of this study I will be interviewing women from four separate generations concerning their experiences engaging in netball. I am interested to discover how the game of netball has changed and what this means and has meant for New Zealand women. To achieve this aim I wish to research the experiences that New Zealand women had/have when engaging in netball and compare and contrast these over time. I am also very interested to discover how the game of netball impacts on women's lives, for example how women create their identity through netball and how the game impacts on other identities and roles they have such as being a wife or daughter.

I plan to study this topic from an intergenerational perspective comparing the game of netball over time from the 1940's to today using four generations of New Zealand women who were/are involved in the sport. From this I hope to discover how changes in New Zealand culture and women's rights have shaped the game of netball and vice versa. I am interested in talking to your daughter about her own experiences to gain a first-hand insight into these topics.

Your Daughter's Involvement

I am seeking consent for your daughter to be involved in one focus group discussion with 2-4 other students of similar age and myself, the interviewer. The focus group will last no more than 90 minutes, will be conducted at [name of school] at the convenience of the students and no class time will be missed. The aim of this focus group is to discuss the participants' experiences in netball so that I can develop a broader understanding of the issues associated with their participation and the way that they perceive their own involvement. I have attached a copy of the focus group outline so that you can see the general direction of the discussion to help inform your decision. I will be audio taping the focus group so I can correctly record what is said. Your daughter will be provided with a copy of the focus group transcript so that she may verify its accuracy and also erase any comments made by herself that she is uncomfortable with or has second thoughts about. Your daughter has the right to withdraw from involvement in this study at any time up until the focus group transcripts have been returned. She may also decline to participate in certain aspects of the discussion if she wishes to. Should you consent to your daughter's involvement in this research you too have the right to withdraw your consent up until the focus group transcripts have been returned. To do so you may contact me directly via email or phone. At the commencement of the focus group, your daughter may be asked to attend a follow-up interview which will be no more than one hour in length, however I will only be conducting one follow-up interview per focus group so your daughter may not necessarily be required for this. Your daughter has the right to decline this invitation also.

Confidentiality

In my research I will not be revealing anyone's identity. Therefore, all participants will be issued with a pseudonym. However because of the nature of this research and the personal and historical stories which are being told, I would like to give participants the option of being identified if they so choose. We can talk about this further at any stage if you or your daughter has any concerns or questions. The data collected will be used to write my Masters thesis for the degree of Master of Sport and Leisure Studies at Waikato University and may also be used for a conference presentation and/or journal publications. Any other uses of this information will not occur without participants' permission. The tapes I will make of the focus groups I conduct and the follow-up interviews will not be included in the research; however excerpts from the transcriptions will be used to write the article.

Participants' Rights

As a participant your daughter has the right to;

- Refuse to answer any particular question, or withdraw from the research at any time before the transcribed data has been returned.
- Ask any further questions or seek any further information about the study
- Be given access to her individual transcript to make any changes if need be and a summary of the findings from the study when it is concluded

Records

All records from the interviews will be kept confidential. They will be archived until a final grade for the assignment has been given in accordance to University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Regulations. The audio recordings will be kept secure during the research process. Any other use of the recordings will not occur without your permission. An electronic copy of the report will be made widely available to you via the Australasian Digital Thesis (ADT) database.

Contacting the Researcher

If you have any concerns about ethical matters or other issues related to the research, please contact either;

Amy Marfell
247b Dey Street
Hamilton
Ph: 027 350 2606
Email: aem19@waikato.ac.nz

Dr. Holly Thorpe
Department of Sport and Leisure Studies
University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105 Hamilton, NZ
Email: hthorpe@waikato.ac.nz

If you agree to your daughter's participation in this research, please sign the following consent form and return the form to me by [date].

Regards,

Amy Marfell
aem19@waikato.ac.nz
0273502606

Appendix Seven:

PARENT CONSENT FORM

I have read the **Information Sheet for Parents** and am satisfied that my questions have been answered fully and honestly. I agree to my daughters participation under the conditions set out below:

- 1) Amy Marfell will conduct a face-to-face focus group with my daughter and 2-4 other participants of similar age relating to her experiences as a netballer. This focus group will be recorded on audio-tape and is to be no more than 90 minutes in length. My daughter has the right to refuse discussion on any issue or to refuse the recording of any part or whole of the focus group. After having read the transcript, she has the right to request the erasure of any record she is uncomfortable with.
- 2) I understand that Amy Marfell will keep all audio recordings in a secure location for the duration of the research process. These will be destroyed after the final grade for the assignment has been finalized.
- 3) The transcribed audio or written data collected by Amy Marfell will be used in her Masters thesis and may be used for a conference presentation and/or journal publications. I understand that any other use of the audio or written data will not take place without my daughter's permission.
- 4) I understand that my daughter's identity will not be disclosed in Amy Marfell's Masters thesis and that she will be issued with a pseudonym unless permission is given for her identity to be revealed.
- 5) I understand that my daughter can withdraw from this study at any time prior to the focus group transcript being returned and that I may also withdraw my consent up until this time.
- 6) I understand that if any ethical concerns arise I can contact the primary researcher, Amy Marfell (email: aem19@waikato.ac.nz) or the researching supervisor, Dr. Holly Thorpe (email: hthorpe@waikato.ac.nz)
- 7) I understand that my daughter may be asked to participate in a follow-up interview at the commencement of the focus group and has the right to decline this invitation.

Please complete the relevant details below,

Signed: Date.....

Appendix Eight:

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Dear (Name)

Thank you for your interest in becoming a participant in my research. I am conducting research for my Masters thesis on New Zealand women's experiences in netball. This letter is a follow-up to the verbal/informal consent that you have given to participate in my study. I would like to formally invite you to become a participant in this study and participate in a focus group interview.

Brief Outline of the Research Project

I am interested to discover how the game of netball has changed and what this means and has meant for New Zealand women. To achieve this aim I wish to research the experiences that New Zealand women had/have when engaging in netball and compare and contrast these over time. I am also very interested to discover how the game of netball impacts on women's lives, for example how women create their identity through netball and how the game impacts on other identities and roles they have such as being a wife or daughter.

I plan to study this topic from an intergenerational perspective comparing the game of netball over time from the 1940's to today using four generations of New Zealand women who were/are involved in the sport. From this I hope to discover how changes in New Zealand culture and women's rights have shaped the game of netball and vice versa. I am interested in talking to you about your own experiences to gain a first-hand insight into these topics.

Your Involvement

If you agree to take part in the research you will be asked to be involved in one focus group discussion with 2-4 other participants of similar age and myself, the interviewer. The focus group will last no more than 90 minutes. The aim of this focus group is to discuss your experiences in netball so that I can develop a broader understanding of the issues associated with your participation and the way that you perceive your own involvement. If you agree to take part in this research you have the right to withdraw from involvement in this study at any time up until the focus group transcripts have been returned. You may also decline to participate in certain aspects of the discussion if you wish to. At the commencement of the focus group, I will be seeking interest in the attendance of a follow-up interview which will be no more than one hour in length. However, I will only be conducting one follow-up interview per focus group so you may not necessarily be required for this. You have the right to decline this invitation also.

Confidentiality

In my research I will not be revealing your identity. Instead you will be issued with a pseudonym. However, due to the nature of this research and the personal and historical stories which will be told, I would like to provide you the opportunity of being identified should you choose to do so. We can talk about this further at any stage if you have any concerns or questions. The data collected will be used to write my Masters thesis for the degree of Master of Sport and Leisure Studies at Waikato University and may be used in a conference presentation and/or journal publications. The tapes I will make of the focus groups and follow

up interviews I conduct will not be included in the research; however excerpts from the transcriptions will be used in the final thesis.

Participants' Rights

As a participant you have the right to;

- Refuse to answer any particular question, or withdraw from the research at any time before the transcribed data has been returned.
- Ask any further questions or seek any further information about the study
- Be given access to your individual transcript to make any changes if need be and a summary of the findings from the study when it is concluded

Records

All records from the interviews will be kept confidential. They will be archived until a final grade for the assignment has been given in accordance to University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Regulations. The audio recordings will be kept secure during the research process. Any other use of the recordings will not occur without your permission. An electronic copy of the report will be made widely available to you via the Australasian Digital Thesis (ADT) database.

Contacting the Researcher

If you have any concerns about ethical matters or other issues related to the research, please contact either;

Amy Marfell
247b Dey Street
Hamilton
Ph: 027 350 2606
Email: aem19@waikato.ac.nz

Dr. Holly Thorpe
Department of Sport and Leisure Studies
University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105, Hamilton, NZ
Email: hthorpe@waikato.ac.nz

If you agree to participate in this research, please sign the following consent form and return the form to me by [date].

Regards,

Amy Marfell
aem19@waikato.ac.nz
0273502606

Appendix Nine:

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read the **Information Sheet for Participants** and am satisfied that my questions have been answered fully and honestly. I agree to participate under the conditions set out below:

- 1) Amy Marfell will conduct a face-to-face focus group with me and 2-4 other participants of similar age relating to my experiences as a netballer. This focus group will be recorded on audio-tape and is to be no more than 90 minutes in length. I, the participant have the right to refuse discussion on any issue or to refuse the recording of any part or whole of the focus group. After having read the transcript, I have the right to request the erasure of any record I am uncomfortable with.
- 2) I understand that Amy Marfell will keep all audio recordings in a secure location for the duration of the research process. These will be destroyed after the final grade for the assignment has been finalized.
- 3) The transcribed audio or written data collected by Amy Marfell will be used in her Masters thesis and may be used in a conference presentation and/or journal publications. I understand that any other use of the audio or written data will not take place without my permission.
- 4) I understand that my identity will not be disclosed in Amy Marfell's Masters thesis. I understand that I will be issued with a pseudonym unless I give consent for my identity to be revealed.
- 5) I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time prior to the focus group transcript being returned.
- 6) I understand that if any ethical concerns arise I can contact the primary researcher, Amy Marfell (email: aem19@waikato.ac.nz) or the researching supervisor, Dr. Holly Thorpe (email: hthorpe@waikato.ac.nz)
- 7) I understand that I may be asked to participate in a follow-up interview at the commencement of the focus group and that I may decline this invitation.

Please complete the relevant details below,

Signed: Date:Age.....

Appendix Ten:

FOCUS GROUP SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1940's Netball (Basketball) Participants:

- Can you tell me a little bit about playing basketball in the 1940's? What was it like?
- Can you remember why you became involved in basketball?
- What did you do in your spare time? How did young people of your generation occupy their free time?
- Who did you play with?
- Can you describe to me what you wore?
- How did you get to and from basketball?
- Did you train?
- Where did you train? How often?
- Who came to support you? What did your family think about you playing basketball?
- When and why did you stop playing basketball?
- Is there anything that remains vivid in your mind about your experience playing basketball?
- What did you enjoy most about playing basketball?
- Was there anything you didn't enjoy about playing basketball?
- What are some of the major changes you have seen in netball since you were a player? How do you feel about these changes?
- Who were some of your role models in netball (or in sport)? Why did you look up to them?
- Can you remember how society as a whole felt about women when you were younger? What were women's roles at that time?

1970's Netball Participants:

- Can you tell me a little bit about playing netball in the 1970's? What was it like?
- Can you remember why you became involved in netball?
- Did you train? How often? Where?
- How many girls were in your team?
- Who came to support you? What did your family think about you playing netball?
- When and why did you stop playing netball?
- What did you enjoy most about playing netball?
- Was there anything you didn't enjoy about playing netball, or that you found challenging?
- What are some of the major changes you have seen in netball since you were a player? How do you feel about these changes?
- Who were some of your role models in netball (or in sport)? Why did you look up to them?
- Can you remember how society felt about women during this time? What were women's roles?

1990's Netball Participants:

- Can you tell me a little bit about your experiences playing netball?
- Why did you become involved in netball?
- Who did/do you play with?
- How often did/do you play?
- Who came/comes to support you? What did/do your family think about you playing netball?
- If you no longer play netball, when and why did you stop playing netball?
- If you still play netball, when/why do you think you might stop playing netball?
- What did/do you enjoy most about playing netball?
- Was there anything about netball that you didn't like, or that you find challenging?
- What are some of the major changes you have seen in netball since you were a player? How do you feel about these changes?
- Who were/are some of your role models in netball (or in sport)? Why did/do you look up to them?
- What did you do with your spare time?
- Can you describe to me what it was like growing up in the 1990's? What were women's roles? What opportunities did women have in society or sport?

2010's Netball Participants:

- Can you tell me a little bit about what it's like to play netball today?
- When and why did you become involved in netball?
- How often do you train? How often do you play?
- Who is in your team?
- Who comes to support you?
- What do you wear to a game? How do you feel about this uniform?
- What do you enjoy most about playing netball?
- Is there anything that you don't enjoy about playing netball, or that you find challenging?
- How long do you think you will keep playing netball for? When/why do you think you will stop playing netball?
- Who are some of your role models in netball (or sport)? Why do you look up to them?
- Can you tell me a bit about what it's like to be a young woman in 2010?
- What opportunities do you think that you have as a young women in the 21st century that women of previous generations didn't have? Can you give examples?