Women, sport and ethnicity : exploring experiences of difference in netball

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WOMEN, SPORT AND ETHNICITY: EXPLORING EXPERIENCES OF DIFFERENCE IN NETBALL

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Certificate of Originality

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, nor material to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at UNSW or any other educational institution except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis. Any contribution made to the research by others, with whom I have worked at UNSW or elsewhere, is explicitly acknowledged in the thesis.

I also declare that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work, except to that assistance from others in the project's design and conception or in style, presentation and linguistic expression is acknowledged.

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates how sports organisations and discourses have impacted on the sports participation of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Australia. A series of national participation studies have documented that women from minority ethnic backgrounds have significantly lower participation rates in sports and physical activity than Anglo-Australian women. However, the explanations and dimensions of this difference have not been examined in previous research. The experiences of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are used in this thesis to explore sports discourses and organisation and the embodiments of their interrelationship.

The present research proposes that sports organisations and discourses within Australia have historically served to marginalise women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The arguments for this position are explored using a local narrative which details the situated nature of women's experiences of sports. These experiences are located within a historical context that traces migration policies, the growth and development of sports and women's social relations since white settlement of Australia. It is argued that contemporary sports discourses and organisation are inextricably tied to Australia's colonial and imperialist past.

Theories of ethnicity, gender and sports are analysed. The theoretical perspective taken in this thesis builds on feminist ideologies and ethnicity studies. Empirical analysis is undertaken using gender relations to situate sport as a site of cultural struggles best understood through investigations of history and diversity. Aspects of power, control and influence are central to this thesis.

The empirical component of this thesis uses secondary data sources, surveys and interviews to investigate the research proposition. This is achieved on two levels. The first level interrogates existing data to create a macro level analysis of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in sports. A survey of 972 schoolgirls

was undertaken to collect information on sports participation and attitudes to sports. This was followed by 30 interviews with women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds that explored individual sports experiences and perspectives on sports.

The second level of investigation employed the case study of netball to examine the research question as it related to a specific sports organisation. The case study component of the research involved document and archival analysis, a survey of 372 netball players and interviews with 18 women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and former and current netball administrators.

The thesis analyses the empirical data as it relates to the organisation and discourse of sports in Australia. The principal conclusion reached is that sports organisation and discourses are located within a societal power structure that places women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds on its margins. Sports participation is predicated on conformity to existing cultural practices and expectations and it does little to facilitate cultural diversity. The women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who participated in the research did not perceive sports as particularly inclusive of gender and culture. The examination of netball demonstrated that netball has not been concerned with 'other' women, rather it has focussed its efforts on appealing to 'mainstream' women. While netball has not explicitly excluded the involvement of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, neither has it actively encouraged cultural diversity.

This thesis makes a contribution to knowledge in the field of sports studies with its empirical research and through the ensuing development of a framework for locating the implications of inclusion or exclusion in sports organisations and discourses. This understanding can be used to assess and inform future sports policy development and practice. Principally, the thesis seeks to acknowledge and legitimise the sports experiences of women from diverse backgrounds and in doing so provides insights into a better theoretical understanding about the nexus of gender, ethnicity and sports.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND THESIS OVERVIEW

1.0 Introduction

In this introductory chapter the background to the present research study will be provided along with an outline of the principal theoretical propostions. The chapter will also set out the research problem and the associated research questions that the thesis seeks to address. The justification for the research and a statement of the contribution the thesis makes to the field of sports studies follows. Finally, a brief overview of research methodology will be included along with an outline and diagrammatic representation of the structure of this thesis.

This thesis is an investigation of the sporting experiences of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Australia. Women from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds are a sub-population that has been identified as the 'other' in previous research (hooks, 1989; Prakash, 1994). Sport theorists that have researched 'otherness' suggest that individuals and groups from outside the mainstream have been historically marginalised in dominant discourses of sports (Bhandari, 1991; Hargreaves, 1992; Long *et al*, 1997). In Australia, the under-representation of this sub-group of women has been quantitatively documented across all dimensions of sports involvement. Previous studies have indicated that women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are significantly less likely to participate in sports activities (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998) engage in physical activity (Armstrong, Bauman and Davies 2000) or become sports spectators (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998). Women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are also less likely to hold either volunteer roles or paid positions in sports organisations (Fitzpatrick and Brimage, 1998). However, existing research does not explore on why this under-representation occurs. Neither does it comment on how females from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds think about and experience sports. The research undertaken for this thesis seeks to explore how the construction of sports discourses and the organisation of sports have influenced these women's sports experiences. It will be argued that the formation of gender and ethnicity relations in sports organisations has been constituted by culturally

institutionalised meanings, actions and explanations that are systemically exclusionary of women from diverse cultural backgrounds. As such, this thesis responds to the call to action by many sports studies academics who have suggested that research about migrant women and sports has been neglected for far too long (Costa and Guthrie, 1994; Hall, 1996; Hargreaves, 1994; Theberge and Birrell, 1994a). The research focuses on the intersecting domains of gender, sports and ethnicity and the implications thereof for sports theory and practice. It has been previously identified that existing research on this topic is sparse (Adair and Vamplew, 1997; Australian Sports Commission, 2000; Booth and Tatz, 2000; Hall, 1996; Mosely, 1997; Rowe and Lawrence, 1996). Given the identified gap in sports studies, this thesis has the potential to provide a better theoretical and practical understanding of sports, gender and cultural diversity.

Women's studies, sports studies and migration studies have each developed their own philosophical and conceptual approaches to researching their constituent populations but each has seemingly neglected theory development about the nexus between women, sports and ethnicity. Over the last few decades feminist studies have extensively and intensively debated the role that cultural institutions play in promulgating male hegemony; the ensuing power relations that are created, maintained and reinforced by these institutions; and the opportunities that women have to contest and resist a gendered construction of society. Initial feminist treatises proposed grand theories, which were applied to all women, however these theoretical assumptions have now shifted and recent works recognise that 'women' are not a homogenous group. In particular, feminists have delved into issues surrounding the marginalisation of women who do not fit into Eurocentric, middle-class, Western 'White' theorisation within poststructural theory (Prakash, 1994; Spivak, 1988). Poststructural feminist have further suggested that all studies of women need to acknowledge non-white, ethnic minority women and rethink how social identities and forms of knowledge can encompass the 'other' (hooks, 1989).

Research on questions of racial and cultural differences in sports appears to have been slow to respond to poststructural feminist imperatives, with research primarily located within androcentric paradigms (Thommson, 1998). Studies of the culturally diverse

female 'other' have only just started to emerge in the sports literature. Up until the 1990s most research on women and sports was essentially ethnocentric and conceptually drew from the experiences of 'White', educated, heterosexual women and women from the dominant cultural group of the society under study (hooks, 1989; Wearing, 1998; Wright and Dewar, 1997). In the sport and ethnicity literature, a predominantly male-focussed theory base has been developed by male researchers (Bale and Sang, 1996; Eiser and Wiggins, 1994; Entine, 1999; Floyd and Shinew, 1999; Hughson, 2000; Jarvie, 1991; Long *et al*, 1997: Mosely, 1994). While there is an increasing body of writing in the migration studies literature on migrant women's general life experiences, very little has been written specifically about the place of sports in their lived experiences.

1.1 Situating the Research Problem

This thesis proposes that women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds living in Australia have been marginalised and excluded from sports discourses and organisations. This exclusion has been perpetuated by sports organisations whose policies and practices have promoted assimilation and acculturalisation, and promulgated cultural stereotypes that have acted to reinforce the non-participation in sports of many women. The under-involvement of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is not under question, it has already been quantified (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998: Bauman *et al*, 1996: Department of the Arts, Sport, Environment, Tourism and Territories, 1991) but the explanations for low levels of sports involvement have not been investigated. Given this starting point the central problem to be addressed in this research will be:

> ***What impact have the discourses and organisation of sports had on women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Australia?***

In order to adequately answer the central question consideration will be given to a two-part subsidiary question:

What are the sports experiences and perceptions of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and are these perceptions and experiences different from those of other women?

The purpose of this thesis is to examine this unexplored territory. The research explores questions about sports organisations and discourses, by examining these within the context of the lived experiences of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Issues of power and control, motivation, the nature of female participation, sports' ambiguities in emancipating and restricting people involved in it and conflicts related to cultural and gender roles, are all intertwined in this study.

In this thesis *discourse* refers to, 'the constructed nature of people and reality … arguing against grand narratives and large-scale theoretical systems such as functionalism, emphasizing the power/knowledge connection' (Alvesson and Deetz, 1996:192). Discourse will refer to the cultural construction of a language for talking about sports and a way of producing a particular form of knowledge about sports and social practice. In this sense discourse allows for consideration of the 'other', those individuals marginalised or excluded from a particular discourse (Foucault, 1988). Marginalisation is evidenced in the ways sports organisations and practices have been constructed by the dominant culture to create a particular shared meaning.

In this thesis *organisation* refers to, 'sites of situated social action more or less open both to explicitly organised and formal disciplinary knowledges … and also to conversational practices embedded in the social fabric, such as gender, ethnic and other culturally defined social relations' (Clegg and Hardy, 1999:4). The analysis of sports organisation will encompass researching the 'reality' of organisations as constituted in the diverse conversations about practices embedded socially in ways of being and ways of organising.

Along with the central research problem, four basic research questions will provide the framework for locating and structuring the empirical data collection.

1. Have discourses of sports influenced the formation and maintenance of gender and ethnic identities and the reproduction of gender and ethnic-specific forms of marginality?
2. What factors influence the involvement of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in sports?
3. How are gender and cultural diversity aspects of access and equity addressed within current sporting policies and practices?
4. How can sports participation opportunities, sports discourses and organisations become more inclusive of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds?

These questions require the selection of research approaches that will allow an in-depth exploration of the role and place of sports discourses and organisations in the lives of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds within Australia. The questions will each be addressed using a four-phase data collection and analysis process. In the first phase, questionnaire surveys and individual interviews with women from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds will be used to gather data and canvass opinions and perceptions about sports. Secondly, a case study methodology will be used to explore issues of cultural diversity in netball, the women's team sport with the highest number of female participants in Australia (Australian Sports Commission, 2000). In the third phase, a critical analysis of the literature and empirical data will facilitate theory building. Finally, a framework for interpreting how sports organisations manage cultural diversity is proposed. On the basis of the analysis recommendations will be made that take into consideration issues of access and equity whilst being sensitive to culturally constructed expectations of women in sports. Ultimately the research aims to empirically verify the research propositions and to suggest how the successful management of gender cultural diversity issues in sports organisations can benefit everyone involved.

The investigations required to explore the questions posed in this thesis aim to create a better understanding of the impact of sports discourses, practices and social relations. By finding out more about the place of women from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in sports, how and why they have been located on the margins,

and by positioning the context of their involvement in sports, the multiplicity of sites and sources of power and inquiry are acknowledged. There will be no simple answer to these questions as gender and ethnicity intertwine in complex ways. However, this research can provide the foundations for increased awareness and debate about the issues involved. However, to influence change, the ensuing knowledge creation and exchange needs to move beyond the confines of its academic context and infiltrate the collective consciousness of Australian sports organisations. To this end a number of pragmatic reasons for sports organisations to effectively manage gender and cultural diversity are outlined.

Given the inadequate conceptualisation about the nexus of women, sports and ethnicity in previous research and literature, this study is well placed to make a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge. It does so by listening to the stories of women who do not belong to the dominant cultural group and creating new understanding of sports from their experiences. It is not intended that the research will generate a grand theory on women, ethnicity and sports. Instead, the resulting analysis seeks to provide insights into sports discourses and organisations and give validity to the experiences of the women who participate in the research. The research will also provide the basis for further investigations of other diversity issues in sports organisations and discourses. While this thesis will be empirically limited to women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Australia, the ideas and concepts generated will provide frameworks that future investigations could fruitfully expand beyond the boundaries of this study.

1.2 Justification of the Research Topic

Why study sports and their place in the collective social life of women from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds? There have been many debates in the last few decades about the way in which sports have been used to construct, maintain and legitimise popular images of masculinity and femininity and a homogenised ethnocentric identity. One aspect of this discussion, the framework of this thesis, relates to the reproduction of gender and ethnic minority inequities through sports discourses and practices and the premise that practice and discourse are intertwined with the cultural construction of femininity and ethnicity. The nexus of women,

sports and ethnicity provides the opportunity to explore how the interconnectedness of each dimension impacts on its constituent theorisation.

Academic ambivalence about the examination, conceptualisation and theory building required to understand the nexus of these three domains is almost iniquitous given Australia's current stage of development and demographic composition. The historical marginalisation of women and ethnic minorities has been recognised but new paradigms in which to locate the problem and develop solutions are under-developed. If past inequities are to be challenged, contested and changed, the way that we currently think and act needs to be deconstructed and reconstructed to be inclusive of gender and culture.

1.2.1 Sports Participation

Is participation in sports really able to offer valid insights into the social construction of Australian society? It is argued here that sports are key 'players' in the construction of social relations and practice and that sports have significantly contributed to the development of an Anglo-Australian culture and a parochial Australian identity.

Australia's fixation with sports and its associated attributes has been the source of continued debate and disputation over the last century (Booth and Tatz, 2000; Cashman, 1995; Rowe and Lawrence, 1991; Stoddart, 1988). Much of the early literature on the place of sports in Australian society was uncritical and espoused an ubiquitously positive view about the contribution of sports to the development of the country's citizenship (Howell and Howell, 1987). Sports participation was perceived as useful to make the country's men, and to a much lesser extent some women, strong and fit. It was suggested that sports provided outlets for physical aggression and facilitated the development of mateship, while projecting a masculine image. It also produced sports heroes that the nation could iconicise. In a history of Australia, MacIntyre (1999) suggested that sporting heroes occupied an exalted place in the country's imagination. The following is a typical statement about the passion with which Australian sports have been viewed:

> If we have a truly national obsession, it has to be sport. We play it, watch it, read and chatter about it, wallow in it. Sport levels the unlevel: for males at least, sport opens conversation, sustains communication in taxis, pubs, parties, and between fathers and sons. It bridges classes … diverts… unites … educates (Tatz, 1996:15).

Until the late 1980s most chroniclers described sports as the great equaliser, the arena in which all persons are treated similarly regardless of their background or social standing. However, this long held and widely perpetuated belief about sports practice is facing increasing academic scrutiny and contention. Booth and Tatz (2000), Adair and Vamplew (1997), McKay (1991), Stoddart (1986) and Rowe (1996), among others, have recently been openly critical about these 'myths' of Australian sporting egalitarianism and have clearly demonstrated that for many people sports have been sites for the manifestation of power, exploitation, discrimination and inequality. It has been claimed that sports have played a central role in the development of an 'Australian' identity and a supporting role in the maintenance of existing power relationships, dominant cultural values and institutionalised discrimination (Stoddart, 1994).

As discussed in the introduction, the dominant discourses in Australian sports have been situated in the 'white' male experience. Men have constructed and controlled most dimensions of sports from the fields of play, to funding, administration and media coverage. It is therefore not surprising that men from the dominant cultural group have also written most of the literature on sports. Coincidently, most academic analyses and discussions of Australian sports have focussed on the experiences of men. Rowe and Lawrence (1996:4) maintained that, since many of the early sports histories were highly descriptive and uncritical, these histories neglected, 'the degree to which structural social cleavages (founded in class, gender, race, ethnicity, age and so on) have substantially shaped the development of sports, and how sports as a social institution have been heavily implicated in the reproduction of such conflicts and inequalities'. Consequently, the critical examination of sports discourse and how its current formation impacts on the lives of those who exist on the margins, outside the culturally mainstream male grouping, has been left largely unchronicled and unconceptualised. Or in other words:

> Elite athletes in Australia generally come from affluent, Anglo-Saxon backgrounds in which they have received considerable parental and peer support for their participation in sport. Thus we have a case of an advantaged section of Australian society being explicitly provided with greater opportunities to succeed than less advantaged ones. (Stoddart, 1986:122).

Only recently, has the attention of sports scholars been extended to, Australian women (Bryson, 1990; Burroughs, Ashburn and Seebohm, 1995; Duncan, 1994; Embrey, 1982, 1995, 1997; Mikosza and Phillips, 1999; Stell 1991; Wright and Clarke, 1999), ethnic minority males (Booth and Tatz, 2000; Hughson 2000; Mosely, 1994; Mosely *et al.* 1997) and Aborigines (Tatz, 1981, 1984, 1985). However, writings about women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are still few and far between (Taylor and Toohey, 1999).

1.2.2 Cultural Diversity in Sports Research

Minority ethnic communities have been subject to widespread systemic discriminatory practices perpetrated under the banner of various government policies promoting cultural purity, assimilation, integration and multiculturalism (Castles, 1992). The role that sports have played in promoting and maintaining discriminatory policies have increasingly been the subject of research on sports and ethnicity. However, this research has been narrowly constituted. To date investigations of minority ethnic involvement in sports have been chiefly focussed on men and soccer (Hallinan and Krotee, 1993; Harrison, 1979; Hughson, 1993,1997,1999; Mosely, 1992,1994). Historical studies of sports have been undertaken in the Jewish community (Hughes, 1999) and the Greek community (Georgakis, 1999) and are the subject of a book on sporting immigrants (Mosely *et al*, 1997).

It is recognised that the inclusion of Aboriginal men and women in the sports literature has been equally sparse (Rigney, 1993; Paraschak, 1992). Tatz's work (1981, 1984, 1995) has particularly highlighted the place of sports in Aboriginal life and the systematic discrimination faced by this group of people. Other works have specifically focussed on Aboriginal involvement in male sports, such as Australian Rules (Hallinan, Bruce and Coram, 1999), cricket (Daly, 1994a; Howell and Howell, 1986; Nadel, 1993; Whimpress, 1992, 1997) and have been dominated by historical rather than

contemporary examinations. However, the present research will not encompass Aboriginal women, as their situation in Australian society is historically unique and culturally very different from that of migrant women. Furthermore, Aboriginal feminists suggest that it is time that Indigenous Australians represent themselves in cultural analyses. For too long 'outsiders' have judged their culture and participation by inappropriate 'white' standards which have perpetuated racism that privileged whiteness (Wilson, 1996). While acknowledging that Indigenous Australian women have been marginalised in sports opportunities and discourses, in this thesis Wilson's call for 'in-house' research and locating the study of Indigenous women and sports to the research agenda within Aboriginal studies is respected.

1.2.3 Women and Sports

Why focus on women in sports? The significance of the gender dimension of sports is well documented. The concept of gender refers to socially and culturally constructed differences between males and females that are based in relationships of power. Society builds and perpetuates expectations and behaviours that are applied to each sex and these dimensions of gender are associated with concepts of femininity and masculinity. Sports are a microcosm of the society in which we live and in a male-dominated society sporting participation is still largely equated with masculinity (Riordan, 1984). In delimiting what is acceptable feminine or masculine behaviour, our current attitudes are shaped by traditional cultural mores and beliefs that have deemed it 'unfeminine' for women to partake in many physically demanding sports. Although involvement in sports for men typically reinforces and promotes masculinity, many female athletes are viewed to have failed as women because, in certain profound symbolic ways, they have 'become' men (Willis, 1982). It is for these reasons that gender relations are central to the examination of sports participation of women. In Australia, women have been continuously subjugated by hegemonic cultural practices in sports that have acted to disenfranchise, disempower and constrain their sports opportunities (Bryson, 1990).

It has also been argued that sports should be a prominent women's issue because women are currently disadvantaged in sports (Nelson, 1993). Men's sports dominate the media; men receive disproportionate sports funding; and sports empower men.

Women's sports participation should equally be able to empower women. Given that sports have been attributed with the potential to be constraining or liberating, conforming or challenging, exclusionary or inclusionary, stagnant or dynamic, the dualism in sports should be further examined to ascertain just what role it plays in a given context for a particular group.

Feminists have suggested that part of problem with sports is that its definition has been bound in historically constructed patriarchally based connotations (Theberge and Birrell, 1994b). They have suggested that use of 'sports' should be expanded to encompass a more diverse range of activities when researching women and the informal sports participation of women should be recognised as just as valid as engagement in formally organised sports. Research on women and sports should encompass these wider conceptualisations of sports. Hargreaves (1994) suggested that sports should be viewed in their broadest context, encompassing recreational as well as competitive, structured physical activity as defined in the *Council of Europe Sport for All Charter*. The use of 'sports' within this thesis will be widened to embody these feminist concerns about patriarchal hegemonic practices and issues of marginalisation. A working definition is provided in section 1.4.

1.2.4 Women, Sports and Ethnicity

The study of the intersection of sports, gender and ethnicity has the potential to provide a reflective commentary on Australian society. This research has the potential to offer unique insights into the nature of the construction and manifestation of power, identity and culture within a culturally pluralistic society. The study of sports offers a window into an historical process where men and women, social classes and racial and ethnic groups, struggle over different versions of how to live, how to work and play and what to value (Pope, 1993). Critical engagement with the theoretical concept of cultural hegemony clarifies the complex ways dominant groups and ideas come to permeate society and legitimate particular class and political structures. It is not simply a matter of quantifying domination by analysis of participation rates in sports but critically examining, 'the discursive terrain, the playing fields where racism and sexuality converge' (hooks, 1990:75). Ethnicity and gender are not merely used as categoric variables; the nexus acts to exacerbate

singular experiences of racism or sexism, and thus significantly affects the nature of the sporting experience.

Challenging current paradigms of sports is particularly relevant for contextualisation of the lived experiences of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and recognising the role sports can play in changing societal expectations and constraints. Changes in women's sports and women's experiences are intertwined with women's position in society (Theberge and Birrell, 1994a). This research aims to move beyond an assumed gender universalism and homogenity of all females, which has hidden the realities of marginalised women's sporting experiences. It also seeks to provide the basis from which to propose a process of change within Australian sports. Change that recognises the current inequities in sports and challenges these inequities will, as a consequence, result in more inclusive sports discourses and practices.

The premise of this research is that not only does the study of sports offer a vehicle through which to interpret society, it also provides an avenue to instigate social and attitudinal change. Sports have the potential to be used as agents of change. 'Sport's symbolic, affective and ideological weight, when harnessed effectively, represents a formidable weapon in struggles for and against equality and social justice' (Rowe, 1996:143). While sports can be used as sites of cultural reproduction of dominant ideologies and power relations they can also be used to provide avenues for resistance, challenge, change and transformation at a personal level and within broader societal structures. However, changing sports discourses on gender and ethnicity relations will not be an easy task as it has been suggested that many sports administrators are inherently conservative and cautious of alternative approaches (Stoddart, 1986).

Provision of a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between sports, gender and ethnicity, may enable policy makers and providers of sports to better address the needs of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Sporting provision, to be effective and equitable, should recognise the culturally diverse composition of Australian society and be open to innovations that are gender and culturally inclusive and that seek to deconstruct and reconceptualise the

discourses and organisational structures which currently alienate non-Anglo-Australian females.

Sports involvement does not interest everyone. Therefore, it is acknowledged that not all females from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds want to participate in sports. However, it is also recognised that participation might be desired but may not occur or may be constrained because of issues related to opportunity, equity, access and even exclusion. The literature on this topic suggests that it is likely that sub-groups, such as women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, have been marginalised by general society, stereotyped in their sporting involvement and subsequently have experienced various degrees of exclusionary attitudes and practices in sports. The research will explore this issue of exclusion and determine if sports are used to contribute to the fostering of gender and cultural inequalities. However, it is critical that the role of sport as an emancipator, a vehicle through which to challenge stereotypes or resist social construction of gendered and marginalised identities, should also be investigated.

In justifying this topic from a more pragmatic perspective, women from non-English-speaking backgrounds comprise nearly 23 per cent of the Australian population (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 1999d) and are thus a substantive sub-grouping within the community. However, as noted in the introductory section to this chapter, the rates of sports participation of women born in non-English speaking countries are substantially lower than those of other women. Low levels of physical activity also contribute to poorer quality of life and higher risks for health problems (Bauman *et al*, 1996). These women are confronted by a sports environment which is intensely masculine (Bryson, 1990), particularly parochial (Rowe, 1996) and often exclusionary (Taylor and Toohey, 1999). In sum, the experiences of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in sports are not well understood and need to be conceptualised in context of historical factors and conditions which have led to the current situation.

Sports participation has many physical, psychological and social benefits that contribute to the quality of an individual's life. Sports can also be a source of increased self-

esteem, personal autonomy and social influence (Boutilier and San Giovanni, 1983). No person should be denied access to sports based on gender or ethnicity, thus access and equity considerations for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are of importance. Sports participation can provide ethnic minority females an avenue by which to challenge patriarchal and ethnic stereotypes through personal empowerment. If so chosen, female involvement in sports can also play apart in transforming gender relations by confronting the gender hierarchy and other power relations, such as class and race, that sports currently preserve (Theberge and Birell, 1994a). Paradoxically, sports also have the potential to be used to challenge and change dominant ideologies associated with the role of women in society.

1.2.5 Netball as the Case Study

The final aspect of the research is to decide which sport should be used for the applied case study. The team game of netball will be used due to its popularity amongst female sports participants. Netball is the highest participation team sport for women in Australia. Netball is played across all states and territories. It is a sport that women have played with relatively little social criticism since its introduction in the early twentieth century and it has been socially perceived as a 'feminine' sport (Jobling, 1994). The research will explore the place of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in a sport that is clearly situated in 'mainstream' Anglo-Australia. This thesis will chart an historical narrative on the evolution of netball and provide the framework for analysing both women's involvement in the sport and the much broader social construction of women's place and identity in Australian society. It will also be used to investigate how one sport has responded to an increasingly diversified cultural environment and to assess its inclusiveness of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

1.2.6 Conclusion

The academic contribution of this research is three-fold. Firstly, it will further develop current knowledge and understanding about the experiences of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in sports. It will do this by investigating the inclusiveness of dominant sports discourses thus providing a conceptual framework from which to structure a re-interpretation of the 'reality' of

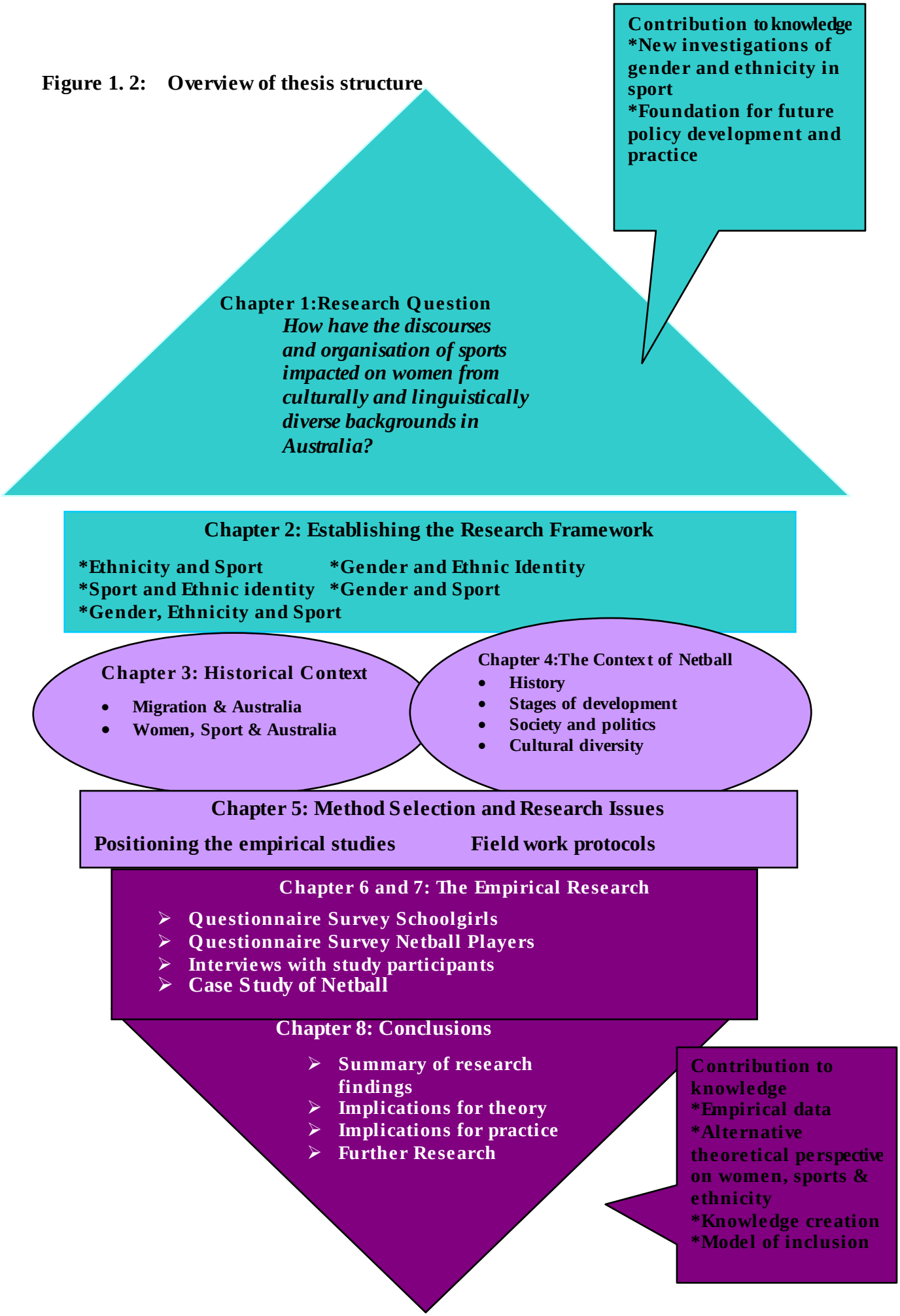
sports from the perspective of the 'other'. Secondly, the research will identify gender and culturally restrictive management practices and suggest inclusive strategies. This is so that women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds can be provided with greater access to sports opportunities that meet their needs. Increasing the opportunities and the number of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to engage in sports has the potential to improve their health, well-being and their quality of life. Thirdly, the research empirically investigates the specific research propositions outlined in this chapter and locates the outcomes in a framework for situating the management of gender and cultural diversity in sports organisations. It will do so via qualitative, quantitative and case study techniques. Employing this mixed method approach makes a methodological contribution to the field of sports studies.

1.3 Outline of the Thesis

1.3.1 Overview

The central focus of the study is to investigate the complex interrelationships between women, sport and ethnicity. The thesis seeks to develop insights into the relationship between the discourses and structures of sports and the implications that these have for equity and access in sports opportunities for ethnic minority women. The interrogation of these issues is addressed through an analysis of literature, secondary data inquiry and the collection and exploration of primary data. A directed study of netball is used to isolate and explore the issues involved through a case study methodology. The outcomes of the research aim to provide a better understanding of sports for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Consequently, the research will suggest strategies, which can be used to improve access and equity for these women through future policy development and encouragement of culturally inclusive practices in sports organisations. Figure 1.2 provides a diagrammatic representation of the three-section thesis structure and the interrelationships between the discussions presented in each of the chapters.

Figure 1. 2: Overview of thesis structure



1.3.2 Section One – Introduction of Research Questions and Framework

Chapter Two will critically review literature pertinent to women and sports, ethnicity and sports, and the intersection of the three key areas of gender, ethnicity and sports. It will analyse the different ways in which these dimensions have been theorised. The chapter will also argue that the sports experiences and perspectives of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are 'different' from Anglo-Australian women. In consequence, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds require differently constructed sports opportunities and will have different experiences of sports. It will be further posited that contemporary understandings of sports are constructed through a discourse based on the assumption that sports are essentially masculine activities. Previously unexplored contentions of whether or not ethnocentricity is deeply embedded within sports discourses will be explored in relation to women. Existing literature suggests that groups such as women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have been marginalised in general society and stereotyped in their sporting involvement. Additionally, it will be proposed that they have faced exclusionary attitudes and practices in sports, which have acted to compromise these women's level of involvement. However, this hypothesised notion of exclusion has not been fully explored in existing theory and research. The ensuing chapters of the thesis will investigate these propositions.

1.3.2 Section Two – The Research Context

Chapter Three will provide an overview of the history of white settlement and migration policies in Australia and explore how immigration decisions and debates have shaped the subsequent cultural character of the country. These discussions will contribute to the understanding and analysis of migrant women's experiences of life in a new country. Tracing government policies of assimilation, multiculturism and cultural diversity will provide the basis for examining the impact of these aspects on sports discourse and organisation. The historical treatment of women in sports in Australia will be simultaneously presented in this chapter and use examples to highlight the oppressive nature of sports provision for female participants.

Chapter Four shifts the focus to the case study sport of netball. The historical development of netball as a female sport will be outlined along with analyses of the place of netball in social relations and practices. It will be argued that netball is an example of the embodiment of a 'compliant femininity' in sports, and that this feminine emphasis has provided netball with an 'escape-clause' from the expectations of masculinity associated with many other sports. The place of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in netball will be analysed within a cultural and historical context. Netball has attracted large numbers of female players but few players from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Chapters Three and Four will provide the platform for the empirical data collection and analysis.

The methodological approaches and techniques chosen for the empirical research are subsequently detailed in Chapter Five. The research investigation will focus on the collection and analysis of both quantitative questionnaire survey and qualitative interview data to explore the research problem and issues outlined in the previous section. The essence of the research is embodied in the use of qualitative approaches, which will allow women from culturally, and linguistically diverse backgrounds to give voice to their opinions and tell their stories. The interview narratives are the focal point of the study whereby the words, experiences and perspectives of the women interviewed will provide the fundamental material to address the research problem. The questionnaire surveys of schoolgirls and netball players are used in complement with the interview material. Collectively, these methods seek to establish if the experiences of sports for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are influenced by the way sports are constructed and if these women are marginalised in current sports discourses. The research acknowledges and is sensitive to the issue of difference and the diversity of women's experiences and subjectivities. Methodologically, it is paramount to avoid stereotyping women into ethnically based and socially constructed categories in both the data collection and data analysis.

1.3.3 Section Three – Empirical Research

The findings of the empirical research are presented in two segments. Chapter Six contains the macro level survey and interview data, which address the question of sports

participation and inclusionary practice. The interview narratives about the experiences of sports for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds form the core of the analysis in this chapter. Together with the quantitative data, the results indicate that social relationships and institutions in sports produce, maintain and perpetuate gender and cultural inequities. The analysis suggests that sports policies, practices and discourses have been historically constructed and contemporarily maintained as exclusionary for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This proposition is further explored in the case study of netball, which is presented in Chapter Seven. Data from the surveys and interviews indicate that netball is perceived by females from ethnic minority backgrounds to have lower levels of constraining practices than most other sports. It is argued that netball organisations have positioned the sport within an assimilationist paradigm of thinking and provision, they accept players from all cultural backgrounds but do not specifically acknowledge cultural diversity or ethnic difference. Chapter Eight concludes with the argument that discourses of sports have promulgated cultural stereotypes and have served to place women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds on the margins of sport. A framework for managing gender and cultural diversity within sports organisations is presented as a culmination of the research investigation.

1.4 Terminology

There are several terms that are referred to throughout this thesis and therefore require clarification of intended use. In the literature reviewed in this thesis a differentiating terminology has been used to empirically group people according to their country of origin for the purpose of identifying commonalties and to explore experiences of culturally constituted difference. These groupings and their associated labels carry both cultural and symbolic content. Terms such as 'non-English-speaking background'; 'ethnic minority'; and 'from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds' are not totally preferable options, as their use may imply an 'us and them' position, and their use also puts a homogeneous label on a heterogeneous set of individuals. However, these terms are used in this thesis because they are expressions in common use in both academic and public discussions.

In this thesis it is argued that ethnicity is a site of cultural contestation and symbolic elaboration. While the problematic conceptualisation of the categorisation of individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds is acknowledged here, it is countered by the contention that marginalised populations should not be ignored because of confronting classification dilemmas. Ethnicity is fraught with complexities but so is gender and just because the experiences and identities of women from and within each ethnic group are different, this difference should not limit the exploration of commonalities. Critical variables, such as age, class, education, religion and sexuality, impact on sporting experience and perceptions and will be explored in the research. This research will explore both inter-group and intra-group similarities and differences.

As evidenced in the arguments above, the use of particular terms to describe or refer to a person or group of people is a sensitive area, both politically and practically. Terminology used is located within a social reality of changing notions of what is acceptable. The following terms, presented in alphabetical order, are outlined to clarify their intended meanings in this thesis.

ACCULTURATION: This is the process of adopting cultural practices, language, accepted norms and beliefs to that, which is expected by the dominant culture. In Australia it has referred to the adherence to values, beliefs and customs that are associated with 'real' Australians. Acculturation acknowledges cultural and social differences and suggests that full assimilation is not always possible and often not desirable. The tenets of acculturation arose out of criticisms of assimilation theory and are based on the premise that assimilation can only occur when individuals are able to fully identify with all aspects of the host culture (Mosely *et al*, 1997).

ANGLO-AUSTRALIAN: This term is used to link Australians of British antecedents, such as English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh descent. Its use is not intended to imply a single identity but rather a common heritage.

ASSIMILATION: This is the process of becoming culturally and socially absorbed into the mainstream culture. Assimilation assumes that minority groups will change

their culture to become part of a mono-cultural society. Homogeneity is valorised. In the case of Australia both Labor and Liberal parties actively pursued assimilation as a political stance until the mid 1960s. Australia was presented as a culturally homogenous society based on British values and institutions. Assimilation aimed to create an environment where, 'everyone would learn English, everyone would look basically alike, and everyone would share values, beliefs and practices' (Jupp, 1992:25).

CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUND: People who originate from countries where English is not the first language of the population. This term is used interchangeable with ethnic minority.

ETHNIC MINORITY: A designated social group within a cultural and social system that achieves its distinction on the basis of complex and variable traits such as religion, language, country of birth, race or physical characteristics (adapted from Webster's Dictionary, 1987). In this thesis 'ethnic minority' is used in reference to people from non-English-speaking backgrounds living in Australia. It is used interchangeably in this thesis with culturally and linguistically diverse background.

ETHNOCENTRISM: This refers to a collective historical referent in the sense of one ethnic grouping in relation to others. It is the level of identification with one cultural and the collectively application of that culture to all aspects of life. In the Australian context it refers to the dominance of an Anglo-Australian collective identity.

FIRST-GENERATION: A person who was born overseas but became a resident of a new country, in this case Australia. Second-generation refers to the children of first-generation individuals. These definitions are based on how the Australian Bureau of Statistics uses the terms in their data collection.

MIGRANT: A person who has moved from one country to another with the intention of residing in the new country. Reasons for the move may include personal, political, or economic factors.

HEGEMONY: Hegemony theory argues that the dominant group in society is constantly working to gain the consent of those outside the group. The process is dynamic and the struggle between the two groups is shaped by the context of the situation and is never constant over time.

MULTICULTURALISM: Multiculturalism is the existence of an overarching framework of shared values that acts as a lynchpin of unity in a multi-ethnic state (Smolicz, 1998). It assumes that ethnic groups will preserve their cultural heritage. In Australia it officially comprise three main elements. These are:

1. *Cultural identity*. The right of all Australians to express and share their individual cultural heritage, including their language and religion.
2. *Social justice*. The right of all Australians to equality of treatment and opportunity, and the removal of barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, gender or place of birth.
3. *Economic efficiency*. The need to maintain, develop and utilise effectively the skills of all Australians regardless of background (Jupp,1989: vii).

Therefore in Australia multiculturalism includes the premise that all Australians should have an overriding commitment to Australia and accept its basic structures including the constitution and rule of law, tolerance and equality, parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as the national language and equality of the sexes (Jupp, 1989).

NON-ENGLISH-SPEAKING BACKGROUND (NESB): This term encompasses people who migrated to Australia and whose first language is not English. It also relates to all subsequent generations. Many government reports, policies and documents use the term NESB. It does not include Australia's Indigenous population.

SPORTS: For the purposes of this study sports has been viewed in its broadest context, encompassing recreational as well as competitive, structured physical activity as defined in Article 2 of the *Council of European Sports Charter* (1992). The Charter states that: Sports refers to all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels.

1.5 Delimitations

The population studied in this research is confined to females from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and therefore does not include Indigenous Australian women or women born in other English speaking countries. The study is also limited to first and second-generation migrants. The empirical data collection was conducted in the Sydney metropolitan area and an adjoining region. This location was deemed viable as Sydney has the highest concentration of people born in non-English-speaking countries of any area in Australia. No claims for significance of the research beyond these delimitations will be made.

1.6 Summary

This chapter has provided the foundations for this thesis. Theoretical frameworks and a conceptual understanding of generic issues relating to women and sports underpin this study. However, the central focus of this thesis is to create a better understanding about the discursive formation of sports as related to women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. A theme within this framework is the relationship of sports to the construction and maintenance of ideals of femininity, masculinity and ethnocentricity. It is recognised that there are multiple subjectivities of women and multiple femininities and that this research will not be able to capture all the variations possible. However, the use of sports to either constrain or reconstruct an individual or group identity is investigated here through the interview narratives of women from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The tensions between compliance, resistance, structural and cultural constraints are examined and discussed in both conceptual and applied terms. The possibilities of using sports to provide a challenge to the dominant discourses on gender and ethnicity, and to allow women the freedom to construct their own spaces where they are comfortable engaging in sports are dominant themes in this work. As this study argues, conventional assumptions about ethnic minority women need to be renegotiated within different cultural contexts and extended to allow for individual interpretations within broader discourses of sports.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL CONCERNS

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter the literature review will build on the concepts outlined in Chapter One by examining different theoretical perspectives on ethnicity, sports and identity, sports and ethnicity and women in sports. The purpose of these discussions is to contextualise the research questions and to develop a conceptual framework as the basis for the empirical investigations undertaken in this study. Consequently, the chapter will also examine the theoretical relationships between dominant sports discourses in society, the marginalisation of certain groups from these discourses and hegemonic structures and practices perpetuated by sports organisations. The theoretical approaches will be referred to further in the methodology chapter.

Figure 2.1 is a diagrammatic representation of published research and literature relevant to the topic of study. As indicated by the relative size of the circles there is a substantive body of both sports and feminist writings. However, the research undertaken on ethnicity in sports and women in sports is considerably less voluminous. Literature that examines the nexus of all three, gender, ethnicity and sports, is very limited. To avoid becoming too diffuse, the central focus of the review will be women and sports in Australia.

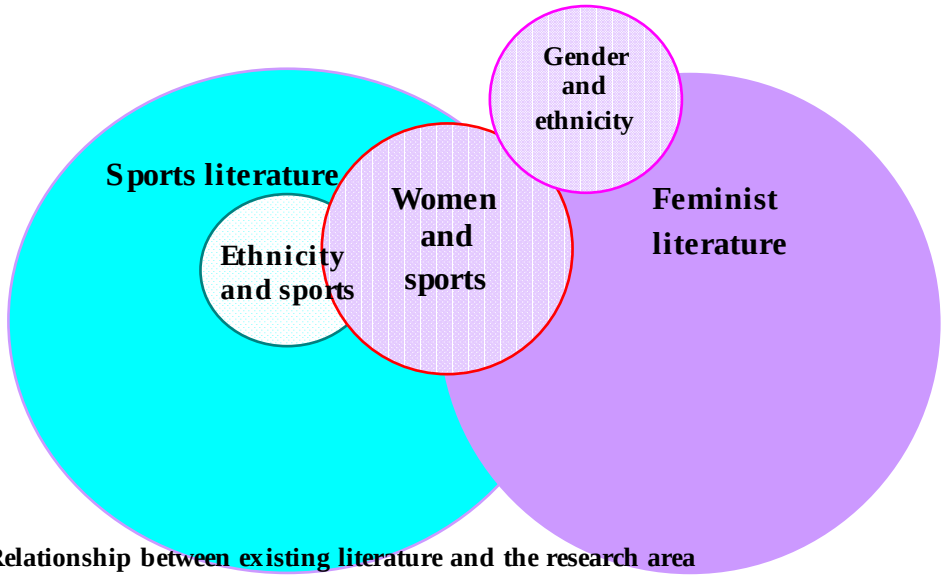


Figure 2.1 Relationship between existing literature and the research area

2.1 Interpreting 'Ethnicity'

While the use of the term 'ethnicity' in this thesis was defined in Chapter One, its interpretation in the general literature reviewed for this thesis varies widely. The purpose of this chapter is to clarify the more widely accepted meanings of ethnicity before deciding on the particular interpretation appropriate for this thesis. Definitional problems concerning the term ethnicity are constantly raised in the literature. Due to the sensitive nature of the term much of the language of ethnicity discourse is fraught with ambiguity and indeterminacy because scholars interpret its meaning in different ways. The usage of 'ethnicity' is therefore chaotic and challenging. It has been taken to refer to a range of phenomena from the deepest divide in Australian society to a preference for soccer teams (Webber, 1992). Even more expansive is one recent academic contention that all residents of a country are in one way or another 'ethnics' (Eisen and Wiggins, 1994). If this sweeping definition were applied to Australia's population everyone could be grouped in some way or fashion by his or her cultural differences and every person would belong to an ethnic grouping. While this definition might be technically correct, such a broad based interpretation of 'ethnic' is seldom applied in the ethnicity literature, where instead 'ethnic' generally takes on a meaning associated with minority cultural or race groupings. Nevertheless, it is a useful reminder that the common usage of the term ethnic as 'the other' does not acknowledge that mainstream Australian culture also has an ethnic basis.

Is ethnic identity fixed or is it fluid? How do we deal with the challenges to this term that result from migration, colonisation, assimilation and intermarriage? These are issues that make the consistent interpretation of the term 'ethnic' in any research quite problematic (Cronin and Mayall, 1998:4). Consequently, it should be noted that the literature reviewed in this section may employ other interpretations and uses of this term which vary from the way 'ethnic' has been delimited in the terminology section (see Chapter One). These interpretations range from mere semantic variances through to fundamentally different philosophical bases.

It has been suggested that 'ethnicity' is best viewed in terms of a complexity of relationships that are continually being negotiated and renegotiated (Mosely, 1997a). Viewed from this perspective ethnicity is relational and changeable in regard to

acculturation and multiculturalism. This conceptualisation of ethnicity suggests various meanings and interpretations. A similar type of differentiation is reflected in Gans' (1979) work on ethnic identity in America. Gans found that young socially mobile professionals expressed their ethnicity in a more 'symbolic' way than their less mobile counterparts who 'lived' their ethnicity. For the former group their ethnic origins provided them with just one, of many, identities. However, in the case of the latter group, their ethnicity provided them with their prevailing identity.

The debate about how ethnic identities are formed has been approached from a range of perspectives in the literature. In essence two schools of thought have emerged; the *primordialists* who situate ethnicity in the psyche, where it is deep-rooted and persistent; and the *situationalists* who see ethnicity as emerging from the contingencies of a person's situation (Bottomley, 1991). Barth's (1969) classic work on ethnicity, which combined elements of both primordality and situationalism, suggested that people could choose their ethnic identity from the different categories that they belonged to and thus often move in and out of sub-group memberships. Barth also noted that ethnic distinctions are not necessarily compromised in the acculturation process and the retention of cultural differences is not related to the level of contact with the host society. However, Cohen (1969) cautioned that people do not just self-choose an ethnic identity, it can also be attributed to them by others so the choice is not entirely made by the individual. In assessing ethnicity theories Banks (1996) intriguingly concluded that the term has not been defined by what is in the heart or mind, but it has been constructed in the imaginations of social scientists. Regardless of the approach taken, theorists do seem to agree that ethnicity categories are informed by culture, class, history and power dimensions.

In classifying certain groups as 'ethnics' the labelling process itself suggests that these people are somehow different from the mainstream. Their 'otherness' label can then act to reinforce their exclusion (Paraschak, 1996). The extent to which the dominant group in the society classifies an ethnic group as the 'other' has also been related to racial distinguishably. Using the example of Indians living in Australia, Manan (2000) suggested that in Australian society, 'Indian' is used as a general signifier of ethnicity, race, culture, and nation of origin. However, for group members, 'Indian' is a

collective in which the members are linked through the common heritage of a mythic India and a shared discourse of race, nation, and migrancy that allows for unity despite different experiences of migration and variable degrees and manifestations of cultural hybridity. Manan (2000:26) observed that, 'what is particularly significant for the Australian diasporic/ethnic Indian subject is that the racial unity that gives reason to the persistence of the diasporic Indian community is as much a product of the power politics of collective difference as it is a shared history of blood, soil, and language'. In a 'White' dominated country, being 'non-white' is therefore an important variable in the construction of a collective identity. Manan's argument is similar to Puar's (1995) findings on the contradictory nature of second-generation Sikh women's identities in England. Puar argued that perceptions of Sikh women's experiences as racial 'others' have not been able to adequately account for considerations of the intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, cultural politics, appearance, and practice. Puar suggested that South Asian women negotiate their identities through an opposition to 'whiteness' and appear to conform to this identity while simultaneously maintaining another identity through the subversion of dominant perceptions.

While research on ethnic minorities is layered with complexities, it is united in the necessity to consider and better understand the experiences of 'others'. There are two groups of others. The dominant group of 'others' define the rules and have access to power and resources, which they use to reinforce their vision of sports upon the second, group 'others', those outside the mainstream, and thus reproduce a hegemonic order. Contemporary ethnicity research seeks to understand how this socio-cultural and political hegemony of the dominant culture is legitimised and reproduced and therefore universalised. Hegemonic expressions are found in religious practices, historical interpretation, and formation of social science institutions and their forms of knowledge and interpretations of life worlds (Stanfield, 1994). Much of the recent theorising about the 'other' acknowledges that the everyday life experiences of marginalised groups are not incorporated into hegemonic research paradigms, methodologies, interpretations and analyses in all the aforementioned domains and in institutions such as sports organisations. While it is acknowledged in this thesis that the use of 'ethnicity' is fraught with complexities, it has been situated in this research as a method of

classifying individuals based on their country of origin and is used to identify and transgress the current knowledge boundaries of sports studies.

Another consideration in ethnic studies is the fluidity of ethnicity compared with race considerations. In a multicultural society there are many ethnic groups that do not stand out as 'different', however, there are other racial groups that will never be able to fully 'blend' into the host society. For this reason Bhabha (1990) has suggested that complete cultural unity with a nation is impossible. This is particularly the case in countries such as Australia where Anglo-Australian interests dominate the nation's cultural centre. People from other races, particularly Asians or Black Africans, are visibly different. Individuals from these groups are often collectively racialised despite the vast ethnic differences within each of the racial groupings. Indigenous Australians might also be considered as facing similar dilemmas due to their physical appearance. However, their place in Australian society is unique and can not be equated with other ethnic minority groups. It has been suggested that, 'it is impossible to include Aborigines in the image of a consensual unity in diversity without erasing the memory of colonial dispossession, genocide and cultural loss and its continued impact on Aboriginal life' (Stratton and Ang, 1994:16).

2.2 Gender and Ethnic Identity

This section locates gender dimensions within the conceptualisation of ethnicity established in the previous section. As outlined in the justification of this thesis, research that specifically incorporates an understanding of women from minority ethnic groups has not been substantial but is a growing area of academic inquiry. Forerunners such as Martin (1991) have lamented that multiculturalism has been traditionally approached from within a patriarchal paradigm that has generally avoided the issue of female subordination. Martin referred to these approaches as imbued with 'hegemonic ethnocentrism'. Martin has equally charged feminism with this same failing of exclusivity, she has written that, 'the majority of migrant feminists continue to struggle unheard on the margins and, apart from occasional ritual gestures, Anglo-feminism continues at the centre, as the point of reference for difference' (Martin, 1991:126). Such criticisms reflect a growing uneasiness with much feminist theory that has emanated from the experiences of 'White' middle-class Anglo-Australian women.

Only recently have we seen a shift in focus with feminists seeking to legitimise the voices of marginalised women and understand the social context of historical incidents and cultural institutions. This section will identify the key arguments surrounding research about gender and ethnicity and discuss the implications of these in determining an appropriate methodology and conceptual framework for the present research study.

Research in the area of women and migration is sparsely represented in Australian and overseas sources, and has only recently begun to receive scholarly attention (Fincher *et al*, 1994). Seymour (1995:158) has noted that, 'if ethnic minorities have an unheard voice in most records and sources, then female members of such minorities come close to being silenced'. Pearson (1996) has argued that both nation state and minority discourses gloss over or ignore class and gender inequalities. While the inclusion of the experiences of women has begun to appear more frequently in the ethnicity literature, the debate still ensues about the appropriate theoretical underpinnings. Fincher *et al.* (1994:155) reflected that, 'theoretical and substantive progress is hampered by continuing disagreements concerning the relations among gender, class and ethnicity'.

Bottomley, de Lepervanche and Martin have all written extensively on gender and ethnicity in Australia. They have collectively structured their work on the premise that aspects of gender, ethnicity and class fuse together to create a cultural background and this interaction is given more attention than a separate analysis of each category. In her seminal study of Greek-Australians, Bottomley (1979) theorised about ethnic social interaction systems within gender considerations. Bottomley and de Lepervanche's (1984) edited collection on gender, class and ethnicity provided the basis for most subsequent theorisation on this intersection for the following decade. In later work, Bottomley (1991) began to develop notions of a gendered ethnic identity. She reported that participation in ethnic institutions, visits to, and contact with Greece, and marriages to a Greek spouse were important factors in identity construction. However, she also discovered that 'class position, status aspirations and gender were at least as important as ethnicity in the construction of these identities' (1991:98). Constraints, limitations and possibilities created by social structures were revealed as primarily based on class and gender. The interrelationships between ethnic minority women, social conditions and sex roles was further

analysed in Bottomley, de Lepervanche and Martin (1991). However, the theorisation arising from these works is at times compromised by the assumption of a collective helplessness amongst ethnic minority women from the lower classes.

Adding ethnicity as another variable to be studied or separating gender from ethnicity has been identified as problematic (Kilic, 1994). As Kalantzis (1990:46) observed, 'class, gender, and ethnicity overlay each other in social reality in a complex profusion of ways'. All of these variables combine in a dynamic social context which, combined with personal history, intersect to create an individual experience. Trying to group all immigrants together or putting all women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds under one umbrella is to ignore these individualities. Adding another dimension to this argument is that it has also been equally problematic to apply power relationships and distributions, and cultural concepts such as masculinity and femininity, universally to every ethnic minority group. Different ethnic minority cultures attach different social and cultural meanings to masculinity and femininity. Postcolonial theory approaches to ethnicity studies appear to have considered these issues more than most other conceptualisations of ethnicity.

Challenging the nature of discussions informed by gender dimensions has emerged as a key theme in postcolonial theory feminist literature. This critical strand of theory has challenged Western feminist theorisations of gender and gender relations for its reliance on social experiences of 'White' privileged women from developed countries. Postcolonial theorists have argued that minority women's participation in general women's identity theory is limited or identifies women as passive victims (Puri, 1999). Within this field there are multiple critiques of traditional and feminist interpretations which accuse the latter of failing to embed gendered hierarchies in class, nationality and ethnicity (Gray, 1996; Ifekwunigwe,1997; Puri, 1999; Ryang, 1998; Smith, 1996). In response there have been a surge of studies exploring the lives of marginalised women using postcolonial frameworks (Schutte, 1998). Around the globe women's narratives are listened to and analysed with unsurprisingly common findings. These have included suppositions of how underlying structural tensions, as well as dominance of hegemonic discourses of gender, are produced and supported by the nation-state. These discussions have also reflected nationality-based gender, class, and racial categories that reject

stereotypical notions of female identity. Such alternative conceptualisations of gender have contextualised issues of race, class, gender, and the 'othering' of marginalised women (Marchand, 1996). Within feminist postcolonial approaches, the underlying premise is to understand where women are located in these relations and how they critically inform personal identity (Green, 1995).

In gender and cultural studies, the examination of sports discourses has been located within discussions of masculinity, femininity and sexuality. How perceptions and expectations of these relations intersect with ethnicity studies is a largely unexplored area. Connections between sexuality and race and ethnicity will obviously vary between and within cultures but there appear to be tentative ethnic boundaries. To exist outside of these boundaries is to challenge the cultural expectations of femininity and heterosexuality (Nagel, 2000). Problems of creating and crossing identity boundaries are raised as key issues in understanding how gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity intersect (Lorber, 1999). While research specifically on sexual diversity is not a common feature in the literature on ethnicity and gender such studies are on the rise. In examining how frequent ethnicity has appeared in 25 years of published sexuality research from 1971-1995 Wiederman *et al*, (1996) found that ethnicity was considered in only 7 per cent of the samples but that the number of studies that have commented on ethnicity have been increasing over time.

In one of the few Australian studies on sexuality, ethnicity and women, Pallotta-Charolli (1994) argued that ethnic and religious groups do not openly support homosexuality as it challenges the culturally acceptable role of women and adds to the fragmentation of the minority culture's values. Pallotta-Charolli used two approaches to analyse the situation of lesbians from non-English-speaking backgrounds. The first analysis was based on the negotiation of ethnicity, gender and sexuality. In this approach lesbians were conceptualised as women compromised by the dominant sub-culture of the group they were operating within. The outcome was that lesbians were compelled to downplay their ethnicity in order to participate in the lesbian community and needed to cover up their sexuality in order to be part of their ethnic community. These cover-ups then led to feelings of cultural conflict. The second model suggested that many lesbians from non-English-speaking backgrounds are able to avoid this

cultural conflict. Instead, they achieve cultural synthesis as active agents of choice in determining their lifestyle by conscious choice. Pallotta-Charolli (1994) was critical of the first model, as she believed it depicted lesbians from non-English-speaking backgrounds as passive victims. She instead argued in support of the second model since it recognised personal choices and action within a dynamic environment. This approach suggested that by openly engaging in their chosen activity, these women, just like sportswomen, have challenged existing ethnic, gender and sexual stereotypes and boundaries. While it is acknowledged here that sexuality is an important consideration for identity construction, it is delimited from the present study, which has a broader focus on how gender and ethnicity intersect with sports.

In summary, there is much debate in migration studies as to the relation between class and ethnicity, and gender and ethnicity. There have been discussions surrounding the exclusion of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds from much of the existing feminist literature and about the appropriateness of merely adding ethnicity as a variable when studying women in general. The dynamic nature of all of these social processes is such that meanings are constantly being created and recreated and research needs to be adaptable and incorporate such movements. The position taken in this thesis is closest to Bottomley's approach, especially in its emphasis on the location of migrants within economic, political and social contexts. Bottomley suggested that detailed studies which considered family, social and gender relations, including second-generation migrant women, would provide an acute point of observation of Australian society and culture (Bottomley 1979, 1991, 1992, 1994). This premise is combined with de Lepervanche and Martin's (1991) discussions about the 'rhetorics of exclusion'. Together these premises provide the conceptual foundation for the research problem addressed in this thesis. Broader questions about power, culture and the formation of personal and group identity are fundamental to this conceptualisation. The focus of the present research is on the degree to which ethnicity and gender have directly influenced sporting opportunities and the relationship to institutional practices of inclusion or exclusion.

2.3 Theoretical Perspectives of Ethnicity and Sports

Turning from generic ethnicity literature to sports specific writings it is suggested that many of the same concerns of under-representation of ethnic women hold true in the sports literature. Research on ethnicity and sports is in its infancy and is still grappling with definitional and conceptual aspects. Much of the published literature on sports and ethnicity has used ethnicity as a study variable without acknowledgment of the hegemonic practices that shape participation opportunities. However, many contemporary authors (see Kalantzis, 1990; Kilic, 1994; Hall, 1996) have argued that categories such as ethnicity should not be isolated as a variable in sports participation, as such investigations are reductionist and categorical, and therefore limiting. They imply that society in general must be examined to account for ethnic variations in sports and recreation interests. There appears to be an academic consensus that merely reporting on variations in sports and participation will not generate theory or facilitate a better understanding of the phenomena at hand. The required knowledge shift involves researching broader issues of underlying power structures. The relationships between sports and ethnicity need to account for broader structural dimensions of inequality, particularly those perpetuated and maintained by sporting institutions. However, to date few studies have embraced these concerns.

2.3.1 Theoretical interpretations

Existing literature has explored the issue of ethnicity and sports within two primary theories. The first theory has been labelled *marginality*, and has proposed that certain ethnic and racial groups are limited in their sports and recreation choices by class-based indicators such as income and level of education. The second has been labelled *ethnicity*, and it has suggested that ethnic groups choose to participate in certain activities due to cultural traditions, practices and group characteristics such as language or religion. Most contemporary research in the area has focussed on testing these two theories by: (1) seeking to identify differences in participation patterns between ethnic groups and, (2) examining specific sports and their ethnic composition. The former work has largely concentrated on identifying constraints to participation and has often employed 'cultural deficit' frameworks, whereby the ethnic group being studied is compared to the mainstream population and differences are targeted for investigation.

In relation to the second issue, a substantial body of literature has emerged to discuss why certain ethnic groups dominate particular sports and explored reasons for these differences. For examples see Entine's (1999) controversial book on African Americans in sports, aptly titled *Taboo Taboo: Why black athletes dominate sports and why we are afraid to talk about it'* or Bale and Sang's (1996) book about Kenyans in long distance running. The majority of these dominance theory works have focussed on blacks and males in sports.

Marginality perspectives appear to be losing popularity and currency for several reasons. First, they have suffered from a lack of clarity of definition and the subsequent ambiguity about precise meaning. Research conducted under the auspices of this theoretical framework has focused on race-based stratification and discrimination and has therefore mainly been measured in terms of outcomes rather than process. This has meant that explanations for these outcomes have not been fully explored. Furthermore, marginality based research has largely assumed common traits within racial groups and has failed to adequately explain inter-group variance or account for multiple influences such as gender, class and ethnicity. Another common complaint about marginality theory is that it does not account for a wide range of behavioural and affective outcomes beyond participation and preferences (Floyd, 1998).

The ethnicity perspective has also been routinely criticised, and many of the problems raised are similar to those associated with the shortfalls of marginality. Race and ethnicity have been used as categorical measurements, often without adequate definition. As such, the research that has used this theoretical framework has tended to measure participation or non-participation against membership in a particular ethnic or race grouping and has not examined what specific aspects of the culture influence choice or how interactions of gender and ethnicity influence opportunity.

This lack of confidence in the existing theoretical perspectives is further exacerbated by the fact that the findings of much of the research on this topic are not conclusive and, indeed much contradictory evidence is apparent. While several studies have found significant differences in the participation levels of ethnic groups (Bhandari, 1991; Carrington *et al*, 1987; Dew, 1992; Philipp, 1995, 1999; Poole, 1986), others challenge

that the variation is not significant (Floyd *et al*, 1994; Stamps and Stamps, 1985; Tangsujjapoj, 1992) or only significant amongst lower income groups (Shinew *et al*, 1996). Differences in levels and types of participation as per the marginality thesis have been attributed to socio-economic circumstance (Smith, 1992; West, 1989), inappropriate programs and facilities (Lindsay and Ogle, 1977), and location of residence (Wagner, 1981). The ethnicity approach has resulted in relating aspects such as discrimination, racism, cultural identity, assimilation, and acculturation to participation in sports (Carr and Williams, 1993; Floyd and Gramann, 1993; Hutchinson, 1987; Jarvie, 1991; MacClancy, 1996; Simpson, 1993).

There are now a range of books and articles examining the use of sports in the acculturation or assimilation process that do not ascribe to either of these perspectives but are case studies positioned within socio-historical perspectives. For examples. see Gems' (1997) book on the retention of European ethnic cultures in the United States of America and Kirsch *et al*,'s (2000) encyclopaedia on sports and ethnicity in the same country. These works can be seen as examples of McPherson *et al*'s (1989) proposition that ethnic groups are positioned on a continuum of assimilation where some groups are totally isolated and only engage in activity that involves other group members. At the other end of the continuum are the ethnic participants who are completely, structurally and culturally assimilated. These authors further suggested that diverse ethnic sports teams foster assimilation whereas ethno-specific groups are less likely to assimilate. However, it seems more likely that this process is more representative of acculturation rather than assimilation, that is, adapting to the sporting and cultural practices, language, accepted norms and beliefs of the host community. Assimilation assumes a complete integration into the host country's systems of associations and elimination of power differentials (Mosely *et al*, 1997). Achieving this by merely joining a non-ethnic specific sports team would seem rather unlikely. However, integrated participation may be reflective of assimilation occurring.

In the literature, most of the American work has involved race rather than ethnicity and in the United Kingdom it has focussed on race and ethnicity. In Australia, since Europeans were the main ethnic minority the focus has been on ethnicity rather than

race. With the arrival of larger numbers of different racial groups into Australia this focus is likely to change in future research.

2.3.2 Ethnic Stereotypes

The low socio-economic status of many ethnic minority groups has led to investigations into the relationship between ethnicity, race and involvement in positions played in specific sports. The dimension of positional discrimination or difference has been the subject of detailed study (Harris, 1997, Lapchick, 1996), along with the use of sports for social mobility or 'getting out of the ghetto' (see Acosta, 1986; Carrington and Leaman, 1986; Mosher, 1997). This research has broadly shown that ethnic minority players are more likely to occupy the less central and non-decision making positions within a team. While a substantial body of research has discredited the association of race with natural sporting ability (Cashmore, 1990), racial stereotypes in sports continue to persist. Inherent in this concept of natural or genetic ability in one sport, is inability in another. Therefore, African-Americans may be stereotyped as good sprinters, Kenyans as great long distance runners and neither as naturally good swimmers. Media-driven racial stereotypes often emerge without consideration of access to opportunity and other such societal and environmental factors. However, it should be noted that most of this research has been based on North American and British male sports and research about other groups is only just beginning to emerge.

In the Australian context the few studies that have been published on sports and ethnicity have focussed on male sports. In his examination of the position of Aboriginal players within Australian rugby league, Hallinan (1991) concluded that the countries where positional segregation studies had found a strong bias relating to ethnic origin all had strong Anglo heritages. It was inherent in his analyses that consequent structural inequalities were found in both the general community and sporting institutions. These acted to discriminate against the minority non-Anglo cultures within that country. While not examining ethnicity from the same perspective of positional selection, the research for this thesis aims to explore similar issues of exclusion by investigating discourses of sport and examining how the structure and provision of sports may inherently discriminate against women from non-Anglo-Australian backgrounds.

Empirical research studies have identified a range of other variables or combinations of variables, which have an impact on sports participation choices. In comparing the participation of African-Americans with European-Americans, Philipp (1995) found that race was perceived to be a significant constraint across numerous leisure activities and those constraints were associated with more than just class characteristics. He concluded that, 'marginality, socialisation, and discrimination are all linked in a theoretically complex, and difficult to separate, manner' (Philipp, 1995:118) and consequently called for more research to recognise the importance of group difference. Jarvie's (1991) research also highlighted the impacts of various types of discrimination. He stated that, 'different forms of racism affect people's sporting choices, actions, levels of achievement and access to positions of power in sport' (Jarvie, 1991:21). As McPherson *et al* (1989:213) had previously pointed out in earlier research, 'there is little evidence that sport is a democratic institution with respect to the involvement of minorities or members of ethnic groups'.

Another identified influence on sports opportunities relates to societal perceptions about 'others'. The creation and maintenance of myths and stereotypes that surround certain minority ethnic groups, and in particular women from those groups, can influence sports choices. A 'vicious cycle' of myth generation and perpetuation can result in constraining opportunities. Fleming's (1994) United Kingdom-based research found that South Asians are stereotyped as preferring non-contact sports due to their 'physical weakness' and that this label has generated responses, which act to reinforce the stereotype. Fleming (1994:40) noted, 'this perception of South Asians as under-achievers in PE and sport inevitably influenced the behaviour of teachers towards them'. Fleming also observed that class position and social disadvantage, ethno-cultural factors and experiences of racism affected the group's sports participation patterns. He drew two primary conclusions. The first was that South Asians do not necessarily want to emulate 'white' middle-class sports participation patterns, and secondly, that experiences of discrimination and racism at both personal and institutional levels can deny equality of opportunity. Long *et al*, (1997) came to similar conclusions in their study of how sports can produce, reproduce and challenge racial myths. They argued that tacit racism is hidden and normalised by language and

culture, which is driven by stereotypes of race and racial qualities. In tracing how historically specific images are formed and justified, the researchers discovered that these images continue to have material effects through the actions of coaches, managers, club chairmen and players.

Castles (1992) suggested that if ethnicity is not a cause of social disadvantage it is certainly an indicator of it, as members of certain ethnic groups tend to have lower incomes, and occupational status and higher unemployment. Long *et al.* (1997: 253) reminded us that stereotypes are not neutral but associated with inferior or superior notions, which have, 'an inherent power dimension linked to questions of control … and the ability of those being stereotyped to define themselves is constrained by the dominant discourse'.

Other studies that have sought to explain ethnic variations in sports have suggested that participation may be shaped by the desire of a group to avoid contact with other ethnic groups with whom they do not wish to associate (Laberge and Girardin, 1992). However, this interpretation has been questioned and subsequent research has suggested that avoidance is only one factor in the equation (Curtis and White, 1992). Participation differences have also been related to different priorities for use of free time (Ujimoto, 1991), whereby sports are not given a high priority amongst some ethnic groups by varying socio-cultural determinations (Laberge, 1982) and attributed to religious requirements (Fleming, 1995). The present research argues that the gender dimension of ethnicity is critical to sports opportunity and participation and this aspect will be more fully discussed in section 2.5.

2.3.4 Conclusions

In the literature sports organisations have been conceptualised as cultural institutions that have predominantly been used to consolidate nationalism and exacerbate racism, and, on a few occasions, been used as avenues for freedom of cultural expression. Sports organisations have also been implicated in the process of colonisation and imperialism and accused of fostering prejudices and stereotypes that have excluded ethnic minorities from many sports participation opportunities. In general it has been

suggested that sports have embodied dominant forms of ethnocentricity and have not been very inclusive of culturally varied forms of ethnicity.

Various theoretical frameworks have been used to examine sports and ethnicity in previous research. However, there is a growing backlash against the use of these dominant paradigms to explore sports, ethnicity and race. Many writers have urged the investigation of hegemonic social and institutional practices be considered when studying the level and patterns of sports participation of ethnic minority groups. This is a challenge that the research questions raised in this thesis aim to address. Additionally, the dilemma of inadequate theoretical underpinnings about sports and ethnicity is perplexing to scholars in this field and many have indicated their dismay at the lack of material on the topic (Hall, 1996; Jarvie and Maguire 1994; Rowe, 1996). As one of the most prolific researchers in this area lamented, 'the most critical issue facing the race and ethnic studies literature is the absence of viable theoretical frameworks' (Floyd, 1998:4). Despite the identification of this inadequacy in both empirical research and conceptualisation few moves have been made until recently to tackle the problem. There is a body of allied research that has been receiving increasing attention since the 1990s; this is the creation and maintenance of ethnic identity through sports participation.

2.4 Sports and Ethnic Identity

One of the fastest growing sub-areas of research on ethnicity and sports is the exploration of sports and ethnic identity (see Fleming, 1995 or Kidd, 1994 for an overview of this research). The role that sport plays in the formation of an ethnic or cultural identity is debated with several possible explanations of identity formation put forward encompassing a range of disciplinary perspectives. The roles that have been attributed to sports are wide-ranging. It has been suggested that sport can provide opportunities for the liberation of an ethnic group, it can create a place and space for the expression of distinctive ethnic identities for athletes, volunteers and supporters, and that sport has been used to 'colonise' ethnic groups by encouraging them to play sports valued by the dominant culture. The use of sports to assimilate migrants and indigenous peoples into the dominant culture is a recurring theme in postcolonial

literature (Manan, 2000). However, research in this area is layered with complexity because individuals have multiple identities (Allison, 1979; Parenti, 1974).

Cronin and Mayall (1998) proposed that sport can be used to create identity at several different levels. These include its use by the participant to shape and sustain her/his own identity, to demonise or to champion an athlete, to replace one identity with another for purposes of assimilation, to perpetrate antagonistic notions of identity, or to create an international identity. The dynamics of using sport or recreation to solidify membership within the accepted domain of mainstream society, while simultaneously retaining a role in the minority culture, can be paradoxical. While these forms of interaction may work for some individuals there is a wide variation between minority group members (Shinew *et al*, 1995). Specifically, the opportunity to use sport or recreation to acculturate, assimilate or remain culturally distinctive varies between men and women. As Fleming (1995) noted, the use of sport as a vehicle for the development of ethnic identity and pride has been almost exclusively contextualised in the male domain with few examples of female equivalents. However, research or literature that empirically investigates the role of sport in the development of identities for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is rare.

Investigating male sports participation MacClancy (1996) found that some sports have contributed to the development of a sense of ethnicity. MacClancy illustrated his case by citing the distinctive role of Basque football in the construction of a nationalist Basque community, and equated the same phenomenon to cricket in the Trobriand Islands and baseball in Japan. In addition, ethnic-specific competitions such as the annual All England Asian Five-a-Side Football Tournament in the United Kingdom, the Pakistan-Indian Cricket Competition in Canada, the APIA Bocce Competition in Australia and other similarly structured competitions are found throughout the world in a range of sports. However, ethnic groups often initiate these ethnic-specific sporting competitions because they have become alarmed by racism in sports and see the competitions the only way in which they can safely assert their independent identity (Bhandari, 1991). In his meta-analysis of United Kingdom based reports that have examined the complex relationship between male sports, power and racism Jarvie (1991) concluded that there are many problems to be addressed and gains to be made.

He noted that a general failing of much research in this area has been its focus on sports participation rates rather than systemic problems in sports provision. The focus on numbers of participants neglects questions about organisational leadership, a key factor in gauging the permeability of racial barriers. Responding to this neglect, the investigation of organisational discourses and structural considerations are key elements in the research undertaken for this thesis. Its premise is that it is imperative to look beyond 'how many' participate in sports activities and find out 'why' some people participate and others do not.

In Australian studies of ethnicity and identity the focus has largely been on ethnicity and soccer (for examples see Hallinan and Krotee, 1993; Harrison, 1979; Hughson, 1993,1997, 1999; Mosely, 1992, 1994; O'Hara, 1994). These authors have all argued that the importance of soccer for many post-World War II migrant communities in Australia was vitally important. As Mosely (1994:199) noted, 'the soccer club was frequently the first organisation established by a migrant community. The reason was simple. Single young males who formed the vanguard of the most migration were not passionate for the game but desperate for companionship.' Mosely also pointed out that migrant camps facilitated sports participation, as there were few other leisure activities available for the newly arrived immigrants. Sport fitted the requirement that the newly arrived men needed to be channelled into socially acceptable, low-cost activities. In North America many of the migrants from eastern European communities rallied to form working class sports clubs that had strong political alliances and agendas. Sports were often used as a means to a political end because the government did not tolerate outright formation of political parties (Kirsch *et al*, 2000). However, no existing research has identified that sports involvement in Australia followed similar lines of political resistance for marginalised ethnic groups

More than any other sport, soccer has been described as the saviour of many migrants to Australia. As Murphy (1993:188) observed, 'sport was probably the best path to reducing the barbs ... one is less a "wog" if one can display even a modicum of prowess at running or at football'. Similarly, Vamplew (1994:7) speculated that soccer should be seen as a positive social mechanism for migrants, with its benefits outweighing the occasional violence associated with the game. Mosely (1994) supplemented this

argument by suggesting that in Australian migrant communities soccer clubs provided support and social networks and aimed to keep the community together by promoting cultural maintenance. Furthermore, Mosely and Murray (1994) have claimed that soccer was vital in the provision of social networks for many migrants to Australia and they argued that it has been wrongly associated with excessive crowd violence. The domination of soccer by ethnic clubs since the 1950s has resulted in the game's reputation as an ethnic sport. This has had produced a range of flow-ons that haveboth positively and negatively impacted on minority ethnic groups. The positive contribution of soccer has been related to its use as an avenue to engage in a sport that has been supportive of ethnic diversity. The negative aspects relate to its stereotyped image as a sport for ethnics and therefore not worthy of general community attention. Furthermore, soccer has been generally perceived as a sport associated with ethnic tensions and violence, it has been placed into a 'cultural ghetto' and not afforded the same status as rugby or cricket (Mosely, 1994).

This was the pre-1990s experience of soccer in Australia; since then there have been a series of moves by the national body that have aimed to 'de-ethnicise' and popularise the game at the national level. These strategies arose from the 1990 Bradley Report that suggested that clubs become district-based rather than associated with any one ethnic group. Team names, logos and colours, were changed to reflect a more inclusive image for the sports, thus being more attractive for media coverage and sponsorship (Hughson, 1992). Paradoxically these initiatives are almost a reverse multiculturalism and, as such, in contravention of Australian legislation that encourages and protects cultural diversity. The wisdom and fairness of the moves to de-ethnicise have been widely criticised in both academic circles and the popular press.

Within these soccer studies, Hughson's (1996) ethnographic study and analysis of the Bad Boy Blues (BBB), a supporters' group of the Sydney United soccer team, is a case study of shared 'otherness'. Hughson argued that BBB members have been able to find a uncontested space within the football stadium to claim their Croatian identity. Soccer matches have afforded Croatian people of all ages a chance to mix and enjoy the experience of being Croatian. Hughson observed that within the Croatian community the soccer club had been given the responsibility of a bearer of tradition. He surmised

that the BBB 'see themselves as contemporary bearers of a proud tradition of aggressive soccer support. This not only links them with the past, but from their perspective, enhances their collective claim to a genuine Croatian identity' (Hughson, 1996:98).

Hughson's focus on the way supporters can use a sport to maintain ethnic identity was taken down another path in audience research on World Series Cricket (WSC). In a recent article on ethnicity and sports, Madan (2000) argued that WSC has provided a space in which an Australian-based diasporic Indian identity could be negotiated and a discourse through which it could be spoken about. He suggested that the Indian cricket team's involvement in WSC created a focal point for pride and discussion within the Indian community in Australia and that many Indians have used cricket to facilitate the process of decolonisation and in the negotiation of their ethnicity. Madan (2000:33) argued that, 'as a result of their engagement with spaces such as the WSC, migrant collectives area attempting to articulate a fundamental difference between the experience of diasporic and ethnic subjectivities'. Madan presented his arguments without comment on the interrelationship to gender dimensions. Whether WSC is equally relevant to the identity formation of both Australian-Indian males and females is a point of contention as there is a strong Indian male presence at WSC matches in Australia but few Indian women attend.

While soccer has evolved into a sport embraced by many ethnic minorities in Australia, other marginal sports such as *bocce* have been played almost exclusively in particular ethnic communities, and yet others have sought to retain their colonial heritage. As Stoddart (1994:273-4) observed, 'a largely monocultural Australian society evolved a set of sporting codes and practices … leading to a sport/culture synchronicity which prevailed until the 1940s. Since the post-war succession of mass immigration programmes, those original codes have struggled to accommodate new developments or to reflect fully the new cultural diversity.' While a scattering of minority ethnic names are found amongst other sports, principally Australian Rules football and rugby league, the embrace of ethnic minorities into mainstream Australian sports has been mainly used to facilitate assimilation aims and has not been used as a means of embracing cultural diversity.

In one of the few academic works to explore the general contribution of immigrants to Australian sports, Mosely *et al*, (1997) presented case studies of a range of 'ethnic' communities and individual sports to demonstrate that sports have played an important role in immigrant life. This series of cases provided a brief historical overview of Italian, Greek, Irish and other ethnic communities and discussed the practices of sports in each. Sports such as soccer, boxing, netball and a number of other sports were presented. Duncan and Weatherburn's (1997) chapter on netball contained the only substantive comment on the involvement in sports of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. However, it focused primarily on issues of low player participation rates amongst women from 'non-British/Irish backgrounds' and the use of netball in maintaining or diffusing ethnic identity was not analysed.

The use of sports participation and sports spectatorship in the social reproduction of a gendered and ethnic identity has also been the subject of a limited number of academic discussions and theorisations. However, these investigations have been almost exclusively located in male domains. While Hughson (2000:8) may have claimed that 'the expression of ethnic identity through soccer support is a postwar cultural tradition in Australia' he needs to qualify this statement by adding 'for men'. There is little evidence to suggest that women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have been able to use sports for the same self-identifying outcomes as men.

2.5 Gender and Sports

Before specifically focusing on gender, ethnicity and sports the extant literature on women in sports will be reviewed. Research has suggested that sports can be sites of struggle, oppression and inequality for women; and they can be sites for liberation, equality and expression. The subjugation and liberation of females in sports have been theorised in the literature across several domains. The exclusionary theories include the historical analysis of restrictions on female sports and the use of myths and limiting stereotypes about female participation (Messner, 1992; Hargreaves, 1994); conceptualisation of the media's negative imaging of female athletes (Messner *et al*, 1993; Burton-Nelson, 1994); the use of female bodies in sports as sites of oppression and exploitation (Hall, 1996; Vertinsky, 1994a, 1994b); and analysis of the virtual absence of women from administrative and executive positions in sports

(White and Brackenridge, 1985; Hargreaves, 1994; Hall, 1996). In all avenues of sports, from participation rates to salary levels to media coverage, women have faced inequities and discrimination. The space and freedom to engage in sports activities without restriction or restraint have been the dominion of very few women.

This section will address issues related to the study and analysis of women in sports and the variety of perspectives that have been put forward to study women's sporting experiences. As there is a vast and ever-increasing body of research and literature emerging about women and sports, this section could not possibly review or summarise all of the work in this field. Its context in this thesis is to review and highlight the critical theoretical development that can be related to ethnic minority women's participation in sports. Many of the issues affecting women in general apply to women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. However, the latter should be acknowledged as having different experiences due to socially constructed notions of gender and ethnicity, cultural constraints and varied life circumstances.

2.5.1 History of Research on Women and Sports

Feminist research about women and sports does not have a long history. The bulk of published material has only appeared in the past twenty or so years but, from its early days, it has gained substantial momentum and coverage. It was not until the 1970s that the impact of social and cultural circumstances on female sports involvement began to be widely analysed. Previous to this the first wave feminists had little interest in the critical analysis of sports, largely because they believed sport to be riddled with values suggesting male hegemony. Much of the initial work in this area encompassed 'a developing awareness of the political dimensions of gender in sports and, for the first time, attempts to theorise the condition of women in sports … Marking the beginnings of an explicitly feminist analysis … ' (Theberge and Birrell, 1994a:325).

These initial studies attempted to analyse sports in the lives of women as a collective group and explored the dynamics of gender and sports. The ability of sports to construct and promote the ideology of innate gender differences, which by implication suggest female inferiority or subordination, was central to many of these early analyses. It was considered that the institution of sport developed, reinforced and preserved male and

cultural dominance, not just in the sporting arena but also in society generally. Collectively these primordial works suggested that women's participation in sports has been limited by all of modern society's major institutions, including medicine, education, media and, of course, sports itself.

Many of the earlier historical works on women and sports were framed within the context of liberal feminism, a perspective that came under heavy criticism from radical contemporary sports feminists. While liberal feminism challenged inequalities in sports provision and aimed for greater levels of female participation, better access, funding and media coverage, it did not necessarily challenge the underlying power systems of sports. Parratt (1994) argued that liberal feminism focused on reform and fitted women into the existing social order. As such, it was mainly descriptive and uncritical of social construction and maintenance of gender relations. Critics of this approach have accepted the challenge to examine women and sports from new paradigms, to use frameworks that do not emanate from patriarchal systems of analysis to incorporate women's perspectives and confront existing power relationships.

In response to this challenge, the inclusion of cultural studies into sports feminist theory has stimulated much debate. Hall (1996) outlined the implications of such a liaison where sports were recognised as sites of cultural struggle and, as well, that the history of women in sports is a history of cultural resistance. While championing its use, Hall believed that the future of radical cultural politics was tenuous and it was far from being fully embraced as a viable agent for change. Theberge and Birrell (1994a:326) described such an alliance as 'fruitful' reflecting that cultural studies assumed that cultural practices such as sports were arenas in which values, meanings and ideologies were contested. Thus sports were seen as an area by which society's norms and institutional forms are created, reproduced and challenged. Furthermore, Hall (1996) stressed the importance of an historical understanding of the gendering of sports, and the need to explore diversity among women in relation to class, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Through such a reconstruction, women's struggle to negotiate their place within a male-dominated environment such as sports could be better understood. Duquin (1994) echoed the need for reframing gender and sports research in her discussions on feminist sports psychology. Duquin's view was that changing sports and

gender relations must be located in the context of history, culture, tradition, social institutions, and dominant groups which contribute to the construction of sports identities and even sport itself. The research conducted for this thesis dovetails with these sentiments. It seeks to explore the place of sports in the lived experiences of women from marginalised ethnic groupings.

The necessity of relevant theory for women and sport has been a constant theme within recent literature on women and sports. Parratt (1994) lamented the lack of understanding we have of how women have defined and expressed themselves through sports and emphasised the exigency for theoretically informed research to address this issue to emphasise that gender is not static, it is a cultural construct, continually evolving and changing. Hall (1996) devoted a whole section of her book on feminism and sports to the need for theory. Hall believed that we are entering a new theoretical era and 'we need to focus on sports as a site for relations of domination and subordination (gender, race, class, sexuality, and other forms) *and* how sport serves as a site of resistance and transformation' (Hall, 1996:31).

2.5.2 Gender Dimensions

In analysing what information already exists about women and sports, there is a substantive body of literature that focuses on gender differences in leisure. Many of the concepts that relate to leisure participation are equally relevant to sports. Feminists such as Aitchison (1996), Bella (1989), Deem (1992), Green, Hebron and Woodward (1990), Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw and Freysinger (1993), Scraton (1994) Shaw (1994) and Wimbush and Talbot (1988) have been critical of previous works which did not fully encompass gender issues and argued that women's experiences of leisure were differentially constructed and interpreted compared with men's experiences.

This gender division is even further perpetuated by women's traditional roles in relation to family, children and domestic duties. A number of studies have indicated that women have substantially less leisure time and become less physically active when they marry or had children (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1994; Bauman *et al*, 1994; Bittman, 1998). Other research has indicated a number of factors contribute to low levels of

involvement of women in leisure. Amongst these are issues such as safety concerns (Shaw, 1996), low self-efficacy, limited access to facilities, lack of time (King *et al*, 1992), feelings of entitlement, gender roles and the ethic of care (Henderson, 1991) combined with social factors such as gender bias and gender role stereotyping contribute to low levels of involvement in leisure. However, similar to the case of sports-specific research, the leisure material is also deficient in content relating to the experiences of women from ethnic minority groups.

2.5.3 Masculinity and sports

While leisure has its own distinct set of connotations that are associated with participation, sports participation has had to specifically grapple with a legacy of masculine attributions. Sports have helped maintain and perpetuate power relations between men and women through initiatives that have kept many sports as male preserves. These initiatives have centred on notions of masculinity and dividing the sexes (Cahn, 1994). The difference between male and female sports participation is located in societal perceptions of femininity and masculinity. This differentiation means that issues of body shape and image, aggression, physical contact and exertion are critical aspects in any analysis of women's sports.

The persistance of gender divisions has even fostered the emergence of stereotypes associated with sexual preferences. For example, female athletes who engage in aggressive contact sports are often believed to be lesbians. There is also a degree of homophobia about sports in general and in physical education activities (Lenskyj, 1986). Girls and women who play 'male' sports are frequently called 'tomboys' or considered lesbians by those outside the sport and participation in sports is seen as not feminine (Wright and Dewar, 1997). 'Male' characteristics of strength, independence and dominance are embedded in most sports and these sports are therefore highly resistant to female involvement (Lenskyj, 1988). At the other end of the continuum are the sports that are stereotyped as feminine, such as figure skating, netball or volleyball, and are therefore viewed as socially acceptable for female participation.

Traditional stereotypes of male athletes stress elements of strength, muscularity, aggression and power, characteristics that conflict with dominant perceptions of femininity. Thus the female athlete is often faced with the dilemma of conforming to societal expectations of appearing to 'be a woman'. If a woman wanted to achieve excellence in a sport that involved strength and the development of a muscular body, such as weightlifting and wrestling, or to participate in traditional male sports, such as rugby or football, she would risk exclusion. This exclusion may be evidenced in various forms, labels such as 'butch' or 'dyke' are attached to such women by others, thus questioning their sexuality merely because of their appearance or engagement in a particular form of sport. Participation is linked to becoming less feminine or, as Dewar (1993:153) states, 'becoming androgynous, a lesser male'.

Women are not uncommonly prohibited from competing in sports that are considered too rough or too manly. There is legislation banning female boxing in many countries, including Australia, and there are many cases of schools not allowing girls to play certain sports or excluding them from 'rough' sports when they reach adolescence. Research on teenage girls and school sports has shown that prohibiting schoolgirls from playing 'boys' sports such as rugby when they enter high school is a contributing factor to overall sports drop-out (Taylor, Legrand and Newton, 1999). Lenskyj's (1986) work on women, sport and sexuality suggested that sex differences have been reinforced to stress male superiority and dominance, and have been used to exclude women from masculine sports. She discussed how activities that are incompatible with femininity have been seen as a threat to existing power relations between the sexes. This is supported by other research (see Colley, 1986; Engel, 1994), which has shown that women prefer different sports to men, with generally low preferences for 'masculine' sports. Whether this is an innate, learned or systemic preference was not explored in these latter studies.

2.5.4 It's a Man's World

The perceived compromise of femininity that occurs when women operate in male dominated domains is not just confined to the sporting arena. Studies of women in business have uncovered a similar situation. For example, a study on the phenomenon

of ‘power dressing’ found that women in executive positions within organisations reported that they felt they had to dress more like men in their efforts to emulate the masculine model of leadership (Cantor and Bernay, 1992). In another study of women in management, it was recounted that women felt that they had to copy male behaviour patterns to more easily accomplish goals and reduce stress (Hood and Koberg, 1994). In research on women in contemporary Australian business organisations Ross-Smith (1999) revealed that even if women in senior management roles largely conform to the traditional masculine norms of management practice they continue to remain marginal to the discourse of management and organisations. Such findings suggest that if men let women ‘play’ it is on their terms and by their rules.

Including women in sports discourses has been problematic and, as research has revealed (Hall, 1996), the mere inclusion of women does not change the power dynamics of sports. It is argued that the way women in sports have been spoken about is negative and disempowering (Mikozsa and Phillips, 1999). Even ‘facts’ can acquire multiple interpretations and may be used to reinforce gender stereotypes. In discussing the negative use of stereotypes Dewar (1993) provided the example of Florence Griffith Joyner, an American track star of the 1980s, whose phenomenal successes were mainly attributed to her racially-based ‘natural ability’. Since black athletes were increasingly dominating short distance running, the success of these athletes was seen in terms of genetic heritage rather than talent and training. ‘We select and promote explanations that reinforce stereotypes so that we can assimilate ‘‘the facts’’ into our existing frameworks without challenging hegemonic representations of women or blacks’ (Dewar, 1993:150). In later years it was publicly speculated that Joyner’s success was linked to drug taking and her death at a relatively young age only served to fuel such comments.

While many women have been restricted in their participation opportunities, it is not suggested here that all women have passively conformed to stereotyped images or only engaged in socially acceptable sports. There are numerous instances where negative representations and stereotypes have been challenged or resisted by women. For example, Brook (1994) has used women’s weightlifting to illustrate how women can challenge the dominant and culturally reproduced perception of femininity, discussing

how Australian weightlifter Bev Francis's body transgresses the idealised female body image. In presenting a body shape that contradicted society's expectations of what a woman should look like, Bev Francis and other women like her have been seen as the 'other', far removed from femininity and in some people's eyes as even seen as deviant or dangerous (Brook, 1994:55-56).

Messner (1994) emphasised that control over women's participation in sports was not just related to women appearing unfeminine if they engaged in certain sports. Rather, a much more potent image of women as unequal or less able participants and thus less powerful in society was created in the sporting world. Similarly, Dunning (1993) argued that the Western 'civilising process' of sports came to represent an enclave for legitimate expression of masculine aggression, physical prowess and power, suggesting that the growing power, assertiveness and independence of women would threaten the maleness of sports. This line of argument adds an interesting dimension to the research at hand, which investigates a sport (netball) that is generally regarded as feminine and is played by relatively few males. Could it be that men have 'allowed' women to play sports such as netball to keep them out of the more 'male' sports? Have certain sports have been preserved for women? Or is netball considered beneath the dignity of men because it was originally a modified sport, adapted from basketball, and therefore perceived as inferior? Cashman (1995) speculated that, while netball was initially considered as less than a 'real' sport, it has transcended its origins and thrown off its taint as inferior. But, he asked, has it really achieved equal status with male sports such as rugby? These issues are further examined in Chapter Seven of this thesis in the case study of netball.

To participate in a sport or to be part of a team is often an empowering experience for males, but is it equally for females? Messner (1996) contended that sports participation could offer a 'normalising equation' for men whereby athleticism equalled masculinity which equalled heterosexuality, whereas women have been subject to a different equation, one which has questioned their athleticism, femininity and heterosexuality. Women's sports involvement has constantly been questioned and the choice of answers is quite different from those afforded to men. While sports participation can be used to facilitate a strong masculine identity, in many cases the opposite is true for women.

Sports participation is used to question their feminine identity. This is not to suggest that sports have provided a universally positive experience for males or that sports are always a negative experience for females. Writers such as Messner and Sabo (1990) asserted that sports have been problematic for males as well. McKay (1991:55) described sport's subculture as, 'an ambiguous array of heterosexual, homosexual, homophobic and misogynist values' in which males may be subjected to ridicule if they fail to accept its traditional masculine persona. Applied to women the corollary would be that females who adopted the masculine approach to sports would be subjected to ridicule. However, women have had limited opportunities to develop positive female identities through sports. This situation is even further accentuated for females of certain ethnic backgrounds where the divide between masculinity and femininity is immense, and where participation by women in physically demanding sports may be considered culturally inappropriate.

2.5.5 The 'weaker sex'

Women's right to be involved in sports has been continually questioned in many societies and by various sports organisations using gender difference arguments. Medical institutions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries warned against vigorous physical activity due to its perceived negative impact on female reproductive systems. It has been argued that this medical control and use of scientific arguments about the female body has been a recurrent theme in the effort to legitimise patriarchal claims over women's bodies (Vertinsky, 1994a). Medical control of women's bodies has used scientific 'evidence' to support an argument for the physical fragility of women. Medically backed movements sought to gain the right to intervene in women's lives when matters of lifestyle, such as participation in contact sports, were thought to interfere with energy levels necessary for family reproduction or maintenance. These movements were responsible for creating many myths about what women were physically capable of, myths that were perpetuated to the extent that they became widely accepted. It was taken for granted that women were the weaker sex (Vertinsky, 1994a). The attitudes created have proven to be highly resistant to change over the years.

Socially sanctioned involvement in sports has been historically intertwined with public perceptions that women participants should retain their femininity and not get hurt when engaging in sports activity. Some non-contact sports, such as figure skating and netball, have been able to present themselves as suitable for female participation, while other sports, such as rugby and boxing, have struggled to gain widespread public acceptance. Many of the sports that were traditionally dominated by males have begrudgingly and slowly allowed female participation over the last few decades. Sports organisations have often imposed prerequisite periods of adjustment to accommodate each step in this direction. For example, golf clubs which initially banned women golfers, and often certain ethnic and religious group members, then allowed women as guest players over a number of years. Women were subsequently permitted to be associate members and finally women were granted the right to full membership. This process of a gradual acceptance of women has been repeated in many other sports and in many other domains of social life. The quest for gender equity in sports participation and opportunities have been constrained by many obstacles and the goal is still not fully realised.

A number of the long-standing obstacles to gender equity in sports are located in the wide-ranging debates surrounding genetic differences between males and females. The extent to which gender differences are biologically determined or socially constructed has been the focus of much research. Biological arguments have been conveniently used to justify unequal and inequitable sporting participation and thus sanction male domination. Through the use of arguments justifying claims about women's physical inferiority, sports organisations legitimise gender differences and, by inference, also legitimise women's social inferiority (Theberge and Birrell, 1994a). Equally, socialisation into masculine and feminine based gender roles has restricted sports opportunities for girls. As Hargreaves (1994:149) observed:

> throughout the western world huge numbers of young boys … are inducted into highly competitive sports … they are encouraged to be aggressive, tough and even violent. Although aspiring parents also encourage young girls into competitive sports, they take part in small numbers and usually participate in those sports (which are) characterised as aesthetic and expressive.

It has also been argued that males and female have significant differences in their reasons for participating in sports. For example, White's (1995) research on the relationship between perceived purposes of sports participation identified significant differences between female and male respondents. The study was conducted on inter-collegiate athletes and recreational sports participants in the USA. Female recreational sports participants perceived that the purpose of sports participation was to develop personal mastery and cooperation from healthy lifestyle habits and to cultivate positive attitudes toward society, whereas the males viewed sports as an agent to further career opportunities and heighten social status. In summary, males perceived sports as avenues for competition, materialistic and individualistic gain, to a greater extent than females. Female participants had a different perspective on the value of sport. They thought sports participation should decrease health risk behaviours and advance societal values and morals.

In previously conducted research it has been revealed that using gender as the single investigated variable rather than exploring sports from the perspective of the individual's membership in a range of groups is problematic (Bottomley, 1991). Considerations such as class, ethnicity or sexuality may impact on the participation choices (Stodolska, 1998). For example, to suggest that all girls who participate in sports must overcome role conflict ignores the reality of female resistance to social pressure. For some women sports participation is unproblematic and does not create any role dissonance (Hall, 1996). To date most gender role conflict research has offered psychological rather than social explanations and assumed that the problem of women's low involvement in sports lies with women themselves and not with the organisation of sports (Theberge and Birrell, 1994a). In feminist research about women in sports it has been suggested that researchers should strive to question cultural stereotypes not only of body, masculinity, femininity and sexuality and the existing structures of power and inequality but the dynamics of the intersections of each. The way in which these aspects then interact and impact on ethnicity is explored in the present research which aims to add another layer to the analysis of women, sports and ethnicity.

2.5.6 Body Politics

The exploration of women's bodies as sites of self-identity, oppression and exploitation have been a central tenet of feminism in areas ranging from pornography to domestic violence. However, until recently, feminists 'rarely paid attention to female sporting bodies, nor have they seen the relevance of physicality, or empowerment through physical activity' (Hall, 1996:50). Butler's (1990) conceptualisation of the self as a political construct that assigns gender through a repetition of performative acts that are culturally constructed allows for the subversion of socially prescribed activities such as sports. This avenue of exploration has gained much academic attention over the last decade and critiques of the use of sports in the social construction and maintenance of inequalities are commonplace in feminist analyses of women and sports (Grosz, 1994; Markula, 1995; Vertinsky, 1994a, 1994b; Wright and Dreyfus, 1998; Young, 1990; Zakus, 1995). These discussions have contended that gendered meanings are embedded in sports and the female body (Bordo, 1995). The body is viewed as having particular meaning within the context of power relations, a text upon which culture writes its meaning, a tool for the construction of a feminine identity (Davis, 1996). Poststructural feminists qualify this statement with the reservation that women have multiple identities that are constantly shifting and therefore the body may provide meaning for one or all of these identities (Wearing, 1998). Alternative uses of the female body allow for a redefinition that can break with tradition, expectation and the constraints of womanhood. For example, female weightlifters may use their sports participation to assert their independence in choosing a sport that does not conform to expected social behaviours of women and body shape.

Studies focussing on the body and understanding its manifestations in a socio-historical context are burgeoning. Hargreaves (1993) traced the popularity of aerobics in relation to the sexualisation of the female body, where participation was promoted by claims of weight loss and improvement of sex appeal. She has also documented women in boxing from the eighteenth century (Hargreaves, 1997) and discussed the diversity of representations of the female body in boxing and the subsequent complexities in assessing the role boxing plays in identity construction. In research based on interviews with female bodybuilders, Obel (1996) found that, while there was a tension between

muscularity and femininity, the bodybuilders believed the sport was located within the bounds of 'acceptable' femininity. In her study of female bodybuilders, Lowe (1998) concluded that, although female bodybuilders exercised control over their bodies, they have little control over their sport. St Martin and Gavey (1996) also studied female bodybuilders, their research concluded that bodybuilders' body shapes challenged and destabilised gender codes. However, they felt that since bodybuilding is a marginal sport its potential to incite societal change is limited.

The bulk of existing research on women's bodies has centred on young, white and heterosexual females. However, in recent years a number of studies that have investigated aspects of sexuality have emerged. In de-constructing the discourse of the female body in sports, Lenskyj (1994) presented the case of a lesbian softball league organised around feminist principles as an example of how women can reclaim enjoyment in sports, diminish power imbalances and use sports as sites of resistance. In another study of older, lesbian and heterosexual women it was revealed that participation in physical activity could provide opportunities for empowerment, sensual pleasure and different ways of thinking about body shape and image for older women (Wright and Dewar, 1997).

Body image research that incorporates different ethnic and racial groups is not extensive. In a study of adolescent girls, it was revealed that Caucasian girls were less likely to report positive body images and felt less competent and capable about their bodies than African-American or Native-American females (Jaffee and Lutter, 1995). Other studies have shown that intolerance for 'tomboy' type behaviour and girls who defy gender stereotypes and engage in perceived masculine activities varied between cultures (Duncan, 1997). In reviewing the breadth of research on the female body Duncan (1997:74) suggested that cultural differences may impact on mainstream expectations for girls' appearance and activities, but qualified the statement with the frequently heard call relating to this topic, 'more research on this important area is needed!'

2.5.7 Media

Popular gender-biased assumptions about women and sports are reinforced on a daily basis through various channels of the media. The way that the media portray women in sports has been explored by numerous researchers (Hall, 1996; Hargreaves, 1994; Kane, 1996; Pirinen, 1997; Wright and Clarke, 1999). In print or on television, patriarchal structures of sports are constantly promulgated while women's sports coverage languishes alongside, achieving significantly less attention than men's sport (Pirinen, 1997). In research on media coverage of female sports Brown (1995:49) revealed that, in the Australian press women receive significantly less coverage than men, female sports are less likely to make the front or back pages of the paper, and stories about women are more likely to appear in mid-week issues and not in weekend papers. Brown's findings are representative of other study findings on media treatment of women's sports.

All facets of the media, including newspapers, magazines, radio and television, have been accused of ignoring women's sports participation. In the United Kingdom research has revealed that men's events are given greater coverage compared with their female counterparts. Elueze and Jones (1998) found that commentators frequently frame the accomplishments of female athletes in terms of traditional notions of femininity, through the use of negative, condescending and ambivalent descriptors and a gendered hierarchy of naming. In a detailed content analysis of sports coverage in England's written media it was concluded that sportswomen are subjected to 'symbolic annihilation', sexism and androcentricity (Robinson, 1991). Robinson argued that not only were men afforded significantly more written and visual coverage but also women's performances were subjected to sexist valuation and presented as of less interest than those of men. Her subsequent research unearthed a similar inequitable situation in sports in Canada (Robinson, 1992).

Media coverage of women and sports can be problematic on two fronts. Not only are women under-represented in sports coverage but their involvement is often trivialised and sexualised, viewed as inappropriate and unnatural, and often contextualised in a hidden discourse of homophobia (Theberge and Birrell, 1994b). An example of these

problems was provided in Burroughs, Ashburn and Seebohm's (1995) research on women's cricket in Australia. This study concluded that the media had demonstrated a preoccupation with the issue of lesbianism and the concomitant trivialisation of women's sport and that coverage of a female cricketer's allegations about lesbianism in the game reinforced existing prejudices to exacerbate homophobia. Wright and Clarke (1999) also suggested that print media representations of sports promoted heterosexuality and traditional social relations. Using rugby union as a case study, they demonstrated how choices in language and visual representations can support notions of hegemonic versions of heterosexual femininity. The research supports the argument that the media do not give much time or space to women's sports and when there is coverage it typically comprises images and narratives about female athletes that portray women as inferior and vulnerable.

2.5.8 Sports Management

Gender inequalities are not confined to media coverage or to the sporting field but are also evident in the administration, coaching and management of sports. Males dominate all of these realms. The seemingly impenetrable male domination of sports participation, management, administration and decision-making has put women in a position of continually having to justify and fight for their right to equal access of facilities, funds, programs and opportunities (McKay, 1992). Bryson (1990:183) suggested that, in order to challenge this current dynamic, three specific sites of its perpetuation must be redressed. The first site was the arena of sport, which needed to be revisioned by increases to the number of women playing sports, greater involvement in traditional male sports and getting women into positions of power within sport organisations. Positioning women in these places may assist to dispel myths about female inadequacies associated with sport. The second site was the point where sport intersects with other institutions; such as in the political arena or the education system. The third site was the personal level and requires both behavioural and attitudinal change. Most research suggests that women still have a long way to go before the three sites are equally contested.

In research undertaken for the Australian Sports Commission, McKay (1992) found that few women held sports management or administrative positions in Australia. McKay's

report was extremely critical of the Australian sports system which was structured to ensure that there were only a few women executives in sports. Similarly, Cameron (1995) has documented the under-representation of women on volunteer boards and as executives on National Sports Organisations in New Zealand. In North America, Theberge's research (1988) highlighted the low number of women coaching at the elite level within Canada and in the United States intercollegiate programs. The proportion of surveyed sports that were administered by women declined from 30 per cent in the 1970s to 17 per cent in 1992 (Acosta and Carpenter, 1994). In a world-wide study of Executive Directors and President's of Olympic National Governing Bodies, Rinatala and Bischoff (1997) found that just 13.2 per cent of positions were held by women from 1970-1995. Commenting on the strength of the 'old-boy' network, Cameron (1995:35) suggested that the social exclusion of women occurred across all dimensions of sports from the office to the post-meeting socialising over alcohol. It seems that the few women present in top level sporting administration circles are often chosen because they are like 'one of the boys' and thus perpetuate the dominant masculine ideology rather than challenge it (Hall *et al*, 1990).

2.5.9 Summary

The research and literature previously cited has argued that relationships of power and patriarchy are critical in the examination of women and sports. Power is dynamic and as such is constantly changing through processes of negotiation and accommodation. Sports can be used to perpetuate or challenge existing power relationships built on the dominant masculine hegemony that pervades contemporary Australian society. Ethnicity considerations add another layer of complexity to the investigations of women and sports.

2.6 Women, Ethnicity and Sports

Despite the constant calls for theory-building that acknowledges cultural diversity, studies that focus on the intersection of gender and ethnicity in sports, these remain few in number. Hall (1996:43) lamented that, 'we know virtually nothing about the role of sports and leisure in the lives of girls and women from established ethnic minorities or among recent immigrants'. Duncan (1997), Gill (1996), Hargreaves (1993), Parratt (1994) and Wiese-Bjornstal (1997) all argued that there has been a distinct lack of

sports research on women of different backgrounds, and who experienced patriarchal culture in different ways to white, middle-class women. Sports scholarship has yet to fully consider the inequalities and conflicts associated with gender and ethnicity. While diversity and inclusionary issues have begun to emerge in recent research on women and sports, this diversity has been mainly in the areas of class and sexuality. Women's experiences chronicled in sports histories are those of middle-class white women. These narrowly constituted experiences have informed physical education programs for girls, college athletics and women's reform movements (Gems, 1997). While it is statistically evident that women from ethnic minority backgrounds are disadvantaged in their sports and recreation opportunities, research to understand why this is the case and to qualitatively explore the nature of difference is not widespread.

The importance of establishing a substantive body of work in this area is important to further a general understanding of sports. Cultural heritage, belief systems, perceived ethnic body composition, religion, and political persuasion can all influence an athlete's disposition to sports participation (Costa and Guthrie, 1994:250). The effect of gender or ethnic discrimination on sporting experiences is a uniting experience and to a certain degree binds groups together, but the differences between and within cultural groups is also a defining factor. Sports have frequently been identified as critical sites for struggles of patriarchal privilege, unrestricted capital accumulation, white skin privilege, compulsory heterosexuality and reproduction of privilege (Theberge and Birrell, 1994b). However, the meaning and understanding of ethnic minority women in sports is yet to be fully theorised in relations of power and dominance within our society (Hall, 1996). Historically, the socially sanctioned behaviours of women have been characterised by passivity, weakness, selflessness and dependence and have been applied to all women even though they are steeped in a white, middle-class ideal of femininity, which may or may not apply to other ethnicities and classes (Lenskyj, 1990).

2.6.1 Previous studies on women, sports and ethnicity

Research on ethnic minority women has been primarily concentrated around African-American women in the USA and Asian women in England. In a study on the impact

of gender, race and social class on leisure preferences it was found that multiple sources of inequality are, 'manifested in leisure preferences' (Shinew *et al*, 1995:80). This research reported that, 'Black'[1] women who classed themselves as poor or working-class were distinct from similarly positioned 'Whites' and middle-class 'Black' men. However, poor or working-class 'Black' women were positively correlated with 'Black' women who defined themselves as middle-class and 'Black' men who defined themselves as poor-working class.' This finding is in contrast to multiple hierarchy perspectives, which suggest that each source of inequality should lower its holder on the stratification continuum, where poor 'Black' women are located at the bottom of the hierarchy. The researchers concluded that the similarity between 'Black' women across class lines may be attributed to similar racial and gender socialisation experiences and that commonality of leisure interest links middle-class persons of different races but not lower or working-class individuals (Shinew *et al*, 1995). In a US study of the effects of ethnicity, gender and years of athletic experience on causal attribution dimensions, Morgan *et al.* (1996) found significant differences between ethnic groups. They reported that Anglo-Americans perceived success and failure as more internal than African-Americans and Native-Americans. Gender and experience had no significant effect on attribution dimensions. However, studies such as this are not explanatory, although difference is statistically significant, the rationale or reason for the results was not explored.

Wiese-Bjornstal (1997) reviewed a series of American studies that examined physical activity and different cultural groups and noted that reported attitudes toward physical activity varied between ethnic groups. The Women's Sports Foundation (1989) found that Hispanic female athletes were more likely than non-athletes to improve educational results and to attend college. *The Wilson Report: Moms, Dads, Daughter and Sports* (Women's Sports Foundation, 1988) concluded that African-American girls had fewer resources for lessons, equipment and transport to games, and the *Miller Lite Report on Sports and Fitness in the Lives of Working Women* (Women's Sports Foundation, 1993) revealed that girls 'of colour' were significantly less likely to receive encouragement from their parents to engage in physical activities. As these studies indicate, 'gender

[1] The authors use the terms 'Black' and 'White' in their article.

belief systems and contexts probably interact with race and ethnicity systems in complex ways' (Gill, 1994:273).

In England, research within the South Asian community, revealed that women's leisure and recreation has centred around the family and religion, the women interviewed felt that they had little time for sports participation (Lovell, 1991). South Asian women in this study found it difficult to be committed to regular sporting activities such as netball because these team games were not part of the South Asian female culture. The significant under-representation of Asian female participation in sports in the United Kingdom has been extensively documented elsewhere (Bhandari, 1991). Language difficulties, dress requirements and embarrassment have been identified as contributors to the low participation figures of Asian women (Phillip, 1995). In contrast to South Asian women, other research has found that African-Caribbean women living in Britain were heavily involved in sports, in particular sports such as netball which are played in their country of origin (Lovell, 1991).

In two other studies on sport and ethnic minority populations, Carrington *et al.* (1987) and Carroll (1993) all note the low levels of minority ethnic female participation in sports in the United Kingdom. The former study focussed on how parents constrained participation of females; finding that gender differences were more pronounced amongst South Asians than 'Whites'. The study appeared to place the onus of non-participation with the parents of females from South Asian backgrounds by directly comparing their responses with those of 'White' females. Such analysis is problematic as considerations relating to cultural perceptions and experiences of sports participation were not taken into account. How children consolidate their ideas about sports through family relationships and the importance of the role of siblings and parents in this process is an aspect of sports and ethnicity, which is inadequately conceptualised (Hargreaves, 1994). When women are raised in a family that does not see sports as important for females, or even totally inappropriate in many instances, this must shape their perceptions of sports participation. This is the experience of many women from ethnic minority backgrounds. Encouragement into sports can be further compounded by physical education experiences in primary and secondary school environments, which have been consistently found to be culturally and gender biased. Teachers and

other students alike often perpetuate racist and stereotyped sentiments (Benn, 1996). Add to this a lack of female ethnic minority role models as leaders, coaches, and administrators which has been commonly identified as a problem that contributes to low participation rates (Acosta, 1993; Smith, 1992), and the socialisation of ethnic minority girls into sports becomes highly complex.

It has also been suggested that women from minority groups may wish to participate in a way that is different to the mainstream, and to assert their own identity in sport. Hargreaves (1992) outlined such a situation in the case of a netball team in England that clashed with official rules when they chose to adopt a uniform that they felt expressed their identity. The team were mainly working class and non-white women who wanted to play the game with 'style', which for them meant wearing shorts, crop tops and associated exercise gear instead of the traditional short shirt, matching bloomers and top. Their choice of uniform contradicted the association's dress regulations and created dissention in the competition. For these women, participating in netball meant that all players were given the opportunity to contribute to the construction of the club's identity.

Other research has revealed that, for many ethnic minority women, engagement in physical activity occurs mainly outside of formalised sports, with a focus on individual fitness activities such as aerobics which are flexible and non-competitive (Deem, 1986,1990; Henderson and Bialeschki, 1994; Leaman and Carrington, 1985). Informal physical activities, which fit into the daily lives and conceptualisation of women's roles and priorities may be more in line with cultural expectations regarding the social construction of gender and participation. This argument sounds logical. However, there have been other research findings which have contradicted the assumption that women necessarily have different requirements for their sports participation (Harahousou and Kabitsis, 1995).

While empirical studies about women who reside in non-English-speaking countries are too numerous to fully document here, a selection of recent research is overviewed. The research findings are by no means universally conclusive. Contrary to preconceptions about the role of women in sport, in their study of Norwegian cross-country skiers

Vikander, Solbakken and Vikander (1998) found that female skiers were not as involved in their team's social structure as the male skiers, and that the women skiers were more goal focussed than men. Wyznikiewicz-Nawracala's (1998) research into why Polish women have low sports participation rates found that while time and financial resources were important, the best determinant of sport participation as an adult women was childhood involvement in sports. In Greece, Harahousou and Kabitsis (1995) interviewed 212 Greek females from both urban and rural areas of Greece. They concluded that the main reasons females chose to be physically active related to health and personally oriented motivations. In their study social aspects were found to be of no particular importance. From the interview data it was concluded that Greek women have many other avenues for social contact and therefore do not see sports as important contexts for socialising. This is an interesting contrast to numerous studies of Australian, Canadian, American and United Kingdom women that have consistently found that the social dimension of sports were an important element in female sports participation.

In her study of Swedish women and exercise, Thomsson (1999) concluded that, despite the official Swedish policy of gender equality, in everyday sports practice gender is socially constructed through difference. The women she interviewed were all striving to be 'womanly' and they reported that they had no time for exercise due to family responsibilities. Research on the involvement of sports of youth in Caen, France found that boys participated more than girls and that unlike the boys the majority of girls that played sports did so in formal settings (Waser and Passavant, 1997). If nothing else this internationally diverse research serves to raise questions about the place and role of sports in different cultures.

2.6.2 Religion

Historically, most religions have had particular views about the 'proper' behaviour of women in society. These beliefs underpinned many restrictive practices in sports participation for women. In the present study, the impact of religion on women's sports participation is of particular relevance for women from Islamic backgrounds where religion is linked to ethnic and cultural identity. One of the initial studies on

these dimensions found that participation levels in sports for Muslim women living in England declined in relation to how important they rated their religion (Carroll, 1993). The more important the respondent perceived religion the lower their level of sports participation. While not explicit in the article reporting this study it could be concluded that adhering to religious requirements associated with sports participation, such as not having any males present when engaging in sports, could be a factor encouraging or discouraging sports participation.

The importance of religion was further highlighted in Benn's (1996) research on Muslim women in teacher training. Many of the women participating in the study recalled negative experiences of physical education in school. The women had encountered public embarrassment and experienced guilt at transgressing religious requirements; experienced religious and racial prejudice; and were not encouraged in sports. The women interviewed who had attended single-sex schools reported more positive experiences then those who had attended co-educational schools.

Muslim women are frequently perceived as being particularly disadvantaged in sports participation due to their attendant religious requirements. For many Muslim women living in Christian countries, sports participation has represented a highly contested arena full of taboos and exclusions; freedom and possibilities; it has not been a space for the construction of identities that contest stereotypes (Bhandari, 1991). Stereotyping the Muslim way of life as oppressive is in itself racist and therefore constraining to Muslim women. To view this population by way of cultural and religious barriers is to apply a model of cultural deficit to the situation where the 'blame' for non-involvement is placed with the group themselves rather than acknowledged as a function of society. Despite widely held public beliefs to the contrary, there are no religious dictums that prohibits Muslim women from participating in sports. Many women do want to be included in sports but are limited by the lack of appropriate programs or facilities (Benn, 1996). In a study of women, ethnicity and sports in Australia, Muslim women indicated that were eager to learn to swim but they met with enormous difficulties in locating an indoor swimming pool that met their requirements for privacy (Taylor and Toohey, 1999). The women interviewed also expressed their frustration at wishing to engage in other sports and received little support from local sports facility managers.

A few highly publicised cases of Islamic extremism have reinforced notions of restrictive practices for Muslim women in sports. This is illustrated in the case of Hassiba Boulmerka, an Algerian woman who won the 1500m race in the World Athletic Championships in 1991 and the gold medal in the Barcelona Olympics in 1992. As the first female Arab to win a track and field gold medal she was initially celebrated in her country but subsequent Islamic fundamentalists denounced her for baring her legs in public. The ensuing reactions reached a fever pitch and Boulmerka eventually moved to France to live. At the Atlanta Games in 1996 Ghada Shouaa of Syria wonthe gold medal in the seven-event heptathlon. Shouaa's gold was the first ever won by Syria. Shouaa also won the heptathlon gold medal at the 1995 World Championships. However, as she is a Christian, Shouaa has not run into the same reaction to her participation in athletics as other women from predominantly Muslim countries. Inthe Sydney 2000 Olympics, Algeria's 29-year-old Merah-Benida kissed her vest and took an Algerian flag for a victory lap when she followed in the footsteps of compatriot Hassiba Boulmerka. Her victory was accompanied by media commentators' speculation about her acceptance back in Algeria and portrayals of her success in sports as an exception to the rule (ABC online 1 October 2000).

2.6.3 Australian Research on Women, Sports and Ethnicity

As discussed in the previous section there have been few studies that have investigated gender, sports and ethnicity in Australia. The scant research that has been undertaken on women from ethnic minorities in Australia has been primarily quantitatively based. The inadequacy of qualitative and historical data about women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is accompanied by a corresponding absence of detailed data on sports participation rates of this group. While there are some data sets that provide an indication of participation figures, these studies do not address the issue of why sports involvement amongst women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is so low. These data point to a condition of inequality in participation but do not offer any explanations about why it occurs. As Hartsock (1990:158) challenged:

> We need to develop our understanding of difference by creating a situation in which hitherto marginalised groups can name themselves, speak for themselves, and participate in defining the terms of interaction, a situation in which we can construct an understanding of the world that is sensitive to difference.

An Australian Sports Commission study of sports and women from non-English-speaking backgrounds found that fewer than 10 per cent of sports providers surveyed had programs or policies addressing the needs of women from a non-English-speaking background (Taylor and Toohey, 1998). The majority of organisations noted that the programs and facilities they operated were open to everyone and therefore they did not feel there was a need to specifically cater for any one group within the community. Managers felt that cultural limitations and women's belief that sports are only for males were the main reasons that women from a non-English-speaking background were not attending their sporting programs and facilities. This contrasted with the responses of the women surveyed, who indicated that the absence of appropriate facilities and programs were a major constraint to their sporting participation. The most frequently nominated constraints to these women's sports participation were (in order) time constraints, nobody to go with, family responsibilities, lack of information, lack of skills and inappropriate facilities and programs. Cultural constraints were much further down the women's list. These barriers reflected what Ireland (1993) calls the 'lacks' experienced by female athletes, which include the lack of encouragement, family, peer and financial support, media coverage and social acceptance.

The research results highlight the conflict between sports providers' perceptions of the needs of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and the views of the women themselves. Providers perceived the problem of low participation in sports as relating to the women's culture, a cultural deficit explanation, whereas the women associated their low participation rates with non-inclusionary practices engaged in by providers. This perceptual difference identifies a need for a set of explanations that go beyond the current constraints and social disadvantage driven notions to encapsulate issues of identity, difference, embodiment and discursive practice in conceptualising sports participation of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Previous research would suggest that the construction of sports discourses and the organisational antecedents has been problematic for marginal groups within society. Explicit barriers such as language problems, inadequate information, program/sports selection, and less direct barriers such as different cultural expectations and assumptions, discriminatory attitudes practices and assimilation-based thinking all contribute to less than ideal access and equity in sports. Exclusionary attitudes that are structured on gender lines are not just found within mainstream sporting communities. For example in Mosely's (1997c) case study of *bocce* in Australia it is reported that Italian males successfully excluded women from the sport until the late 1960s when they were admitted into clubs. However, sustained male opposition led to a subsequent decline in the number of female *bocce* participants. Similarly, an historical study of Greek-Australians found that while Greek males used sports activity to maintain their cultural identity, women were systematically excluded from forming sports team within Greek community clubs until the 1960s (Georgakis, 1999). Georgakis's main finding was that, sports have served to maintain Greek identity in Australia and an essential part of being a male Greek male is playing sport when young and keeping interested in it as one gets older. Hughson's (1996) research on soccer supporters of a Croatian club team revealed that the supporters' activities acted to exclude women and promote a masculine identity that was highly misogynistic.

2.6.4 Contemporary Sports Participation data

Quantitative data does not explain a phenomena but it does provide an indication of its dimensions. The national data on sports participation has consistently indicated that females participate in sports to a lesser degree than males and that females from non-English-speaking backgrounds participate substantially less than other females. The data presented here are from studies by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. As the definition of sports participation has changed over the collection periods careful interpretation is required. As evidenced in Table 3.1, the 1993 participation figures are lower than in the 1997 data. The higher participation rates in the latter dataset reflect the fact that the survey included social sports and physical activities. Whereas the 1993 data are for organised sports only.

Irrespective of the definition used, participation rates were substantially higher for men than women, and for young adults. Over the relatively short period for which comparative figures are available, 1993 and 1997, levels of participation in sports as a player remained much the same (about 36% for men and 22% for women). However, for women in the 25-34 and 35-44 year age groups, the level of sports participation fell by nearly two per cent. Against this trend, small increases appear to have occurred in participant rates among older men and women (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998).

Table 2.1 Sports participation in Australia, 1993 and 1997

Age in years	1993 % Women	1993 % Men	1997 % Women	1997 % Men
15-24	39.4	55.5	40.0	57.9
25-34	28.1	42.5	25.7	42.7
35-44	20.7	32.3	17.6	32.8
45-54	14.8	25.0	14.3	25.2
55-64	14.5	21.1	14.8	23.2
65 and over	12.2	20.3	12.9	22.2
Total	23.1	35.3	21.5	37.7

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998

The reasons for discounting sports participation were similar for both women and men with 'too busy' the most common response (23.7% and 30.9% respectively). While childcare issues were substantially more significant for women, only 3.5 per cent cited it as a reason for discontinuing sports. With younger people, boys (65%) were more likely than girls (57%) to have participated in sports. Netball was the most popular sport for girls and outdoor soccer the most popular for boys (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998).

The 1997 survey showed that sports participation rates for Australian-born persons was 37.6 per cent compared with 21.2 per cent for those born overseas. Furthermore, the participations rates for immigrants from the main English-speaking countries (29.8%) were almost double that of people born in non-English-speaking countries. The

differences were even more pronounced for women. While 26.7 per cent of women born in Australia played sport, the comparative rate of women from non-English-speaking countries only 8.4 per cent. The non-player rates are similar with 4.4 per cent of Australian-born females surveyed indicating they had a non-playing role in sports, compared with 1.5% women from non-English-speaking backgrounds (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998). Also, more Australian-born people (48.7%) went to sports events than those born overseas (32.2%) of which people born in non-English speaking countries attended at a rate of 24.5 per cent (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1995). However, it should be noted that the use of 'country of birth' as the measurement variable places second-generation persons into the Australian-born category.

2.7 Conclusions

This review of the literature has covered the topics of ethnicity, ethnicity and sports, identity and sports, women and sports, and ethnicity, sports and women. The main purpose of the chapter has been to provide evidence for the argument that sports have been inherently associated with conceptions of masculinity, whiteness and ethnocentricity. The literature analysis confirmed that the dominant sports discourses have been based in concepts of masculinity and that female considerations have traditionally been marginalised in these discussions. This marginalisation has acted to negatively value women's contributions to sports, trivialise participation and ignore cultural diversity. While the gender dimensions of sports are being challenged in relation to the dominant male paradigm of sports, the investigation of other paradigms such as dominant culture are less evident. Gender relations' theorists are yet to fully embrace women from ethnic minorities in their feminist projects on sports.

Through examining the literature it can be seen that in many instances groups who have been marginalised in general society and/or stereotyped in their sporting involvement have also faced exclusionary attitudes and practices in sports. Ethnicity is not merely another variable added to the equation, it is another dimension to be explored and better understood. In this theoretical realm the overseas material has been useful in framing a conceptual approach for the empirical component of the research. The still unanswered questions are primarily related to context. Do the current sports discourses in Australia embody shared meanings for all Australians?

How have the practices of sports organisations impacted women from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds? Do current attitudes and practices serve to marginalise these women from sports discourses? How does this situation affect an individual's and cultural group's sports participation rates, opportunities and experience? Chapter Three will provide the local historical and social underpinnings in which these understandings are furthered, and in which the empirical research is conceptualised.

CHAPTER THREE: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF AUSTRALIAN MIGRATION AND SPORTS

3.0 Contextualising the Empirical Research

This chapter provides the historical context for the empirical component of the present research project. As discussed in the literature review in the previous chapter, it is important to position the research within a socio-historical domain. The sports participation experiences and perceptions of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds cannot be viewed in isolation from broader societal constructions of gender and ethnicity relations within Australia. Therefore, this chapter highlights the salient immigration debates and policies that have shaped Australian migration patterns and community responses. It also traces the complementary historical occurrences in Australian sports and the place of women within sports organisations and discourses. Women's subjectivities are created by the dominant cultural hegemonic practices across all spheres of lived experiences and a better understanding of the interrelationships between these factors should provide a more informed appreciation of the contemporary location of ethnic minority women in Australian sports.

3.1 Brief History of Migration to Australia

The following section provides a brief overview of the history of immigration to Australia from 1788, with particular emphasis on the immigration policies and practices of the federal government during these years. Australia can be viewed as a settler nation, one which 'Europeans have settled, where their descendants have remained politically dominant over indigenous people, and where a diverse, gendered society has developed in class, ethnic and "racial" terms' (Stasiulus and Yural-Davis, 1995:3). The original settlement of Australia by Aborigines occurred at least 40 millennia ago and they remained relatively undisturbed until the eighteenth century when the influx of substantial numbers of European arrivals fundamentally changed the population's composition (Sherington, 1990).

The shape of the waves of migration from 1788 were key factors in the subsequent development of colonial Australian society and identity. By the latter part of the eighteenth century British colonisation had not only begun to alter the dominant ethnicity of its inhabitants but it had begun to permanently change the nature of Australia, with the imposition of new social, economic and political structures.

3.1.1 Migration and Sports from 1788 to the Twentieth Century

The national identity of contemporary Australians has been conspicuously forged by the continuing migration that has occurred since its colonisation. In the last few decades of the eighteenth century and in the first decades of the nineteenth century migrant arrivals fell generally into three categories, convicts, free settlers and colonial gentry (Jupp, 1988). Initially, the largest group of immigrants during this period were convicts deported from Britain and Ireland. As a colonial outpost Australia was used by Britain to achieve a number of its national political initiatives. Having lost the USA to independence Australia was seen as an alternative location for trade and strategic positioning. It was also a remote location to which Britain's substantial criminal population was transported. Over 160,000 convicts, the great majority males were sent to Australia from 1788 to 1848 with the greater number arriving between 1820 and 1850 (Sherington, 1990). The deportees included a substantial number of Irish, transported as a result of political or social protest. Transportation to the colonies slowed after 1850 and was officially discontinued in 1852, except for the new penal migration to Western Australia (Adair, 1998). The convicts had little money or freedom but they actively engaged in sports such as cockfighting and bare-knuckle fighting which were considered appropriate for their class and status in the new colony (Waterhouse, 1995).

The second largest group of arrivals were free settlers who came to Australia to pursue opportunities for wealth that a new and developing country could offer. Third were the 'gentry immigrants' who were a small minority that came from England and Scotland to exploit the trading opportunities and acquire large land holdings (Sherington, 1990). These non-convict settlers used sports such as hunting, horseracing and cricket to help distinguish their upper class status in the new colony (Booth and Tatz, 2000).

Politicians, military officers and rank-and-file soldiers were also a significant presence in the colony. Not only did they control all aspects of legislation and official authority but they were involved in many sports such as billiards and horseracing (Booth and Tatz, 2000). Horseracing was especially popular with the governor and the military as they were the main importers of horses to the colony and the military organised the first official horse meet at Hyde Park in 1810 (Waterhouse, 1995). While the different groups kept separate in most spheres of life, there was some overlap in their sports and recreation pursuits. While the convicts were the bare-knuckle fighters, the free settlers and military men were present as spectators and gamblers (Waterhouse, 1995). Sports provided males the opportunity to demonstrate their 'manliness' (Crotty, 2000).

By 1850 the convict population of New South Wales was less than 1 per cent (Waterhouse, 1995). However, politicians and landowners still believed that the country was significantly under-populated and various schemes were devised to attract greater numbers of free settlers to migrate to Australia. The Land and Emigration Commission was established in 1832 to assist migration and settlement and further encouraged immigration to Australia during the remainder of the 1800s. In particular, skilled labourers and single women were targeted for assisted settlement. This program met with minimal success in attracting skilled labourers but large numbers of single women arrived on Australian shores thereby dramatically changing the gender balance of the population (Sherington, 1990). Successive colonial governments initiated various other schemes of assistance for migrants thereby modifying the character of Australian immigration by stipulating conditions for entry and targeting particular ethnic groups for settlement.

Most immigration schemes were designed to attract designated sections of the urban working class and labouring population of Great Britain. Nearly 30,000 assisted immigrants arrived between 1831 and 1861 under the auspices of such schemes (Jupp, 1988). These people were sent from Britain and Ireland to reduce the numbers of paupers in those countries, to provide rural labour and to try and reproduce the social and racial composition of the United Kingdom. The assistance schemes also included a reunification program whereby families of convicts were brought out at the government's expense, a program of innovation, which would become a feature in

future immigration policies (Murphy, 1993). The thrust of all the assisted immigration programs was to attract more British migrants to Australia.

In terms of absolute numbers the first substantive group of non-English-speaking settlers came from Germany in the 1840s. They located in South Australia where they remained mainly in small rural communities (Jupp, 1988). The numbers of non-British Empire settlers greatly increased during the gold rush period and encompassed a range of ethnic groups. Germans arrived to work in the goldfields and subsequently moved to Melbourne where they formed German clubs and associations, which provided them with sports and recreation activities (Sherington, 1990). Greek immigrants arrived in large numbers in the late 1860s to work the Victorian goldfields and in 1869 established the Lebentia Rowing Club to keep fit and active in their new country (Georgakis, 1999). Croatians arriving during this period were largely uneducated and from rural backgrounds. It is suggested that they were particularly successful at wine making, fruit growing and fishing and assimilated into Australian culture more fully than subsequent Croatian arrivals (Smoje, 1988). By 1901 the Census indicated that there were 45,008 German immigrants and 16,144 Scandinavians in Australia (Murphy, 1993:25). Smaller numbers of Western and Central Europeans and Americans also came to Australia during this period and each group brought its own cultural traditions, values and practices. In many instances these settlers were attracted to Australia to pursue freedom of religious worship (Adair, 1998).

The most noticeable change in the ethnic composition of immigrants in these years was the arrival of Chinese men. Few immigrants had arrived from Asia prior to 1840 since non-white settlers were not encouraged (Sherington, 1990). However, the Victorian goldfields were a strong attraction and by the early 1860s nearly 20 per cent of all males in Victoria were Chinese (Adair, 1998). In 1861 Chinese-born persons accounted for 3.4 per cent of the total population of the country, the highest ever recorded in Australian history (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 1999a). At its peak the Chinese population reached 40,000 at the end of the gold rush decade and they were the largest Asian group in Australia in the nineteenth century (Murphy, 1993). This racial change in migration met with strong community opposition and anti-Chinese

riots erupted on the goldfields when the available gold began to run out. The colonial governments immediately brought in initiatives to restrict the numbers of Chinese immigrants. Opposition to Chinese immigration involved a mixture of economic, social and racial considerations but public outcries centred on allegations of cheap labour. In further argument against their presence in the country a commission of inquiry on Victoria's goldfields blamed the evils of the flourishing gambling trade on the Chinese even though many other ethnic groups were heavily involved (O'Hara, 1988). By 1888 the colonies excluded Chinese immigration and by the mid-1890s this had expanded to include all non-white immigrants (Adair, 1998); a policy decision that remained relatively unmovable until the 1970s. In due course most of the Chinese immigrants returned home and the remainder dispersed to country towns, Melbourne or Sydney (Sherington, 1990).

The composition of the Australian population was further affected by what has been considered as another government-sanctioned action of formal racial discrimination. Not only were non-whites discouraged from migrating to Australia but the native-born Aboriginal population were also subject to government-sanctioned acts that decreased their numbers. From the 1840s to the 1890s large numbers of Indigenous Australians were separated from their families as they were removed from their ancestral lands and placed on stations and settlements to live in government-controlled segregation (Tatz, 1984). Ironically, during this time cricket began to become a vital part of Aboriginal communities with the colonisers believing that cricket could act as a civilising force and therefore encouraging 'Blacks' to take up the game (Booth and Tatz, 2000). Large numbers of Aborigines living on country stations and missions were taught to play cricket and subsequently Aboriginal teams toured the country to large crowds, culminating in a 1868 tour of England (Cashman, 1994). If Indigenous Australians couldn't be 'White' at least they could aspire to attain some of the qualities of the civilised whites, and what better way to achieve that goal than through the quintessentially proper English game of cricket!

The social, political, ideological and educational domination of the British-born arrivals upon Australian life throughout the nineteenth century was absolute. Contact with England was maintained through various institutions, including sports, and through the

steady stream of new arrivals (Sherington, 1990). Between 1860 and 1900 some 800,000 arrived from Great Britain and Ireland, with approximately half of these assisted by governments under the two main systems of selection and nomination (Murphy, 1993). Immigration numbers from the British citizenry remained strong until the early 1890s when the economic climate changed and arrival rates only slowly recovered in the next century. Colonial Britons felt that they were superior to other migrants, they held higher social status than non-British ethnic minorities and occupied most of the positions of power within government and industry (Adair, 1998).

British arrivals also continued to influence the type of sports that were popular in the middle to latter part of the nineteenth century, namely horseracing, prize fighting, and cricket. Each of these sports established exclusive clubs for its middle and upper class members and membership was highly selective. 'Nostalgia no doubt led to the adoption of many British sporting activities, but others were the result of deliberate attempts by the colonial wealthy and educated classes to replicate English social life, including its social structure' (Vamplew, 1994: 2). Men from all classes played cricket, the upper classes saw it as an opportunity for men from the lower classes to learn from their 'betters', but very few players were from non-English-speaking countries (Waterhouse, 1995).

The emergence of 'muscular Christianity' and the ideal of athleticism made a large impact in this period and was evidence of the fervent adherence to social and reform movements which originated in England (Lynch and Veal, 1996). Vigorous sports participation was introduced in the UK into elite private boys' schools, as part of this movement. It was believed that playing sports would assist the development of skills that would prepare pupils for leadership roles in all aspects of life (Bailey, 1978). The movement promoted sports as an avenue for developing manliness, discipline, team spirit and fair play. Waterhouse (1995:109-110) argued that in Australia muscular Christianity became popularised partly as a response to the cult of domesticity and the perceived feminisation of society, and partly merely to copy what the English middle class were doing. Private boys' schools adopted strict regimes of exercise and sports in an attempt to develop strong, masculine boys and foster their leadership potential (Kirk, 2000). As Crotty (2000: 11) has suggested, 'games became a crucial element on the

construction of a chivalric, patriotic, physical and militarist ideal'. Women were initially exempt from this physically oriented movement, as it was believed that they needed to protect their reproductive abilities from harm and cultivate their feminine charms.

In the adult sphere, the upwardly mobile middle class developed Australian Rules football to provide another avenue for leadership training, but the game was soon taken over by working-class enthusiasts who saw sport as an enjoyable break from work (Booth and Tatz, 2000). In New South Wales rugby union football managed to keep control of the game in the hands of the upper and middle classes until 1907 when breakaway players formed rugby league teams to meet working class demands for professional sport (Booth and Tatz, 2000).

Sports were often organised along class lines but men's participation in sports activities was taken for granted. Sports participation allowed men the space to define their masculinity and assert their superiority over women territorially and physically (Booth and Tatz, 2000). Men played sports and women watched. If women exercised they did so in private (Stoddart, 1986). Women's role in sports in the nineteenth century is captured in Vamplew's (1994:14) statement that historically sport, 'has been a prime means of gender-fixing; a way of socialising the populace into sex-based social roles … almost half the Australian population was excluded from sports participation by virtue of its gender.' This attitude, along with many migration practices, would change substantially over the course of the next century.

3.1.2 1900 to World War II

Australia became a Federation in 1901 and one of the first legislative acts of the parliament was to pass the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901. This 'White Australia' policy officially restricted entry of non-whites and complemented the segregation of the original Aboriginal inhabitants onto reserves. These political mechanisms were seen as a means to maintain the British race as central to the population of the country and were to have a key place in immigration policies for the first 70 years of federation (Sherington, 1990). The ideology of immigration during this period has been described as 'moralistic, patriotic, racist, and eugenic' (Jupp, 1988:2).

Devices such as the English dictation test were introduced to ensure exclusion of undesirable migrants. There were many instances of pre-judged use of the dictation test such as when a Czechoslovakian political activist was given the test in Gaelic in an attempt to exclude his entry to Australia (Murphy, 1993). The clear preference for white, English-speaking migrants was the basis for all immigration policy.

In another attempt to encourage English-speaking migrants, the Empire Settlement Act (1922) was introduced as a joint program of Britain and Australia. The Act was eventually to facilitate the arrival of 320,000 British immigrants between 1922 and 1929 (Murphy, 1993). In conjunction with these schemes were sponsorships of working and lower-middle class English women for domestic service in Australia (Bottomley, de Lepervanche and Martin, 1991). Programs designed to encourage more migrants from Britain were in decline by the early 1930s and it became apparent that the dream of a self-supporting British Empire would be unattainable. Consequently, Australia was forced to start looking beyond the British Isles to sustain its large immigration program (Sherington, 1990).

Although not targeted, and arriving mainly unassisted by governments, mainland European immigrants significantly contributed to the growth of the early twentieth century Australian population. New German and Scandinavian arrivals were predominantly single males who lacked marriage partners of the same ethnic origin within their adopted country and consequently married outside their cultural group and soon lost their original ethnic identity (Sherington, 1990). Italians arrived in increasing numbers in the first part of the twentieth century, settling mainly in Fremantle, the Riverina and North Queensland. Other southern Europeans arrived in small numbers and many settled in ethnically defined communities. This settlement pattern facilitated cultural maintenance and appeared to oppose assimilation. Ethnic concentrations were heavily criticised as these settlement patterns were not seen by other Australians as an acceptable method of coping with the transition from one culture to another (Sherington, 1990) and they did little to facilitate acculturation (Mosely, 1997a). In response to the public concern about the clustering of ethnic communities the government amended the Immigration Act in 1925 to refuse entry to anyone who was

not likely to 'readily assimilate' (Murphy, 1993). Assimilation meant speaking English at all times and acting 'British'.

Before 1930 political ethnic refugees were admitted to Australia on an extremely limited basis. The numbers of refugees substantially increased from the mid-1930s when large numbers of Jewish people left Europe. In 1935 some 1,000 Jewish refugees arrived and their numbers continued to increase in subsequent years (Murphy, 1993:52). The reason for the migration of most of the Jewish refugees was the policies and practices of Nazi Germany. The ensuing war with Germany would ultimately have a profound effect on the ethnic composition of the Australian population.

3.1.3 Immigration Post-World War II

In the aftermath of World War II Australia's immigration policy continued with its three traditions, the incessant demand for new labourers, British predominance, and White Australia (Jupp 1988). Increasing the country's population emerged as a major policy initiative to achieve the two-fold aim of providing a form of national security and defence, and encouraging economic development. A new Department of Immigration was established in 1945 to act as watchdog over the potentially conflicting interests of population expansion and the traditional perceptions and prejudices attached to immigration (Murphy, 1993). Yet again British immigrants were preferred, and a free passage scheme for ex-servicemen was instigated along with government-funded plans of assistance.

The fundamental objective of immigration was to further populate the country. The slogan 'Populate or Perish' became the raison d'etre of immigration policies. However, the government soon realised that the preferred English-speaking immigrants were not arriving in sufficient numbers so it chose to look elsewhere for new Australians. The refugee camps of Europe were seen as a substitute, they represented 'splendid human capital' and eventually over 170,000 displaced persons arrived in Australia between 1947 and 1954 (Sherington, 1990). Preference was given to Baltic nationals and later Czechs, Slavs and Poles. Collins (1994) suggested that during these years the need for labour won the battle over concerns about racial purity. Reception centres opened to act as transit points where basic skills in English were taught along with processing for

employment. The arrivals were encouraged to assimilate into the Australian way of life as quickly as possible and become inconspicuous in their new land (Murphy, 1993). There was a strongly expressed public expectation that, 'everyone would learn English, everyone would look basically alike, and everyone would share values, beliefs and practices' (Jupp, 1990:25). As with previous arrivals many of the refugees settled in ethnic concentrations and established cultural associations for social and religious contact. The various national groups adapted in different ways, based on the skills they had. In example, most of the Baltic immigrants came from middle class and skilled trade backgrounds, secured good jobs and did not live for long in ethnic enclaves (Sherington, 1990). Immigrants were encouraged not to speak their native languages in public and to refrain from using their hands in conversation and thus avoid embarrassing themselves (Murphy, 1993). Despite, or maybe in spite of, these expectations and restrictions, self-contained enclaves continued to form and grow and allied ethnic organisations formed 'serving as bulwarks against an Anglo majority that was largely unaccepting and antagonistic' (Mosely, 1994:200).

In 1952 in a major shift in immigration policy occurred when the Australian government announced that it would reduce the intake of immigrants by half. Of the new migrant intake, 50 per cent were to come from the United Kingdom and 25 per cent were to be 'landed permit' holders. Most of the permit holders were relatives of southern Europeans already living in the country, and the remainder were to enter under agreements signed with European governments (Sherington, 1990). Consequently, British immigrants constituted the largest numbers of settlers in the following two decades, followed by Italian and Greek arrivals. In the case of Greek migrants the government-funded assistance passages were granted only to Greek males and heads of households. Thus from 1953 to 1956 Greek male migrants outnumbered females by five to one (Sherington, 1990). New arrivals continued to defy government policies for assimilation and created large ethnic concentrations in Melbourne and Sydney. Yugoslavs, Italians and Greeks 'virtually occupied entire suburbs where they created, and recreated, their own social and cultural institutions' (Booth and Tatz, 2000:141).

Between 1947 and 1961 nearly three-quarters of all new jobs created in Australia were filled by immigrant workers, with immigrant males taking 82 per cent of all new male

jobs and immigrant women taking 55 per cent of female positions (Collins, 1994). Female immigrants arrived as brides from Italy, Spain and Greece and these women were clearly designated as domestic workers and carers (Bottomley, de Lepervanche, and Martin 1991). Asian and Islander women were not recruited for similar purposes, which was a clear bias in the selection process. These practices served to reinforce the widely held public opinion that only a low proportion of Asian migration to Australia was tolerable.

Ethnic affiliated clubs, newspapers, cultural, religious and sporting bodies were created and flourished (Waterhouse, 1995). Sports with long-established colonial links were not as attractive to newly arrived ethnic minority groups. An increased multicultural population meant a decreased population base for traditionally English sports such as cricket and rowing (Cashman, 1994). However, other traditional English sports such as soccer, which were actively played on the continent, flourished as the newly arrived males from Europe swelled the player ranks and quickly made the game their own. The reasons for this ethnic minority influx into soccer varied from community to community. Georgakis (1999) suggested that sports, and in particular soccer, were the avenue by which the Greek community could keep traditions alive and build the masculine traits they believed that young males needed. 'First of all sport would masculinise the boys so counteracting the influences of the feminised home. Secondly, because sports were conducted in Greek clubs and organisations, they would ensure traditional allegiances to Hellenism and to Greek traditions' (Georgakis, 1999: 32). As noted in Chapter 2 similar uses of soccer, to a greater or lesser extent, were evident in other ethnic communities. 'Perhaps the sphere that has come closest to uniting the Croatian-born is sport, and especially soccer, in which many Croatian teams and players have competed with great distinction in the top grades' (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 1999b: 3). Sports were used to deal with government and community expectations of total cultural assimilation that remained relatively unchaged until the 1970s.

The 1970s were a watershed in Australian immigration history and by the mid-1970s formal policy discrimination against all non-British immigration was removed and assimilation policies had started to be replaced by a policy of multiculturalism (Collins,

1994). Until this time assimilation had been viewed as synonymous with being a 'good Australian' and a desirable cultural conformity. The policy had been pursued as an extension of the management of immigration (Murphy 1993). The Borrie Report of 1995 signalled a cautious start to the dismantling of the 'White Australia' policy and gradually a wider range of people were permitted to enter the country (Sherington, 1990). The new initiatives that promoted multiculturalism included provision of free English language classes for migrants in conjunction with financial encouragement of ethnic radio and television and the establishment of the Australian Institute for Multicultural Affairs. This new direction was formalised by the adoption in 1978 of the 'Galbally Report' on migrant programs and services that changed policies from promoting assimilation to the recognition of ethnic identity (Jupp 1992). This report, the *Review of Post-Arrival Programmes and Services to Migrants*, was tabled in Parliament and emphasised cultural pluralism and the right of migrants to retain their cultural heritage without fear of prejudice or disadvantage.

Despite moving away from assimilation expectations the inability of new arrivals to communicate effectively in English was still considered a particular problem and for a short period in the early 1970s foreign language broadcasting was restricted to facilitating quicker learning of English (Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, 1988). This 'sink or swim' mentality was found across a wide array of service provision. Research has revealed that migrants were significantly disadvantaged in the use of community services such as public sports and recreation facilities due to cultural and communication reasons (Jupp *et al*, 1991). A subsequent review of the Galbally Report in 1982 endorsed its initial recommendations and further highlighted the importance of English, cultural maintenance and community development in the settlement of migrants (Jupp, 1992). Multiculturalism was seen as a term that was, 'associated with an official recognition of the existence of different ethnic groups within the state's borders, and evidence of concerns about disadvantage and equity which the state recognises as its responsibility to address' (Stratton and Ang, 1994:3). While many of the community and welfare policies were rewritten during this period to reflect the change from integration to multiculturalism there is little evidence that the new polices resulted in tangible changes in sports organisations.

The government's adoption of multiculturalism has solicited varied responses. In migrant studies multiculturalism and other related 'isms' have been conceptualised as attempts by the dominant powerbrokers to explain and manage increasing ethnic and cultural diversity (Pearson, 1996). A prominent group of migration-focused scholars, emanating from the University of Newcastle, have suggested that multiculturalism should be viewed as a thinly disguised strategy of domination over minorities by the majority, and a legitimisation of the existing order (Castles, 1992; Vasta, 1996). According to this perspective, government policies and initiatives are patronising approaches to welfare where settlement problems are considered as the exclusive fault of the immigrant (Cox, 1987).

The 1980s brought a dramatic directional shift for Australian migration patterns with the arrival of large numbers of refugees from Asia. By 1985 some 79,000 people from Vietnam had entered Australia (Sherington, 1990) and in the period from 1990-1992 Hong Kong became the second largest source of immigrants after the United Kingdom (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs 1999c). Newcomers, including Asian refugees, landed in Australia in a time of economic recession and fears of the new migrant arrivals taking jobs away from Australians were publicly expressed. Such fears had a long history. In a widely reported public address in 1984 historian Professor Geoffrey Blainey argued in favour of a more monoculture society and suggested that too many Asians had settled in Australia and their presence was causing racial tension. Blainey's controversial statements generated much public debate and other prominent conservative figures, such as Bruce Ruxton (former head and spokesman for the Return Serviceman's League) and Senator John Stone, echoed his views, demonstrating that racial intolerance was still present in Australia. Public opposition to continuing immigration, particularly with regard to Asians, appears to have strongest support amongst working-class people who feel threatened by economic, cultural and social change (Castles, 1992). With the appearance of the One Nation Party in the late 1990s, a party hostile to liberal immigration policies, it would appear that intolerance of Asians has been retained in some sections of the Australian population.

Official projections have suggested that migration will continue to provide substantial numbers of new arrivals into Australia in the forthcoming years (Department of

Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 1999d). The nature of that migration is difficult to predict but it would seem that the patterns of the last few years will continue and an increasing number of migrants will come from the Asia Pacific Region. In June 1997 23.3 per cent of the population were overseas born, of which 14.2 per cent were from non-English-speaking countries and including 5.3 per cent of those from Asia (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 1999d). According to population projections by birthplace, if current immigration trends continue, the percentage of the population born overseas will decline to 16 per cent in the year 2041. People born in Europe, the UK and Ireland will be 5 per cent of the population and those born in Asia will be 7.5 per cent (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 1999d). This will have a significant impact on the population of the country, as earlier migration from England and Western Europe are superseded by arrivals from South East and North East Asia.

3.1.4 Implications for this research

Immigration policies and directions in the evolution of Australian migration can be categorised into three phases. The first period was one of assimilation that dominated policy development until the mid-1960s. It was expected that all new arrivals would be totally absorbed into the host culture. This underlying principle was deeply embedded in the so-called 'White' Australia policy with its preference for British migrants. The policy effectively excluded non-European immigration, especially from Asian countries, because it was considered that they had less potential to assimilate. The second phase, was from the mid-1960s to 1973, and was defined by the post-'White Australia' Policy period when it was recognised that large numbers of migrants, especially those whose first language was not English, required more direct assistance. However, it was still expected that arrivals 'integrate' into the host culture. The final phase, adoption of multiculturalism from 1973, featured the shift to cultural diversity. In this latter period minority ethnic groups have been encouraged to maintain their language and heritage within mainstream institutions.

Pearson's (1996) four-phase framework is useful here to conceptualise the place of sports in this history. The framework focused the construction of myths and origins in Australia's history of 'white' settlement and immigration. Pearson suggested that from

1788, the dominant elite introduced civic underpinnings of a national community based on established institutional links with Britain. In sports organisations this was evidenced by the introduction and reinforcement of cultural continuity through sports such as cricket and horseracing. This initial phase was followed by the creation of myths and memories that were linked to a reshaping of the relationship with the mother country. In this period games such as cricket moved from their early allegiance and deference to everything English to the creation of an intense rivalry and desire to beat all English sporting teams. This was followed by the appropriation of cultural symbols that signified Australian uniqueness. The emergence of new sports, such as Australian Rules football, provided evidence of the move into this next phase. The final phase was characterised by the process of borrowing of customs and traditions from other ethnic groups. This shift in sports occurred in a two-way process. Soccer moved from an English-controlled game to a sport administered and played by large numbers of European Australians. In the second shift non-English sports, such as handball and *bocce*, were introduced by ethnic minority groups into the host society but were still mainly played within ethnic communities.

However, not all sports have moved into the final phase and successfully adapted in the move from assimilation to cultural diversity and thus remain relatively culturally segregated. Cricket, a sport that has been perceived as the archetypal English game, has had a very limited multicultural penetration. While the New South Wales Cricket Association has actively recruited ethnic minority youth, mainly Arabic and Vietnamese boys, most cricket administrators have been found to be indifferent to increasing ethnic minority participation in the sport (Cashman, 1997). Australian Rules football, and to a lesser degree rugby league, have been more culturally integrative (Stoddart, 1994). Stewart, Hess and Dixon (1997) suggested that the appeal of Australian Rules football to immigrants was threefold. Firstly, it was the most prominent sport played in the suburbs where newly arrived migrants settled; secondly, some clubs developed links with particular ethnic communities; and third, it provided financial rewards at the elite level and the players became role models for the young males from their communities. These players have succeeded despite assimilation policies. They were also able to overcome racist taunts and labelling (Booth and Tatz, 2000).

While there is a common migration experience to some extent, in society in general and in sports in particular, the process of immigration and settlement has had different consequences for women. These gender differences and their implications demand to be explored if a fuller understanding of migrant experiences is to be reached (Bottomley, de Lepervanche and Martin, 1991). The next section will provide a more detailed account of the socio-historical development of women and sports and the place of ethnic minority women within this history.

3.2 Women in Sports in Australia

In an early piece about women and sports it was pointed out that, 'while sport has been considered an important part of Australian culture, women's contribution has, with rare exceptions, historically been invisible or devalued' (Darlison, 1985:100). While Australian scholars have documented some of the achievements of women in sports, a full examination of the restrictions women face and how these barriers are created by and within society has still to be completed (Broomhall, 1993). Writings about women from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in sports are rare. Sports historian Daryl Adair (1998:44) recently commented, 'it is gloomy to admit, but we know virtually nothing of ethnicity and women in colonial sport'. In consequence, this section presents an overview of the history of women's involvement in sports in Australian using examples about women from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds wherever possible.

3.2.1 The Early Years

From the first days of colonisation women were discouraged from active participation in sporting activities. Female spectators were present in small numbers at the popular sports of horseracing and prize fights but such behaviour was not viewed as socially acceptable for women (Waterhouse, 1995). In the colonial era, sports such as horseracing, cricket, tennis and fox hunting, were instrumental in reinforcing British values in Australia but were mainly male domains (Lynch and Veal, 1996). The nineteenth century allegiance to all things British by residents of the colonies is evident in this quotation: 'British mores set the standards of society; either standards to follow or benchmarks from which the strength of colonial deviation could be measured' (Daly,

1996:39). While Adair (1998) surmised that early colonial sport provided both pleasure and the social and cultural underpinning of British civilisation, he did not specify whether this benefit extended to women.

Across all spheres of colonial life, including sports, officers and gentlemen were largely motivated in their actions by commitment to the principles of paternalism. The lower orders participated mainly out of defiance to authority and engaged in 'illegal' sports, while women of all classes were restrained in their participation by English cultural values and institutions (Waterhouse, 1995). Therefore, as was outlined in the previous section, sports for officers and free settlers were a matter of elite participation, convicts and lower classes played sports for fun, as an expression of freedom, or as a focus for gambling. It has been suggested that women were left to watch or play games such as croquet where they could look feminine and 'hunt' for a husband (Raszeja, 1992). The colonial sporting heritage of Australia has meant that most sports played in the early years of the colony were imported from Britain and virtually excluded the public participation of women (Stell, 1991). During these times 'white' women who publicly participated in male dominated sports were subjected to social ostracism (Darlison, 1985). This does not mean women did not engage in physical activity, particularly in country areas. As Dow (1993:430) revealed, 'the physical demands of the pioneering life meant colonial women were proficient shooters, rowers, swimmers and excellent equestrians. Their skills, however, were rarely acclaimed.' In the main early formal sports organisations ostracised women from participation and sports were used to reinforce the divide between men and women (Crotty, 2000)..

It has also been suggested, that up until the 1850s, women's participation in leisure and sports was limited to drinking contests and smock races, sports that made them objects of sexual display (Waterhouse, 1995). While this is one conclusion it would seem that opinions to the contrary do exist. Women have been reported as actively participating in public fairs, engaging in foot racing and other such activities (Howell and Howell, 1987). As new forms of commercial leisure emerged, such as music, dance, and horseracing, men embraced these forms of public recreation to a far greater extent than women, who mainly found their recreation at home (Waterhouse, 1995). Other popular sports such as cricket, football, sculling and later in the century, rugby, were also male

domains with minimal female involvement. If women publicly engaged in vigorous physical exercise, 'they were considered eccentric, brash and even a trifle risqué' (Webster, 1989:160). Women have been largely invisible in most of the documentation of colonial sports. However, it has been suggested that this period of Australian social history is still of great importance for women as it was to provide the foundations fora particular view of women that increasingly discriminated against those who did not conform to middle-class ideals of femininity (Booth and Tatz, 2000). Societal expectations of masculinity and femininity would continue to shape and restrict women's sports participation for generations to follow (Kirk, 2000).

There are limited histories of the sports and recreation activities of ethnic minority immigrants during the nineteenth century. It is known that Germans living in South Australia played *Kegeln*, a game similar to skittles, and established hunting clubs. However, these pursuits appear to have been open only to males (Adair, 1998). The introduction of the *turnverein* (gymnastics) movement in the 1840s by German immigrants signified the start of a truly culturally different sport, which included women, but its constituency was limited. Engagement in gymnastics was justified as promoting better physical well-being (Adair, 1998). Other ethnic minority groups such, as the Italians and Greeks, established sports clubs but did not permit women to compete in the sports they offered (Georgakis, 1999).

Of those women who did want to publicly participate in active sports, their involvement was largely restricted by social convention and even legislation. Bathing became popular in the early 1800s as a recreational exercise for women. After complaints about women bathing in public, private ladies establishments were built so that women could bathe without men present. However, the cost of entry into these facilities and their limited locations meant that the baths were mainly used by upper and middle class women (Raszeja, 1992). In reply women began to campaign vigorously for greater access to segregated public bathing areas (Stell, 1991). As a result lower cost swimming pools, which provided for segregated activities and allowed women the space to enjoy swimming in private were built in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. However, many areas could not afford to build separate facilities and women were forced to enter only during designated time periods. Raszeja (1992) speculated

that the restricted hours only suited middle class women since women's swimming times were typically scheduled during the day, when working women were unable to use the facilities. These segregated spaces offered women the space to develop their swimming skills and enjoy the freedom of segregated participation. Swimming and bathing emerged as arenas in which some women were able to contest the social conventions of the period, conventions which frowned on women engaging in physical activities or exposing too much of their bodies in public.

The overwhelming community reaction to women who engaged in physical activities in full public view was not positive. In a historical study of women cyclists in New Zealand Simpson (1998) wrote that women publicly participating in the sport in the 1890s were mocked and their female propriety questioned as their riding attire and physical activity pushed the boundaries of social etiquette. Cycling was seen as improper as its bifurcated costumes symbolised masculinity and female cyclists had to face derisory comments about their morality. However, other sports, such as women's tennis, were able to largely escape public wrath by keeping the uniforms decidedly feminine and thus acceptable, 'divided skirts and modestly shortened skirts, for example, remained within the bounds of appropriate feminine attire' (Simpson, 1998:135). It was even suggested, by men of the day, that only women should play tennis since it was really an 'effeminate game' (Crotty, 2000: 24).

Public perceptions about participation in physical activity and its associated benefits entered into another realm with the emergence of 'muscular Christianity' in the late nineteenth century. These ideas were initially related only to males but gradually in the mid-1860s Australian girls' schools began to introduce light exercise into the curriculum and by the 1870s physical activity was being promoted as essential to women's physical and moral well-being (Crawford, 1984). However, most female exertion still occurred in private (Booth and Tatz, 2000) and was designed for the perpetuation of the British race and its morals (Raszeja, 1992). It was not until the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century that girls began to publicly participate in a range of sports provided by organisations such as private girls' schools and the newly established Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). This shift was not without dissent. Society still had difficulty accepting that women

engaged in sporting pursuits as it was perceived as a compromise of their gentility. But times were changing. This new level of women's participation was not limited to sports and reflected a wider social movement whereby women were also slowly starting to find a place in politics, education and the arts (Booth and Tatz, 2000).

The broader acceptance of physical activities for females was further illustrated in a discussion on the growth of female-only gymnasiums. The *Australian Sketcher*, of 23 July, 1881 stated, 'the success of the gymnasium is evidence that public opinion is moving onwards, and it encourages us to hope that in the future Victoria's daughters, as well as her sons, will have reason to be proud of their physique' (quoted in Howard, 1978:25). In 1897 Dr Philip Musket was quoted as saying, 'if Australian mothers are not to possess physique, I should be very much concerned for the future of the Australian race … cycling can cure 90 per cent of the functional ailments of women begotten of ennui … thousands of women qualifying for chronic invalidism have been rescued by cycling' (quoted in Daly, 1996:191).

The YWCA and independent girls' schools were of utmost importance in promotingthe benefits of physical exercise for women. Both of these organisations offered sporting facilities and regular physical activities such as swimming, rowing, gymnastics, croquet, tennis, rounders, cricket, hockey, vigoro, lacrosse, baseball, basketball and athletics (Stell, 1991). The independent girls' schools incorporated sports into their curriculum and promoted the approach that all women and girls should be healthy and physically active (Kirk, 2000). 'The games of the English girls' schools were adopted in Australia in the early decades of the twentieth century as part of the accepted cultural transference of "things British" to the antipodes' (Daly, 1994a: 24). Similar to the male sports being played during this era, most of the sports played by the women and girls were of British origin. In analysing school sports Kirk (2000: 52) suggested that:

> … the team games that emerged in the late nineteenth century from the schools serving the privileged classes were firmly and explicitly designed to emphasize the social characteristics of femininity and masculinity valued by those social groups at the time. Throughout its modern history sport has been an important means of emphasizing differences between men and women and of maintaining those differences.

However, the extent to which this applied to working class schoolgirls is not clear since the historical documentation on sports participation does not specifically discuss their situation. Although, Kirk (2000) speculated that sports were not part of the working-class child's experience until the late 1940s.

By the first decade of the twentieth century women were 'permitted' to play sports that were perceived as social pastimes, that did not require great physical exertion and that allowed them to retain decorum of femininity. For example, golf was seen to have redeeming feminine virtues, it provided women with the opportunity to mingle with individuals of the same social standing, it was a healthy form of moderate exercise, and it developed self-control and equanimity (Haig-Muir, 1998). Golf was promoted as a sport devoid of serious competitiveness. In the main South Australian news publication the results of ladies golf competitions of the day were reported under the heading 'Adelaide gossip' rather than in the sporting column (Vamplew, 1994). For women, sports such as golf, tennis and croquet were socially sanctioned elitist sports that were constrained by rigidly adhered to rules and conventions about 'proper' behaviour and dress (Raszeja, 1992). Played under such conditions, these sports acted to reinforce gender and sexual division and provide a site for males to demonstrate their superiority (Booth and Tatz, 2000). Working class women do not appear to be represented in these discussions of early sports participation. It is likely that working class women neither had the time, finances, freedom or inclination to participate in sports.

The era's social perception of women's sporting requirements can be illustrated in the case of women's swimming. In her examination of women's competitive swimming Raszeja (1992) convincingly argued that swimming was the first acceptable physically active recreation for women. Unlike other sports, swimming participants were able to combine masculine qualities of physical excellence within a feminine image of gracefulness. 'As it posed no threat to the image and ideals of "respectable" womanhood, women's competitive swimming would, in its early years, be allowed to develop virtually unhampered' (Raszeja, 1992:44). Non-competitive swimming was a very popular pursuit for women during this period as it was supported by the medical

profession and was included in the educational curriculum (Booth, 1994). These elements combined to make it a non-threatening and socially acceptable sport. Across Australia women's swimming clubs developed under the auspices of men's associations though women were often powerless in the decision-making of the clubs. The New South Wales Amateur Swimming Association was the controlling body in NSW. In partial response to continued denial of representation of female swimmers, the New South Wales Ladies Amateur Swimming Association (NSWLASA) was formed in 1906 (Booth and Tatz, 2000). The new association adopted strict regulations for swimming costumes and banned male spectators from competitions. Raszeja (1992) speculated that this move allowed women the freedom to join swimming clubs without fear of embarrassment while still retaining their ability to compete. These sex segregation regulations were to remain unchallenged until 1912 when the selection of Fanny Durack, triumphed as the fastest woman swimmer in the world, and Mina Wylie, to the otherwise all male Australian Olympic team depended on the association withdrawing its rule forbidding women to swim in public. The regulation was narrowly rescinded and the men's association ratified the decision but provided no financial support for the two female athletes. A benefactor organised a public appeal to provide the money to include Durack and Wylie in the Australian team and they won gold and silver medals respectively and returned home from Stockholm to a warm welcome (Booth and Tatz, 2000).

Women engaged in various other sports within similar social confines and expectations. By the early 1900s women's rowing clubs were organised in Australia and women's boat sheds were built on rivers and lakes. While initially a sport for daughters of the wealthy classes, the popularity of rowing spread and many women participated in the sport. However, female rowers were expected to appear lady-like, and dress appropriately and relied on handed-down equipment. They also had limited access to clubhouses (Adair, 1994). Even in sports that had relatively high female participation, such as lawn bowls, women's involvement was often contingent on affiliation with men's clubs or on men's permission. In the case of lawn bowls the unequal access to facilities was closely linked to the high cost of establishing greens as it was argued that allowing women use the greens was hard to justify due to their 'inferiority' (McCarthy, 1994).

In some respects golf followed a similar pattern to lawn bowls whereby women were allowed associate status at golf clubs, which denied them full membership. Women's golf had its origins much earlier than lawn bowls with the first Australian ladies championship being held in 1894 in Geelong (Stell, 1991). Even though golf had a long tradition of female participation and was seen as socially acceptable, as previously discusses, women were allowed to play only at times deemed convenient to men and certainly had little control in the decision-making within clubs. They were usually excluded from the clubhouses (Stoddart, 1994). Similarly, women competed in track and field events starting in the early part of the twentieth century but had little access to power or decision-making in the organisation and administration of the sport. As Daly (1994b: 261) observed 'national representation, range and even conduct of events was determined by the whim of male officials.'

Unlike the other socially accepted sports of the period, tennis was initially dominated by women, and therefore not considered a 'real' sport until the late 1880s (Kinross-Smith, 1994). Before this time it was seen as a non-competitive pleasant pastime played by wealthy patrons emulating the British model. Tennis was the 'perfect game' for women during this era; it was social rather than sporting and it gathered together women with similar social standings (Stoddart, 1986). The first intercolonial lawn tennis match between Victoria and New South Wales was played in 1885 in Sydney and the largest crowds attending were for the women's games (Stell, 1991). As the game became more serious and more competitive men began to control the game, particularly within its administration, and women were pushed into the background.

Another sport played by both sexes was cricket. While the first recorded women's cricket match in Australia was in 1874 at Bendigo most female involvement in the game was in auxiliary capacities or as spectators (Cashman, 1994). The initial few games that were played by women were viewed as novelty and, as the case of so many other sports of the time, not taken seriously. By the turn of the century there was little public or media support and women who played cricket were ridiculed and considered unfeminine (Cashman and Weaver, 1991).

3.2.2 The tide turns

By the 1920s and 1930s women were participating in sports that ranged from the earlier socially accepted sports of tennis, golf, and swimming to the new pursuits of basketball, hockey and cycling. Women began to form their own sports associations and take control of the administration of their sports but they still had to continually battle for physical space and social acceptance (Booth and Tatz, 2000). Women's participation during this period was still primarily seen as a social occasion where competition or outcome was not of paramount concern (Jobling and Barham, 1988). Acknowledgment of the sporting achievements of women was not particularly forthcoming from their male counterparts, their families, communities or the media. However, the social tide was beginning to turn and competitive women's sports were gaining in number, popularity and social acceptance. In 1932 interstate women's cricket competitions were established and in 1934/5 the first women's cricket Tests between Australia and England were played (Bushby and Jobling, 1985). Nancy Wynne was acclaimed for her tennis abilities and was six times winner of the Australian women's singles from 1937 until 1951 (Kinross-Smith, 1994). The Australian women's basketball side played its first international match in 1938 and defeated New Zealand 40-11 (Jobling, 1994). Since 1926 the New South Wales Amateur Athletic Association competitions included women, in response to the introduction of track and field events for women into the 1928 Olympics (Daly, 1994b). The 100 metres for women was contested at the inaugural Australian National Games in 1928, with Edith Robinson attaining victory and therefore Olympic selection. The other states in Australia began to form their own women's associations with Queensland establishing the first Women's Amateur Athletic Association on the 28 April 1929 and Victoria the second on 9 December 1929 (Bellert, 2000). However, strenuous physical activity was still seen as questionable for females and during this period the Australian Amateur Athletic Union did not allow women's events to collect points for their side (Bellert, 2000).

Women struggled, in varying degrees, to gain public acceptance for their sport participation. While women had rowed competitively in Australia since colonial times, the sport's very nature of aggression and muscularity raised debate in terms of acceptable social conventions of femininity. In comparison with men's rowing it 'remained very much a poor relation' not only in relation to facilities and access but

also in relation to public acceptance (Adair, 1994:183). Field hockey was popular for women from the early 1900s, and the New South Wales Women's Hockey Association formed in 1907. On 2 July 1910 the Australian Women's Hockey Association was consitutued and it affiliated with the All England Women's Hockey Association. The first 'All Australian' team was selected in 1914 to play England in Australia, with the initial overseas tour taking place in 1930. Widespread acceptance was not immediately forthcoming, and hockey was considered a rough game that promoted masculine behaviour (Daly, 1996). In 1919, the first intervarsity hockey tournament was held in Sydney and the accepted costume at the time included long heavy skirts. Strict morality codes demanded stringent uniform conformity, which was rigidly enforced as expansion and characteristic increase in organisation led to a strict dress code. In 1924 the English three-pleated tunic shirt, tie and long stockings were accepted as the official uniform for the Australian teams. Concerned about Victorian moral conservatism, Australia clung to this uniform as late as 1938 (Daly, 2000).

Latham (1997) has argued that during the 1920s and 1930s the female body in sports served as a site where cultural values were exhibited, endorsed, defied, mediated, and transformed. In defying conservative conventions of the time, women of previous generations exerted autonomy, enacted resistance, and changed the nature of sports for future generations. However, the reverse was true in the cases where women accepted the conventions of the time. These women reinforced the gendered nature of sports participation for future generations. The majority of women chose to accept the conventions rather than to resist or challenge them and in many instances is was women who acted as the enforcers of social acceptability in sports participation.

An economically-driven shift, which had a direct impact on the absolute numbers of women playing sports during the 1920s and the 1930s, was workplace sponsorship of women's sport. Factory employers saw a relationship with physical fitness and industrial efficiency and encouraged their female workforce to be active. Companies sponsored employees in sports such as women's basketball, hockey, tennis and vigoro, and provided company sports facilities. However, support was withdrawn if working hours or profits were negatively affected by the women's sports participation

(Stell, 1991). This support of women's sports had a massive flow-on effect, city-based sports competitions such as women's basketball grew in numbers as workplace teams swelled the ranks and provided a place for working class women to compete once they had left school (Dunbar, 1989).

In 1939 softball was introduced into Australia by Gordon Young, the Director of Physical Education in New South Wales in a summer school for primary teachers (Embrey, 1995). Australia's first inter-state championship was played in Brisbane in 1947 and was won by Victoria. Two years later in Melbourne the Australian Softball Women's Softball Council was formed with Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales as the founding members. The other states of Australia eventually joined and softball evolved into a female sport dominated by women players, coaches and administrators (Embrey, 1997). Like women's basketball, softball gained a foothold in schools and community clubs and was seen as an acceptable sport for girls to play.

The 1950s signalled a period of rapid change for women in both society and sports that continued to the 1960s. Technological and economic developments meant women spent less time in the home and more time in the labour force. It was a 'golden era' for Australian women in the Olympics and at the 1956 Melbourne Games women won seven of Australia's thirteen gold medals (Booth and Tatz, 2000). Australian women began to dominate their sports but the media coverage of their participation outside the Olympics remained minimal and mainly limited to the occasional standout athlete such as Marjorie Jackson, Margaret Court and Dawn Fraser. Daly (1994a: 9) has suggested that, 'there exists though in Australia a paradox, acceptance of the few (winners) and rejection of the many women who just wish to play sport'. Even the acceptance of the winners has been conditional, with many of these women publicly criticised for being too masculine (Booth and Tatz, 2000). Despite a growing sense of freedom in lifestyle choice, women still had constantly to fight for access to appropriate facilities, funding and acceptance. Even though women's sport continued to attract larger numbers, and discard the social constraints associated with acceptable sports participation, between 1945 and 1970 the highest growth sports were tennis and golf. These sports were

considered feminine and both still retained the title 'ladies' for their organisations (Stell, 1991).

Other sports continued to formally exclude women. It was not until the 1980s that women were allowed to engage in rescue work and competitions in surf life saving (Booth, 1994). Women were only allowed limited access to facilities as evidenced in golf where many golf clubs did not allow women to play on weekends until the 1970s (Stoddart, 1994). In male dominated sports such as boxing, cricket, the football codes, horseracing, soccer, surfing, wrestling and weightlifting women continued to be marginalised in many other ways.

Although women are the majority of the Australian population they have historically, received a disproportionately smaller share of sporting resources. Even in the sports that have now fully included women as players, most have continued to exclude women from positions of influence and authority (Vamplew, 1994). Research undertaken for the Australian Sports Commission (1992) found that there were low numbers of women as players, coaches, administrators, and officials and in decision-making positions in most sports. While numerous policy initiatives have been taken ostensibly to redress the inequities, progress has been slow. The title of McKay's (1992) report 'Why so few? Women executives in Australian sport' says it all. The women he interviewed for his study reported that they perceived their organisations to be neither female nor family friendly. Similarly, a study of Australian urban sports infrastructure found that facilities and services favoured males (Mowbray, 1993). Stoddart (1994:272) aptly summarised the situation in this comment, 'women have given Australia vast service in athletics and swimming, vast numbers in netball and bowls and vast service in administration, yet their playing field is uneven … old practice remains persistently pronounced and symbolic of a deeper social stubbornness in the Australian cultural psyche.'

The battle continues to be waged against gender-based inequities and inequalities in sports. Women have historically had to face discrimination and 'male-controlled sporting organisations, and a hostile male-dominated press that deemed their efforts trivial and second rate' (Stell, 1991:49). The Australian media have reinforced the dominant masculine viewpoint of sports and either disregarded women's involvement

or trivialised it to fit stereotypical images of feminine behaviour (Vamplew, 1994). Even the most talented female athletes faced subjection to the 'ethic of care' and public demands to see them as 'family women' (Henderson, 1991). The media have played on this image. How often have we seen women's magazines, 'elevate a young woman from absolute obscurity to banner headlines and then return her to obscurity via a well-publicised marriage. End of story' (Dow, 1993:433).

3.2.3 Women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

So where do women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds fit into this history of women and sports in Australia? From the section on Australian immigration it is evident that since colonisation the country's population has encompassed large numbers of women from non-English-speaking backgrounds. However, there were few references to involvement of non-British migrant women in early Australian sports. If, as many writers lament, the history of Australian women in sport is thinly documented, then the history of sports and women from ethnic minority backgrounds is skeletal. Writing about women's sport up to 1912, Raszeja (1992) concluded that the majority of women involved in organised sports during this period were middle or upper-class white women of British origins. While Stell (1991) asserted that the 1950s influx of migrants significantly altered the range of women's sporting choices, she was referring to both English and non-English-speaking arrivals, and offered little evidence of the latter's impact beyond Hungarian-born Suzy Javor (Australian table tennis champion in 1958 and 1959), Czech-born fencer Johanna Winter (gold in 1962 British Empire Games) and several European-born coaches and trainers prominent in the development of gymnastics. Current sports participation data reinforce the under-representation of ethnic minority women.

3.3 Summary

This chapter has provided the historical framework for the empirical component of the study by locating the research questions within the historical boundaries of Australian society. Relevant social, demographic and political parameters were explored and there was reference to the place of ethnic minority women in these contexts. The literature on the history of women and sports in Australia traced a path of constant struggle against a sports system that was designed for and controlled by men. The system perpetuated

sports as sites of aggressive competition, personal development and maleness. Women were not encouraged to join most sporting clubs. Women's place in the Australian sports organisations has ranged from outright exclusion through to segregation, marginalisation, and trivialisation.

Women appear to have had little influence in the early structures of sports and for the most part were excluded from participation on medical and gender grounds until the latter part of the nineteenth century. When women did start playing sports in increasing numbers, they engaged in mainly in class-based genteel activities that excluded many women from working-class backgrounds. Migrant women were located on the extreme margins of sports in Australia throughout the twentieth century (Stoddart, 1994). Just as Hargreaves (1985) contended, the growth of women's sport in the inter-war years was closely associated with middle-class education in England, so too could this be argued as the case in Australian Federation after 1901. When women were in control of their own competitions and organisations, such as in women's basketball and later in softball, the acceleration of competitive games was more rapid. Booth and Tatz (2000) have suggested that women in Australia, made little progress in sport during this same period because men were still opposed to vigorous female activity and many women accepted this feminine ideology.

From its earliest days, organised sports in Australia have been used to socialise women into gender-based, socially acceptable roles (Vamplew, 1994). Women began to participate in competitive sports gradually, starting in the late nineteenth century, much to the horror of many males and females who believed that high-exertion, physically demanding sports were not appropriate for women. Women continued to fight for a change in public opinion and exercise their right to participate in physical activities. The struggle was particularly acute for women from different cultural backgrounds who did not have the same opportunities as their English-speaking counterparts. Australian immigration policies clearly favoured migrants from white, English-speaking countries and for many decades legislated for complete assimilation of all other groups. There is little evidence of sports organisations advocating the inclusion of women and girls from non-English-speaking backgrounds during this era.

CHAPTER FOUR: NETBALL IN AUSTRALIA – A SOCIAL HISTORY

4.0 Introduction

Chapter Three outlined the general social environment of Australia since white settlement and the role of women and ethnic minority groups in its social history. This chapter narrows the focus and concentrates on the development of netball, the sport chosen for the case study in the present study. The aim in this chapter is to provide a contextual analysis of netball in which the subsequent empirical research can be located. The administration, politics and playing of the sport are examined within a socio-historical framework that incorporates a discussion of gender and social relations, ideology and hegemonic positioning.

It will be argued that netball was designed, promoted and promulgated to enhance the ideals of a 'compliant femininity', a premise that provided a socially legitimated foundation for netball and positioned it as an acceptable activity for women and girls. This chapter explores the debates surrounding the early development of the game and its progress; proposing a conceptual framework in which to situate netball's emergence as the number one team sport for women in this country. This analysis of netball is subsequently used as the basis for positioning and discussing the primary data collected through surveys and interviews relative to the case study in Chapter Seven.

4.1 Australian Netball

Netball is played in schools, community and state competitions and at representative and professional levels across contemporary Australia. While growing numbers of men and boys have become involved in netball, it has been historically dominated by female involvement in all aspects of the game, from players to umpires, coaches and administrators. Netball is traditionally a winter sport in Australia running from April to September but there are also a substantial number of summer and night competitions. At the elite level there are annual National Championships each year in 17 years and under, 19 and under, 21 and under and open age groups as well as a

National Disabled Championship. Recently a national championship was instigated for male teams. An annual Australasian Schools Netball Championship and an International Test Series complement these events. Netball has operated as a professional sport since 1997 when the National Netball League commenced, a female-only competition.

While the sport is now commonly and officially termed *netball*, this has been a relatively recent name change from *women's basketball*. The title change officially occurred at a 1970 Council meeting of the All Australia Netball Association (AANA) in Brisbane (Jobling and Barham, 1988). When the national association approved the new name of netball in its title, all member states followed suit and the sport became officially known as netball across Australia. Previous to this there was a great deal of confusion surrounding the exact nature of game as it was being played under different names and rules around the country due to the *ad hoc* nature of its introduction into schools, church competitions and community leagues. In this chapter the nomenclature that was used during the particular period under discussion is utilised. However, it should be noted that some of the authors quoted in this chapter use the term 'netball' instead of women's basketball even though they are referring to the pre-1970 period. All of the discussions in this chapter are in reference to the sport that started as 'women's basketball' and evolved to 'netball' in Australia.

The contemporary sport of netball has the highest level of female participation of any team sport in Australia. In 1991 a study of national sports participation found that over 185,000 girls and women participated in netball on a weekly basis and 240,000 participated on a monthly basis (Department of the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and the Territories, 1991). These data are complemented by a 1995-96 study, which found that 287,000 females aged 15 years, and over played netball in 1995-96 and 285,800 in 1997-98 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998). It has been further documented that netball has increased its participant numbers by 49 per cent between 1975 and 1998 (Commonwealth of Australia, 1999). Table 3.1 outlines the position of netball in relation to other sports played by females aged over 15 years.

Table 4.1 Most popular sports/physical activities for females 15 years and over in Australia

Sport	Number		
	1995/6	1997/8	Change
	'000s		
Aerobics	566.3	896.2	+329.9
Netball	287.0	285.8	- 1.8
Tennis	207.2	474.2	+267.0
Swimming	153.8	896.0	+742.2
Ten pin bowling	111.1	217.3	+106.2

Source: Participation in Sport and Physical Activities, 1997-8

While these figures may seem to suggest that netball has lost popularity and other sports have soared in participation, it should be noted that the data are not directly comparable between the two collection periods due to a change in data collection procedures. Prior to 1997 'sport' was defined only as organised activity, from 1997 onwards the Australian Bureau of Statistics changed the definition to include all non-organised activity, so the data included recreational pursuits as well. Many more women informally participate in activities as recreation rather than sport. This explains why recorded participation levels sports such as aerobics, swimming and tennis have increased enormously from the 1995/6 to the 1997/8 figures.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data (1998) has indicated that for young girls aged 5-14 years, netball and swimming were by far the most popular sports or physical activities, with participation rates of 20.5 per cent and 15.0 per cent respectively. The next most popular sports were basketball (8.3 per cent) and tennis (7.7 per cent). It was further estimated that if informal play and competitions are counted that some 750,000 or one in seven females (of all ages) in Australia play netball (Otago, 1991). On its official website (last updated on March 2000) Netball Australia claimed a national membership of over 350,000 and 541 affiliated associations. Totalling all of the registered numbers of Netball Australia, there are an estimated 1.2 million netball

players in Australia, a substantial increase from the 1991 estimates. Internationally netball is played in approximately 50 countries, 45 of which are affiliated with the International Federation of Netball Associations (IFNA).

A detailed profile of netball was developed for the Australian Sports Commission from the 1995-1998 Population Survey Monitor surveys and related to people over the age of 18 years. The study concluded that on average netball participants are female, aged between 18 and 24 years, are Australian-born, have never married and are employed full-time. Australian-born players comprised 91.8 per cent of netball participants in the figures reported (Australian Sports Commission, 2000).

Netball is also a major sporting attraction with over 312,000 estimated spectators attending netball matches in 1995 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998). Netball was the only sport for which significantly more females than males attended games away from home (33,600 females and 11,700 males) in 1995-96. In the same 1995-96 study it was estimated that $76.7 million was spent on netball and that the average cost per participant was $233 per annum (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998). Just how netball achieved this position of dominance in female team sports will be discussed in the following sections of this chapter.

4.2 Development Up to 1970

In trying to determine the historical course of netball in Australia it was revealed that there is limited research or critical documentation about the game's development. This seemed surprising given netball's dominant place in the construction and practice of women's sport in Australia. A similar situation has existed with Australia's close neighbour, New Zealand, where netball is also the largest female participation team sport. As is the case in Australia, there has been little attention paid to the New Zealand game either sociologically or historically (Broomhall, 1993). General histories of netball, which provide descriptive narratives of key events and personalities in the game, exist but these have focussed on providing a factual documentation of the game rather than social critique (see Dunbar, 1989; Netball Victoria, 1994). Additionally, a socio-

historical series of articles about netball was authored by Jobling and Barham (1988, 1991, 1992).

The lack of netball-specific literature is compounded by its non-inclusion in general sport texts. Many of the early works on the history of Australian sports made little or no reference to this game or its participants; instead they focussed on established male dominated sports such as the various football codes and cricket. When women were discussed the comments typically focussed on women's achievements in Olympic sports. In respect of the lack of academic discussion about netball Darlison (1985) expressed concern that women's netball teams have been hugely successful over the years but their efforts have been largely unnoticed outside the netball community. Netball clearly has been a success story in terms of national team supremacy on the world stage. The national Australian side won the inaugural World Championships in 1963 and dominated the ensuing championships but received little media or public recognition until the 1990s. While it could be argued that this circumstance may be predicated on the narrow bases of netball, as it is a sport which is primarily played in a selected number of Commonwealth countries, or the fact that it is not a recognised Olympic sport, this argument fails to explain the amount of attention paid to male sports such as Australian Rules football which is even more territorially limited than netball.

The ensuing discussions will outline the historical development of netball in Australia, with a particular emphasis on New South Wales, the state in which the subsequent case study is located. The information for this section has been obtained from primary and secondary sources including archival records, newspaper reports, letters and oral histories of women involved in the game. This material offers comments on the general development of netball. It will also suggest why and how netball became the most popular women's team sport in Australia, why men were excluded from all spheres of the game for so many years and why women from ethnic minority backgrounds have had only a marginal presence in netball. These issues are located within their social context and discussed in relation to values and ideologies present in Australia during the corresponding time period.

4.3 Development of the Code

In the following historical sections the term 'women's basketball' will be used in reference to what was to become 'netball' in 1970. The precise timing of the introduction of women's basketball into Australia is uncertain and largely based on speculation. Previous research has traced the history of the game in Australia to the turn of the century when it was thought to have been introduced into primary and secondary schools by teachers from England (Jobling and Barham, 1988). While the historical roots of women's basketball are imprecise, it was most certainly derived from the men's sport of basketball and is a modified form of the game. The origins of men's basketball are well documented; it was first played in 1891 and codified in 1892 in the USA at Springfield College, a physical education training institute in Massachusetts. Its inventor, a Canadian, Dr James Naismith, was a Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) instructor who developed the game to increase the interest of his students in their gymnasium exercises. Smith College, an institution for women 20 miles from Springfield, introduced a female version of basketball in 1892. Women's basketball spread across the USA and into Canada but its development followed a somewhat different path from women's basketball in England and Australia. The North American game started off with netball-like similar rules but it then evolved to mirror the men's game.

The Australian version of netball traces its roots to England. Some sources attribute the development of women's basketball in England to an American, Dr Toll, who was visiting Marina Bergman-Osterberg's Physical Training College in 1895 (Martin, 1977). Madame Osterberg, apparently an autocrat who controlled students' activities in practically every detail, believed that a girl's education should be geared to her subsequent role as a mother. She promoted sport as training for motherhood and for the delivery of healthy children (Hargreaves, 1985). The modified game of women's basketball appealed to her as it could be played in a manner that retained femininity and decorum. The sport restricted physical movements and involved no body contact and therefore was not perceived as a threat to a woman's reproductive function.

Another theory on the introduction of women's basketball to England has suggested that two English women watched a game of basketball at Springfield College and returned home to, 'develop a set of rules more suitable for the less robust female competitor who, in those days was regarded as a rather frail and timid person' (Smith and Humberstone, 1978:11). Rules were subsequently devised to accommodate the restrictive female dress of the day, as women's long skirts made dribbling the ball and lengthy passes difficult. In consequence, the court was divided into three equal parts, with players based respectively in one of these three sections. The rules did not permit players to travel the full length of the court. A women's basketball team initially comprised either seven or nine players (this varied between competitions) compared to the five required for men's basketball. The number of players was increased for the women's game as a practical way of dealing with the mobility restrictions faced by women playing the sport in long skirts and restrictive attire (Dunbar, 1989).

Women's basketball arrived on Australian shores in various forms, as it had not been formally codified in England. The first recorded women's basketball game was played in 1897 in Victoria and included much improvisatio; women used broomsticks for posts and wet paper bags for baskets (Netball Victoria, 1994). Another early variation included the use of washing baskets on poles for goals. A separate pole was then used to tip the basket to allow the ball to be removed from the basket after a goal was scored (Netball Victoria, 1994).

The genesis of women's basketball varied markedly because the rules were not formally documented, they were largely passed on by word of mouth. While the early versions of the rules varied considerably, women's basketball was primarily played indoors as it had been in England (Jobling, 1994). However, by 1899 the game had moved outdoors as indoor playing space was limited and outdoor play suited the Australian climate. Due to the uncertainty about the rules the Ling Association of England revised and published the first set of rules in 1901 and also changed the name to netball as the baskets had been replaced by rings and nets (Jobling, 1994). Meanwhile in Australia the game

retained the nomenclature of women's basketball and regional variations continued with little notice of the English codification.

The size of teams varied to include nine-aside, seven-aside, six-aside and five-aside versions. As a result attempts to standardise started to occur at the national level as early as the 1930s (AAWBBA, 1931). However, these early attempts by the national association to regulate formal play and competitions in each state or association were only partially successful. Women and girls played by varied sets of rules up until the 1960s. While New South Wales officially used the seven-aside player rules, many schools and community groups playing netball in the state were not formal members of any association and various versions of the game continued.

National rules were finally established in 1963 at the time of the first world championships. It was decided that netball would be played on a court measuring 30.5m x 15.25m by teams of seven players. Scoring was to be achieved by shooting a ball through a 380mm ring attached to a post 3.05m high. To score, the ball was to be put through the ring by either the Gaol Shooter or Goal Attack from within the goal circle. A match consisted of four fifteen-minute quarters for women and four ten minute quarters for schoolgirls with a two minute break between quarters and five minutes at half-time. Teams change ends after each quarter. Each player has a designated area on court, determined by his or her playing position. A player may catch the ball with one or both hands and must pass it or shoot for goal within three seconds (Brown, 1978). Netball was defined as a non-contact sport, however, in reality there is some physical contact even though no player is allowed to come into personal contact with an opponent in a way that will interfere with the opponent's play.

4.4 Tracing the Growth and Development of Women's Basketball

4.4.1 State Level

The earliest developments in women's basketball were in the state of Victoria. In Melbourne, Victoria, girls in primary schools were informally playing women's

basketball by 1913 (Cashman, 1995). The game spread to secondary schools and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) courts, which opened in 1920, record hosting formal competitions from their inception (Netball Victoria, 1994). As outlined in the previous chapter the YWCA were to play a critical role in the promotion and development of women's sports associations and in encouraging physical activity during the early part of the twentieth century. Along with independent girls schools, the YWCA supported numerous women's sports from basketball to cricket, providing women with the impetus to form independent associations as well as providing actual sporting facilities and organising sports competitions. The ethos underlying this push for greater involvement of girls and women in sports was based on the muscular Christianity belief that team sports could be used to develop upstanding moral values and ideals of citizenship. Sports participation was also accompanied by physical benefits. These beliefs were to remain firmly in place for decades to come; evidenced in 1942 in an article in the *Age* where a sports mistress from a Melbourne girl's school was reported outlining the importance of schoolgirls' basketball as a good way in which, 'to build good character and make solid citizens who can contribute to this nation' (5 September 1942).

Women's basketball was an ideal sport for women to play. It was only played by women and therefore did not contest pre-determined male terrain in either psychological or physical terms. While women's basketball required some physical skills the sport initially did not require the use of excessive strength, aggression or overt physical exertion and therefore did not challenge perceptions about the player's femininity. In these early years games were played on asphalt courts, school grounds, tennis courts, and in church and drill halls. In using these venues for their sport girls and women did not have to compete with male dominated sports for ovals used for cricket and the various codes of football. In keeping women's basketball separate from male sports the game was able to develop independently unlike many other sports that women played and that were controlled by men's associations.

While some states adopted the game earlier and more enthusiastically than others, women's basketball soon spread across Australia. In Victoria, Louise Mills and Nonie Hardie from the Melbourne Residential YWCA took the first steps to formalise women's basketball when they formed the Melbourne Girls Basket Ball Association in 1922. An active sportswoman, Louise Mills was also instrumental in founding the Victorian Women's Cricket Association in 1923, and later played a role in establishing the Australian Women's Cricket Association (Cashman and Weaver, 1991). The Melbourne Girls Basket Ball Association went on to become the Victorian Women's Basketball Association in 1928 when the game's popularity spread beyond the confines of Melbourne into other areas of the state.

In South Australia the game developed slightly later than in Victoria but by 1937 there were over 100 teams registered with the South Australian Women's Basketball Association, with a further 80 teams playing in the United Church Association (Daly, 1994a). Independent girls' schools supplied the largest numbers but other organisations such as the YWCA and other similarly focussed girls' and youth clubs also joined together to form competitions.

In Queensland, nine-a-side women's basketball was played from 1920 under the banner of the Queensland Ladies Basket Ball Association, which was based in Albert Park, Brisbane (Jobling and Barham, 1991). In 1929 the Queensland Women's Basketball Association was set up as a competitor, offering seven-a-side basketball along with a women's cricket association that drew most of its players from the basketball and hockey associations (Cashman and Weaver, 1991). It is likely that this alliance was formed to provide women the opportunity to play a winter sport and a summer sport with the same club. In the Australian Capital Territory, the first women's basketball association, called the Canberra Netball Association, formed much later, in 1942. This association later divided into two district Associations, Canberra and south Canberra; both were affiliated with the New South Wales Netball Association (ACT Netball Association, undated).

In a development phase similar to the other states, women's basketball in New South Wales was initially associated with girls' schools and the YWCA in the early 1910s moving into women's leagues in the 1920s. In 1923 the City Girls Amateur Sports Association of New South Wales became the first recorded association to run competitions in Sydney (Hyland, 1987). The popularity of the game grew quickly amongst women and the association rapidly expanded. The New South Wales team emerged victorious in the first Annual Interstate Basketball competition in 1926 (Hyland, 1987).

Just as the rules and regulations of this relatively new game were modified and changed to meet the needs of players and society alike, the structure of its administration also evolved to meet the demands of the times. In the 1920s and 1930s the New South Wales competition was comprised of teams and clubs from around the state and games were played in both Saturday and night competitions. In Sydney, the main competitions were played at Moore Park, the Domain and Sydney University. In 1928 there were 43 clubs listed as competing in four grade competitions (Dunbar, 1989). On 4 July 1929 the City Girls Amateur Sports Association changed its name to the New South Wales Women's Basket Ball Association to reflect the prime focus of its activity. At this time the Association had some 41 teams registered (Hyland, 1987:28). The amalgamation into the new association also included fourteen other teams from the YWCA and an unspecified number from the Sydney Basket Ball Association, making a total of approximately 60 teams (Dunbar, 1989). Women's basketball was a growing sport for both girls and women.

In the 1940s and 1950s as Sydney's population expanded west, associations at Parramatta (now Parramatta-Auburn) were formed, followed by Manly-Warringah to the north. The growth in the game further accelerated and in 1949 there were 142 teams (with approximately 1400 players) in the Sydney metropolitan area. By 1959 this number had increased and 180 teams were affiliated with the New South Wales Women's Basket Ball Association (Dunbar, 1989).

The New South Wales state association restructured in 1968, adopting a new constitution that established districts across the state. Previous to this only the metropolitan clubs were allowed to hold full membership in the New South Wales Women's Basket Ball Association, all other groups were classified as associates. These changes meant that all district associations were now eligible for full membership and were given equal representation on the New South Wales Council.

In New South Wales women's basketball has historically been sensitive to and inclusive of women with differing physical abilities. For example, deaf women have had a long-standing involvement in the game. Women's basketball was played in the 1930s at Darlington Deaf School and there was a team entered in the 1944 New South Wales Women's Basket Ball Association competition (Dunbar, 1989). Originally called the NSW Deaf Basket Ball Club, the club changed its name to the Sydney Deaf Netball Club in 1977. Additionally, in 1959 the Eastwood Ryde Association began training the first blind netball team (Dunbar, 1989). The ball used had a bell inside, not unlike the popular sports of goal ball and blind cricket. A separate competition was also organised from the 1960s for girls and women with intellectual disabilities and many hospitals and institutions entered teams.

4.4.2 National Level Developments

While matches between state representative teams had commenced in 1924 and formal interstate competitions were in place by 1926, the creation of an Australian association did not occur until a few years later. The All-Australian Women's Basketball Association (AAWBBA) was formed in 1927 with the first All-Australian championship held in 1928. New South Wales was one of the foundation states, joining the AAWBBA for its inaugural meeting in 1927. Following this national alliance, interstate carnivals were held each year from 1928, except in 1937 when the carnival was cancelled due to a polio epidemic and in 1940-45 due to World War II (Dunbar, 1989).

Although most competitions were played on Saturdays, states such as New South Wales had quite active night competitions as well. Night Basketball Associations were initially separate from the day associations; however in some states these were controlled and organised by the parent association and others were officially affiliated. Night Basketball Associations also had their own constitutions. The Queensland Women's Basket Ball Association offered both night and day competitions. The South Australia Night Association was a subsidiary of the day association, New South Wales' Night Association was an associated member of the day association, and Victoria operated under two separate bodies. The day parent association president and secretary were automatically the president and secretary of the Night Association but were not affiliated with AAWBBA (Night Carnival Minutes, 1932). In 1940 AAWBBA proposed that Night Basketball should be controlled by AAWBBA, with a sub-committee consisting of one member from each state having a night association. A Night basketball tournament was to be held every year in the same state as the All Australia tournament and either immediately before or after the All Australia tournament. AAWBBA was adamant that constitutions for Night Associations must be drawn up and approved by each state (Night Association Minutes, 1940).

A unique aspect of women's basketball in the world of Australian sports was the control that women had over its management and delivery. Men were excluded from holding any formal positions in the association either as players or administrators. The female executive of women's basketball held steadfast for many years and did not allow men, in any state, to be umpires or hold official positions. In 1940 the Queensland association requested that AAWBBA allow two men to keep their life members badges for their informal service to the sport. A majority voted that the men be allowed to keep their badges, however, they were not to take part in the future management of the Queensland Association. It was decided that no other badges would be issued to men in the future (AAWBBA, 1940). When the Northern Territory representative body applied to AAWBBA for either state or associate membership in 1950 the council minutes documented the discussions about the Northern Territory Association's application. It was a contentious application because the organisation was

a combination of both men's and women's teams and men held office. AAWBBA therefore suggested that the Association be informed that only if they ran the women's competition as a separate body, controlled by women officials, would the council give consideration to their status as a state or associate member (AAWBBA, 1950).

The lack of uniformity in the construction of the game was soon brought home when Australia began to play in overseas competitions. During the 1948 Australian team tour of New Zealand Australia was forced to compete in both seven-aside and nine-aside games in Timaru (*Rotorua Post*, 1948). Australia travelled to England to play in 1956 and again rule variations caused conflicts when matches were played between the two countries. It was not until 1957, in London, that a meeting was called to try and develop consistent international rules and work out the differences as England, USA, Australia and New Zealand were each operating under different codes. Northern Ireland, South Africa and Wales were also present at this historic meeting (AAWBBA, 1957). In 1960 the first conference of the International Federation of Netball Associations was held in Ceylon. This inaugural conference adopted an international code of rules and resolved to meet every four years afterwards, at which time a council meeting and international tournament were to be staged (AAWBBA, 1960).

The first World Championships were played in England in August 1963 with Australia winning the title from a field of eleven countries (Blanch and Jenes, 1982). The second tournament was held in Australia in 1967 in Perth and New Zealand won the world title, Australia placed second. Australia regained the world crown in 1971 in Jamaica and won it again in New Zealand in 1975. At the fifth world tournament in Trinidad in 1979 there was a three-way tie for first place between Australia, New Zealand and Trinidad and Tobago. Australia won again in 1983 in Singapore and finished tied for second with Trinidad and Tobago in Scotland in 1987 with New Zealand taking first place. Demonstrating their recent dominance of the game Australia won the world title in 1991, 1995 and again in 1999.

4.5 Firstly Feminine – A Game For 'Girls' ?

Women's basketball carved out a unique place in women's sport, particularly until the 1970s. From its introduction to Australia in the late nineteenth century women's basketball rapidly gained in popularity in the first part of this century. The game was defined as non-contact; the skills required to play were perceived as simple and not too strenuous and the uniforms were respectable and quintessentially feminine. Middle class women instilled the sport with qualities that were highly valued during this epoch (Kirk, 2000). Consequently, it met with general public acceptance as women's basketball was a sport that conformed to expectations of the times about women and sport, as it was not seen as overly competitive or masculine (Jobling and Barham, 1991).

In her examination of the history of women in sports Stell (1991) contended that women's basketball was introduced to Australia as a more feminine alternative to field hockey, which was regarded as boyish and rough and therefore not suitable for women or girls. Women's basketball was played in a ladylike fashion and the players were supposed to be co-operative rather than overtly competitive. Such considerations about desirable femininity and acceptable behaviours reflected societal attitudes of the era; if women were going to play sport they were best to engage in a game that accounted for their delicate nature. These arguments are explored in the following sections.

4.5.1 Built for Comfort Not Speed

In pursuing the line of argument about the societal acceptability of women's basketball, Nauright and Broomhall (1994) have suggested that the sport was a prime example of a sport that Australian and New Zealand women have been 'allowed' to play. This social acceptability was evidenced in the widespread approval of women's basketball as a suitable sport for female players in schools, churches and industrially sponsored competitions. Nauright and Broomhall asserted that while women were involved in designing and promoting the sport it was mainly middle-class Anglo-Celtic women, operating under the presumption that women's basketball should retain its compliant feminine character who dominated the game's development. Furthermore, they contended that public permission to participate in this sport was readily forthcoming

from its beginnings because women's basketball was seen to complement the dominant conceptions of proper female physical activity. It did not constitute a challenge to the gender order or conventional perceptions of femininity. It has also been suggested that women played the sport merely for enjoyment, for physical activity, to obtain some independence and to secure a break from household activity (Muir and Romanos, 1985). These analyses suggest that women's basketball gave women the space to play sport while remaining within the confines of a 'compliant femininity'.

The argument of this thesis is that initial design and the premise of being a sport specifically for women shaped the subsequent growth in popularity of women's basketball. This design was based on meeting the perceived needs of women but staying within the confines of their social context. It is quite evident that the game's designers and advocates aimed to explicitly address the requirements of middle class women who wished to publicly engage in physical activity. The appeal of women's basketball was clearly located in the description of the parameters of the game, 'it lasts only 30 minutes, that is less than half as long as hockey: so that many girls who find hockey beyond their strength benefit by, and thoroughly enjoy it' (Martin, 1977:2). Field hockey required players to cover a large pitch and thus the level of aerobic exertion could be quite high. The lower level of strenuous physical activity and absence of any sanctioned body contact was perceived as a distinct advantage for women's basketball, which was viewed as graceful and ladylike.

Women's basketball was structured to emphasise teamwork and co-operation, attributes that were considered socially appropriate for women. Only certain player positions were allowed to shoot for goals and players could only have possession of the ball for a restricted time limit. 'Netball because of its rules, ensures, that in the end, the team reigns above the finest individual' (Smith and Humberstone, 1978:12). The team sport philosophy was evident in the rules that assigned each player a role and defined space on the court so that no one player can dominate the game. Recent rule changes have eased on these requirements, just as general society has become more flexible about restraints on acceptable female behaviour.

Dimensions of co-operation and support, along with the absence of sanctioned body contact and uniforms that were designed to retain a definite feminine quality, were used by promoters of the game throughout the decades to encourage a wide variety of 'mainstream' women to play women's basketball. These specific considerations were employed to keep the game aligned with popular conceptions of middle class femininity. As an early publication on the game stated, 'good temper, pluck, determination, extreme agility of mind and body, are traits universally found among Net-Ball players, and best of all perhaps, that inexpressibility happy attitude, esprit de corps' (Grieve, 1916:32).

There were some gaps between the passion and commitment of the early organisers to develop the game within an acceptable and respected middle class framework of expectation and the practice and perceptions of women's basketball. These were between the stated ideal and practiced reality. Despite organisers' attempts to quell public disquiet about women playing sport through the design of a game they felt met societal expectations, early attitudes about female sports were tinged with scepticism. A newspaper[1] headline from 1926 proclaimed 'Women play basketball result: Four taken to Hospital'. The text of the article implied that playing sport was a dangerous preoccupation for women and those who played did so at their own peril. Two years later a 1928 circular from the Sydney City Girls basketball competition included this statement about the expected behaviour of female players in a public place:

> A Warning: Any girl speaking to onlookers in the Domain will be asked to leave the Field … There will be a policeman present to prohibit any conversation by onlookers.

Such sentiments were an indication that the organisers of the game felt that the moral reputation of women playing sport needed to be closely guarded. Women and girls were allowed to play women's basketball but within the confines of societal expectations. Steps were continually taken to ensure that an acceptable feminine aspect of the game remained intact.

The 1930 minutes of an Executive meeting of the AAWBA stated that, 'our girls should always be well presented and demonstrate good manners in public'. The 'girls'[2] referred to in the minutes were actually women players. It was common in this era to refer to women players as 'girls', thereby maintaining the authority of the organisers. In a 1931 executive meeting of the AAWBA a motion was passed that required players to be silent during the course of a game. The documented discussion, which accompanied the motion, affirmed that the executive felt that women's basketball should be designated as a silent game where only the captain was allowed to speak. The executive stated that they did not think it was 'lady-like' for players to shout and carry on while engaging in the sport. The rules of the game were changed to meet expectations about proper conduct of women in a public forum.

4.5.2 Looking Like Ladies

Starting with the first games played, the public appearance of players and the associated dress requirements of women's basketball were taken very seriously by officials and standards were rigorously applied. Photographs from the 1920s to the 1930s show the players' uniform as comprising a stylish broad headband, belted tunic falling to the knee, a white blouse under the tunic and dark stockings. In Victoria, the initial uniform was a navy blue tunic that fell below the knee, a blouse, tie and black stockings and in the 1940s the stockings were replaced by socks (Netball Victoria, 1994). The Women's Night Basketball Association of Victoria (WNBBAV) stipulated that uniforms must be eight inches above the ground when kneeling and that, 'all girls must wear a blouse and matching underwear' (WNBBAV, 1960). Each local and state association had its own rules about colour and length of skirt, which were strictly enforced. The regulation of proper and acceptable attire was central to the sport's

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[1] The article was included in archival material of the Queensland Netball Association with no reference to the newspaper title.

[2] This terminology is common whereby the official administration documentation refers to women's basketball and then netball players as 'our schoolgirls' or 'our girls' until the 1980s, symbolising that players should be subservient to officials.

image and was subject to much debate and discussion throughout the century. The game's central administration held a conservative line until the late 1980s when a move into commercialism signalled a monumental shift in its ideological stance.

While the official uniform rules were inherently conservative, it has been noted that there was some player resistance to strict compliance. The *Age* (1961) reported that a number of Perth residents had complained about the length of the players' uniforms worn in a local competition. As a result, the Western Australian Women's Basketball Association took action the following week; armed with tapes they measured every participant's uniform at the competition. Representatives checked the uniform length for the regulation seven inches from the ground when kneeling. In response to the public criticism the Association's president reported, with apparent distain, that 'of the 150 teams measured yesterday only 10 were passed'. She was clearly upset by the many breeches of dress protocol.

Bushby and Jobling (1985) have suggested that during these years looking like a 'lady' was essential for women's basketball players. Debates about the appropriateness of the attire worn by women engaging in sport and physical activity had plagued every sport since women first took to the playing fields. The cumbersome outfits that women were expected to wear in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries severely restricted their participation in many sports and inhibited their movement and competitiveness. These restrictive dress requirements were the prime reason the game of basketball had been modified for women in the first place (Cashman, 1995). The prescriptive dress regulations that were evident in the regulation of women's basketball were not dissimilar to cricket (Cashman and Weaver, 1991), cycling associations (Hess, 1998), golf (Stoddart, 1995), surf-life saving (Booth and Tatz, 2000), swimming (Raszeja, 1992), tennis (Kincross-Smith, 1995) and other sports. Cashman and Weaver (1991) observed that more media words have been written on the clothing of women playing cricket than their sporting ability in the initial years of women's cricket. This public fixation and control of appropriate female attire in sports has been the subject of much feminist analysis and related to issues of self-identity, oppression

and exploitation of women in sports (as previously outlined in Section 2.5.3). The dissention caused by female dress requirements has been the focus of detailed gender relation analyses (Simpson, 1993). It has been suggested that during the initial years of Australian sports the sporting attire worn by women also acted to symbolise their inferiority as well as contributing to their restricted activity (Stoddart, 1986). Therefore, while women's basketball strictly regulated the attire of its players the stipulations were neither more conservative nor more liberal than those found in most other sports of the era.

4.5.3 Social Dimensions

Bushby and Jobling (1985) have suggested that for the majority of Australian women sports were perceived to be a pleasant social outing or a diversion from home-making duties until the 1970s. However, exploring the archival documents of the state sport associations of women's basketball spanning the years up to 1970, it is clearly evident that many of the women involved in women's basketball took their participation and the competitive side of the sport quite seriously. These women did not consider playing women's basketball a mere diversion from their 'womanly responsibilities' and a number of committed women dedicated their entire lives to playing, coaching and administering the game.

However, it would appear that the majority of women who played women's basketball were attracted to the sport because it had an obvious recreational component and it was a game that fitted comfortably into middle class social acceptability. Players did not need to be outwardly athletic or overtly strong to play in social competitions. It has been suggested that, 'netball is a game that can be played by women of all shapes, sizes and aptitudes ... netball is the game of a lifetime you can start at eight and still be playing in your fifties' (Smith and Humberstone, 1978:14). In addition, women's basketball was only played by females and this provided the game with a broad appeal. It meant that girls and women players did not face the same social resistance to playing women's basketball that confronted women who played less conventional female sports. As many women discontinued playing women's basketball when they

had children it was not perceived as interfering with their family or domestic responsibilities (Broomhall, 1993). In interviews with players from the 1920s and 1930s it was reported that young single women dominated the game, and many women entered into teams that were supported by their church, school or place of work (Duncan, 1994). This structure of involvement facilitated a large decline in player numbers as women made the transition from school to work and from work to marriage and children.

Although obviously influential, the early role of workplace-based teams in the development of women's basketball has been largely undocumented. It is evident from the records of the New South Wales Women's Basket Ball Association on Sydney competitions that a substantial number of businesses supported teams from the 1940s onwards. Companies such as Myer, Unilever, Rothmans, Esanda and Fletcher Jones appear to have regularly entered teams in competitions, and encouraged their female employees to be physically active. Many workplaces required women to resign when they married and this impacted on the basketball involvement of women who played for work teams. In general terms, workplace teams appeared to be much more prominent in larger cities. Country and rural areas fostered club systems and church-based competitions. Club, church and work teams were all exclusively female.

4.5.4 No Men Allowed

The official exclusion of men from women's basketball was ingrained in AAWBBA's constitution and underpinned its ideological stance. Despite constant pressure to change the AAWBBA executive held steadfast to a women-only policy for over 50 years. It was not until the 1970s that men were allowed to hold formal positions within the member associations. This female-only policy made women's basketball unique, as it was exclusively female from its players through to its top coaches and administrators. In retaining its gender exclusivity women's basketball was able to offer girls and women the rare opportunity to control and shape the direction of a sport. Although it could be argued that women's softball found itself it a similar position, softball never achieved the level of mass participation achieved by women's basketball.

The women who organised and directed the development of women's basketball positioned it in the mainstream. The sport was reliant on its social acceptability for continued growth as it had aligned the rules, dress and ideological basis of the game within a framework that did not directly challenge social mores or male superiority in sports. Women's basketball perpetuated an image of acceptability through public compliance to femininity expectations within its performative spaces. While general discourses of sports are dominated by male superiority claims, women's basketball was able to create its own discourse that acted to largely exclude men. In managing the lines of connectivity between actions and justifications, women's basketball was able to capture and retain female constituents from 'middle' Australia and in doing so increased its member base beyond that of all other female team sports.

4.5.5 A New Era

Women's basketball was faced with a different set of challenges when a new era of heightened awareness about gender issues in sports emerged in the 1970s. Sporting opportunities for women increased and a larger range of physical activities became accessible. This, combined with the growing professionalisation of sports, meant that women's basketball was forced into a new phase of development. It had to adapt to the changing environment or lose its position as the number one female team sport in Australia. A substantial component of the game's early success was attributable to the limited opportunity for schoolgirls and women to choose other sports that were regarded as acceptably feminine. However, these limitations disappeared as the women's movement gained momentum and women began to make choices that contested long-standing notions of gender relations. Sports organisations also faced a period of striking change. Many sports shifted their focus from amateur based, grass-roots philosophies and began to adopt professional and market-driven approaches. The intersection of these ideological shifts produced a nexus that would dramatically reposition women's basketball as a 'new' sport called netball.

4.6 More Than Just a Name Change

The 1970s signalled the beginning of a new era for women's basketball as it moved away from its roots as an amateur and volunteer-run organisation, and began to restructure into a professionally administered sporting organisation. Women's basketball administrators moved to promote the sport's image and profile to a broader section of the community. During the early part of the 1970s Australian sports had the possibility of securing funds from a substantially increased federal government-funding scheme. However, each sport had to demonstrate that it had both national appeal and the potential to grow if it was to attract any of these funds. Male-dominated sports appeared better positioned to capitalise on the new funding opportunities due to their high levels of media exposure. Women's basketball did not have a national club competition, they had few corporate sponsors, and it was not an Olympic sport. The focus over the previous 70 or so years had been the grass roots participation of women and girls in the sport, and while the Australian team were extremely successful in international competitions, the media coverage they received was minimal (Dunbar, 1989). Women's basketball was in danger of becoming marginalised in this new economically-based, globally-focussed sports environment. The administration recognised that a change in operations was necessary if netball was to successfully manage the change process (Jobling and Barham, 1988). One response was a name change instigated at the 1970 Council meeting in Brisbane; the sport became known as the All Australia Netball Association (AANA). All member states immediately followed suit and changed their official titles to 'netball' in place of women's basketball (Jobling and Barham, 1988). The change of name was to mark the start of more dramatic changes to netball's amateur structure and focus.

4.6.1 The Winds of Change

The feminist movement of the 1970s championed the cause of women's rights and greater equality of opportunities for women. In response, governments at both the state and federal level instituted policies to encourage greater female involvement in sports. The Australian Sports Commission established a Task Force for Women in Sport in the 1980s that provided the basis for a number of government initiatives concerned with

increasing the level of female sports participation. These were followed by the Department of the Arts, Sport, the Environment and Territories, *Access and Equity Plan 1991-1992 to 1993-1994* and the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) *Access and Equity Plan 1991-1994* and the *Active Women*: *National Policy on Women and Girls in Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity, 1999-2002*.

Substantial growth in women's sports occurred as public funds were made available for the development of new facilities across the country. In particular, new housing estate areas were built with community sporting facilities as dictated by changes to state planning legislation. These were quickly filled with netball teams and competitions. In New South Wales alone the number of districts affiliated with the New South Wales Netball Association grew from 41 in 1968 to 98 by 1979. The Casino District, for example, began with six courts in 1969, but six months later the number of courts used doubled to accommodate demand and by the end of 1970 there were 18 courts in use. The Ku-ring-gai District listed 63 teams and 520 players when they commenced competition play in 1969. By 1978 there were 235 teams with 1,600 players and by 1987 some 2,700 players were registered (Dunbar, 1989). This growth was repeated across the state where the game attracted record numbers of players.

The massive increase in players, clubs and competitions facilitated a change in the way netball was administered. The 'kitchen table' approach of years past could not cope with the increased demands that were being placed on the previously all volunteer-run administration (Hyland, 1987). Netball moved into a new period of expansion and professionalisation that not only marked a shift in the administration but also a change to the public image and promotion of the game. The Victorian Women's Basketball Association was among the first to introduce salaried staff positions when it hired a full-time salaried secretary at the state level in 1969 (VWBBA minutes, 1969). The national office soon followed suit and in 1978 Helen Edmunds-Jones was hired to the newly created post of National Development Officer. This was the beginning of a huge paradigm shift in netball operations. While many women

involved in netball welcomed the change, it was strongly resisted by others and a number of power battles were soon to envelop the sport.

4.6.2 Netball NSW's Response

As the first step in the change process the New South Wales Women's Basketball Association officially changed its name to the New South Wales Netball Association in 1970. This coincided with the national body's name change and provided the organisation with a new sense of purpose and direction for state netball (Hyland, 1987). The association began a program of change that comprised three initiatives. First was the identification and development of talented players. An elite level Inter-District competition was introduced in 1970 with six associations represented. In 1978 this was expanded to two grades, and by 1985 four divisions were in operation. Second, the association moved to replace the older women who had controlled the game for many years with new younger, professional administrators. Organisational changes were made at a rapid pace after nearly 50 years of relative stability in the administration of the game and for the first time men were permitted to assume official roles in netball organisations. This meant stalwarts such as Anne Clarke were encouraged to retire to make way for a younger and more professional cadre of sports administrator (pers comm. Dunbar, 1997). Anne Clarke had been the driving force behind the New South Wales Women's Basket Ball Association and an influential figure in the game since 1929. She had held various positions in the association and was an office bearer with netball for 50 years until 1979. After a 29-year term as President of the New South Wales Association she was forced to resign due to an age clause in the Companies Act (Hyland, 1987). The end of her term coincided with the end of an era of volunteer administration and organisation.

The third platform of change was to re-position netball in the commercial sphere of sports. The New South Wales State Association headquarters, along with other state sporting bodies, moved into Sports House in The Rocks in July 1978. The association became incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in February 1979. In September of that same year the Minister responsible for sport, Ken Booth, laid the

foundation stone for the State Netball Headquarters at Wyatt Park, Auburn. The Anne Clarke Netball Centre was officially opened on 11 October 1980 with over 800 people in attendance (Dunbar, 1989). New South Wales Netball Association then hired its first paid employees in 1980; these included an Executive Director, Peter Epov; Manager, Robert Whitton; and Director of Coaching, Margaret Corbett. It was the first time men had been appointed in an official capacity in the New South Wales Netball Association. These initiatives shifted netball away from its origins as a totally volunteer-administered female sport and repositioned it in the new era of global sports organisations.

4.6.3 National Organisational Change

At the national level the transition process was not smooth. The National Council members did not support many of the new directions and tensions were apparent between the old and new guard. The All Australia Netball Association (AANA) decided to pursue a strategy of commercialisation, sponsorship and expansion of netball into the new professionalism of sports in 1978. In this restructured administration the AANA employed their first Executive Officer and opened a national office. The first salaried National Executive Director hired in 1978 resigned not long into her term because of problems with the commitment of the Management Committee to the new direction and over concerns about her contract (AANA, Feb 1980). Long-standing official Dorothy McHugh recalled the many challenges faced by the first executive officer:

> … when she (the Executive Officer) got out there in the corporate sector, they didn't know what netball was about. It took her six months to build up an awareness of netball. Well once that started to roll, we didn't ever look back. You needed the professional paid people there, and in turn, All Australia exploded, and the states couldn't keep up with it, because they were all working in a voluntary sort of way (in Duncan, 1994:56).

It was proposed that the position of National Secretary should also change to a salaried position but the February 1982 Council meeting rejected the motion. The reasons the proposition was rejected were:

(1) salaried officers should not be members of Council and it was felt that the National Secretary should remain on Council;
(2) if the position was salaried it might compromise the National Secretary's freedom to speak about sensitive matters without prejudice to her career;
(3) the National Secretary should not hold any pecuniary interest in the activities of the Association;
(4) there was a danger of the Council losing its control over affairs of the Association if the administration and promotion were undertaken by professional administrators.

The vote was taken during debate about the control that the newly appointed administrator was exercising over the sport and the direction that netball was heading. The job descriptions of the National Secretary and the National Executive Officer were revised to ensure that key decision-making power was not placed in the hands of salaried staff members. The National Secretary was deemed responsible for day-to-day administration and operation of the AANA office, supervision and performance of office staff, preparation of submissions for government and the co-ordination and evaluation of approved programs. The National Executive Director was to control finance and sponsorships, media liaison, preparation of development programs, represent the Association at events, assist member associations and manage AANA Sport Trading. Although the impetus for these decisions was not apparent from the Council minutes a financial crisis was reported in 1982 and this appeared have facilitated the restructure. In a report to the Management Committee, sub-titled 'Financial Crisis' (AANA, 1982), the National Executive Director expressed concern about the current financial operations.

Former National Coaching Director Joyce Brown then suggested that there should be a restructure of AANA because of a concern for what was perceived as a top-heavy administration. She argued that AANA had become more concerned about marketing clothes, insurance and other commodities, than about servicing the needs of players, coaches, umpires and administrators of the game (pers. cor. 17 November 1982). In a written response to Joyce Brown's suggestion, the National Secretary/Treasurer, Moira McGuinness acknowledged these concerns. However, she argued that the Association had also taken a gamble in 1978 when it agreed to hire professional staff

and that if the Association was to 'service our players in exciting, imaginative programs and to provide an organisational structure and highly qualified personnel capable of doing this ... we have to look to commercial avenues of assistance, such as sponsorship, to reach the goals we have set' (pers. cor. 23 November 1982:3).

In an Interim Memo[3] the National Secretary/Treasurer blamed AANA's financial situation on its new philosophical commitment to organisational professionalism. She stated that, 'whether the Council members of the time realised it or not the 1978 decisions constituted a commitment to a reliance on sponsorship funding'. She questioned whether the Council were really supportive of such approaches. The Council decided to continue along the lines that had been ratified in 1978. This appeared to represent a turning point for AANA, marking a formal reaffirmation of the commitment to the change process.

Initiatives and strategies to instigate change were pursued. A former player Keeley Devery commented, 'It's getting more professional, it certainly needs to, and I guess its becoming more of a business, and it certainly has to when you're talking million dollar sponsorships. You can't operate like a tea and scones brigade' (in Duncan, 1994:15). Sponsorship deals were actively sought to fund the new initiatives. However, gaining greater sponsorship funding seemed to elude AANA and they blamed this failure on the lack of media coverage (AANA, 1983). AANA were especially disappointed at the media coverage for the Sixth World Tournament in Singapore (1983 Minutes of Management/Finance Committee April 15-17, 1983). The Australian press did not send any reporters to cover the event and it was left to the Reuters Bureau in Singapore to send stories back to Australia. AANA decided that local pressure on media channels was needed and member associations were to begin media campaigns. As the minutes recorded (1983:232), 'letters, telephone calls from State, District, associated associations, clubs, teams and individuals are essential to convince the media moguls (mostly male)[4] that a World Netball Tournament is a sporting event

[3] The memo was found in the Association's archived document boxes and not dated.

[4] This note about males was in the original document.

worth reporting'. Efforts to lobby the media did not yield many dividends and netball continued to be considered a marginal sport in terms of media coverage. Anne Sargeant (1989), a player in the 1983 competition, reflected on the lack of media and public attention when the team returned victorious from Singapore and stated that she felt very upset at the time. Netball Victoria (1994) subsequently commissioned research on the media coverage of netball and found that just 17.5 hours of netball was shown on ABC television in 1986. AANA were worried that the low level of media coverage would be a major barrier to the sport's progress. It began a concerted effort to rectify the situation. Reflecting on her role as the Executive Director for the All Australia Netball Association Helen Edmunds-Jones (1982:3) elaborated on this media challenge:

> ….it soon become evident that, to a large extent, future success of our five year development plan did rely heavily on publicity and sponsorship. To a virtually unexposed sport, this meant that media people had to be impressed, educated in the fundamentals of the game and inspired to report to readers, viewers and listeners.

The media and sponsorship problems did nothing to assist the financial position of AANA and on 30 July 1983 AANA Sports Trading Pty Ltd was advertised for sale in the *Sydney Morning Herald* for $36,000. It was described as a mail order operation functioning as a service to the members of the All Australian Netball Association for three years. The Waverley Night Netball Association (Melbourne) purchased AANA. Somewhat perplexed the National Executive Director reported to the November 1983 meeting of the Management/Finance Committee that, 'marketing netball has brought me nothing but years of hard work, worry and harassment so it is understandable that I was both sad and relieved to see the crates packed off to Melbourne today'.

While the commercial strategies of AANA achieved limited results, the perceived legitimacy of netball as a sport was further advanced in 1981 when the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra selected netball as one of the eight sports to receive federal government funding for a new sports scholarship scheme. Furthermore, in 1984 AANA proposed the creation of an indoor competition, Super League, to

promote netball throughout Australia. The teams suggested were New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Australian Institute of Sport. ESSO Australia was the first major sponsor of the competition. It was decided to test the competition in 1985 after the National Championship to create spectator interest and gain greater television coverage (February 1985, Management Committee minutes). In recognition of the growing need to support and develop elite level netball players AANA also established trust funds for players in 1986, enabling players to retain their amateur status and allowed them access to financial assistance when playing commitments impeded employment. The first-fully funded Director of Umpiring was hired in 1992. Adding to its enhanced status, and some twenty years after lodging its first application, netball was recognised by the International Olympic Committee allowing national association access to membership of their country's National Olympic Committee in 1993. At the 1998 Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur, the Australian netball team competed in a full medal sport for the first time.

4.6.4 Fighting for Recognition

The new place of netball in Australian and world sports provided the incentive for a determined campaign to obtain greater media coverage the sport. Those involved in the game felt that it was unfair that netball lost out to the dominant male sports, especially as the Australian netball team was consistently in the top three countries in world championships and had an extraordinary large player base. However, inadequate media coverage was not just limited to netball; women's sport in general was receiving little attention. As a response to this problem the Australian Sports Commission published *Women, Sport and the Media* (1985) a report that called for greater coverage of women's sport. Australian media coverage of Australian netball finally came of age on 13 July 1991 (Smithers and Appleby, 1996). This was when Australia won the World Netball Championships over New Zealand before a Sydney crowd of 12,000. This was netball's first achieved breakthrough in terms of national identity, pride and greater national media coverage. In a reflective article on the media coverage of netball *Sunday Age* reporter Linda Pearce (8 May 1994) observed that the interest of her sports-writing colleagues about netball was usually minimal,

however this situation changed after the 1991 World Championship final. Former player Keeley Devery remarked, 'After the World Championships it really turned around. I mean certainly we are not getting the coverage that we think we should be getting, but as far as women's sport goes in Australia we're looking pretty good' (in Duncan, 1994:9). The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) began regular match coverage with the Mobil Super League in 1991. Netball finally received sustained media exposure. In 1995, the national association adopted the business name of Netball Australia. The name change was to facilitate an update of netball's media image and to increase its marketability.

The constant struggle for greater media coverage caused a great deal of internal dissension in the netball ranks. It was felt in some quarters that the game needed to be 'sexier' if it was going to gain wider public attention. However, long-time advocates such as the then national coach Joyce Brown felt there was little need for the use of frills and lace to promote netball. She fought for women netballers to be recognised for their skill and athleticism and was opposed to suggested changes to the uniform that incorporated lycra bodysuits and colourful patterns (Smithers and Appleby, 1996). The game's administrators however otherwise and introduced tight-fitting uniforms. The publicity campaign exploited feminine sexuality to a moderate degree.

Evidence of such moves to make the game and its players more appealing was a photograph of the Australian netball team in black dresses with a single leg exposed, captioned as 'Belles of the (net)Ball' and accompanying text asks 'Who are these leggy ladies? Are they international models set to knock Elle Macpherson off the catwalk?' The *Advertiser* (Adelaide) 19 May 1992:53. Linda Pearce of the *Sunday Age* (7 March 1993:39) reported in her article 'Netball looking to bright year' that professional make-up artists, hairstylists and fashion designers were brought in to glamorise the national players. Netball magazines such as *Netball NSW* and *Netball*: *Australia's National Magazine* have since been introduced and focus attention on both the technical ability of players as well as the more social elements of their lives. Despite these media advances, the overall coverage of netball remained limited

compared to sports such as racing, cricket and the various football codes. In their study of sport marketing Shilbury, Quick and Westerbeek (1998) noted that netball, along with other sports such as hockey and bowls, receive irregular media coverage in Australia. Cashman (1995) further pointed out that netball, despite its large player base, has struggled to get television coverage yet has continued to grow without its assistance. This lack of media coverage was not dissimilar to softball, another sport dominated by women. The evolution of media coverage for netball parallels that of softball, which was almost nil until the 1996 Olympics when 'the United States won the first Olympic gold medal for women's fast pitch softball but through the media Australia won the world' (Embrey, 1997:74). Softball has achieved some benefit from its status as an Olympic sport, though increased media exposure has been largely confined to the Olympic year.

Not all media coverage of netball has been positive. In an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* Lisa Olsen provided a scathing attack on netball. She asked the question 'What is this sport still doing in the 90s?' and answered it by saying 'It looks like a chapter straight out of that ridiculous new book, "The Rules, on how to catch a man". Somewhere between Rule 3 (Don't Stare at Men or Talk Too Much) and Rule 17 (Act Dumb Even If You Know the Answer), I expect to find a new rule: If You Must Sweat, Choose a Non-threatening Activity Like Netball or Cheerleading.' Although Olsen was wrong when she attributed the rules of netball to Dr James Naismith[5] she did offer some observations about the game that reflect its status as a sport favouring a 'compliant femininity'.

> I may be wrong here, but it seems to me that this is a sport that was conceived by a man, natch, who believed females were weak and fragile dolls, ones that didn't perspire, but glowed. They obviously didn't have the stamina to run full court, so this man, the esteemed inventor of basketball - divided it into three parts in order to prevent those sweet young things from becoming too exhausted.

[5] The origins of the sport are outlined earlier in this chapter.

> They weren't co-ordinated enough to move and shoot at the same time, so he decreed they would have to come to a full stop before aiming at the goal, thus guaranteeing a lifetime of knee injuries. They were too delicate for all that bumping and jostling, so he decided a defender must stand arms length from a shooter, thus guaranteeing about as much action under the net as a knitting contest.

Stereotypical comments about netball and its standing as a real sport have not been infrequent. Adair and Vamplew (1997) suggested that many Australian males believed that netball is a female game that requires little commitment or courage and did not see it as serious sport. However, Adair and Vamplew (1997:59) contended that this stereotype is far removed from reality as, 'netball may be a non-contact sport but particularly at international level the game is highly demanding, both physically and mentally'.

The belief that netball promotes knee injuries is another popular myth that has received media attention. In netball players are often required to engage in short bursts of acceleration to get clear of opponents, followed by rapid deceleration. This is because of a rule that states that players can only take one and a half steps when in possession of the ball. The association of this limiting movement with excessive knee injuries and the lack of responsiveness of netball officials to this situation gained negative media attention (Steele, 1988). A *60 Minutes* television program (14 June 1992) highlighted this issue and was very critical of the high level of knee injuries in the game. AANA disputed the program's contentions, claiming the sport had undertaken much research into injuries and found netball was no worse than any other sport with regards to player injuries (*Launceston Examiner*, 17 June 1992:46). However, it should be noted that athletes in most sports can sustain injuries, but in male sports these are accepted as part of the game. Both bowlers in cricket and golfer players are at high risk of back injury, footballers are susceptible to knee injury, and so forth.

Partially in response to this negative media coverage on netball injuries a four-year Australian Sports Commission research project was initiated. The research concluded

that knee injuries would not be reduced by a rule change to allow an extra step (*West Australian*, 6 November 1996:66). The researcher, Leonie Otago, was quoted as saying 'The emotiveness and concern is probably because we're dealing with girls. People would just accept it as normal for boys.' (*Daily Telegraph* 6 December 1996:7).

As netball became more reliant on sponsorship and headed to professional sport the amount and type of media coverage it received became increasingly crucial to its continued viability. Netball officials recognised that the sport needed to make itself more marketable. Australian captain Vicki Wilson suggested that the annual netball Test against New Zealand coincide with a leg of Rugby Union's Bledisloe Cup to produce a combined weekend of elite trans-Tasman sport as one way of lifting public interest in the sport. 'We actually did make an approach to the Australian Rugby Union because there were a number of issues that we wanted to talk through with them, but trying to match calendars has been extremely difficult.'(*Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 October 1996). The dual event did not occur.

Geary (1995) has debated whether moves to commercialisation would ultimately benefit netball or women's sport. She speculated that professionalising netball might help challenge traditional structures, which have reinforced sport as a site of exploitation and subordination of women. On the other hand there was a danger that such moves would represent conformation to a male model of sport and merely perpetuate a masculine hegemony of capitalist rationality and female discrimination. Broomhall (1993) argued in favour of the latter, that in striving for greater internationalisation, aiming for Olympic competition, and trying to attract sponsorship, women have moved netball closer to a male model of competitive and aggressive sport.

Another perspective on professionalisation is the corporate reinforcement of a women's sport that promotes feminine qualities. A case in point was when the Queensland Netball Association (QNA) announced a $1 million deal with Chevon Furnishers in 1991. Chevon stated that their philosophy in supporting the QNA was that they 'felt the

community lacked a structure which encouraged the social development of young women' (*Brisbane Courier Mail*, 1991). The company obviously felt that netball was an avenue for girls to learn and demonstrate appropriate feminine behaviour. Also, as Keely Devery has pointed out, 'our Mobil league is a flashier competition so that teams have come out in new gear, flashier gear … I guess that's made us look more appealing, without losing the femininity of the game … you can still stay very feminine, and be a sportswoman' (in Duncan, 1994:7).

In moving netball into the professional sphere the national body has had to make decisions that have not always been popular within the sport as has been the case in many other sports. Netball Australia fuelled a huge debate in 1996 by proposing changes to the existing national league. Newspaper headlines such as 'Clubs in turmoil amid fierce backlash against radical changes' (*Sydney Morning Herald* 22 March 1996:16) and 'State League future hangs in balance' (*Herald Sun* 27.3.96:80) typified the coverage. These sentiments were fuelled by an AANA announcement of a 1997 National Netball League of eight teams playing two preliminary rounds and a final series. This signalled a move away from club to state teams with all teams were to be named after birds, Adelaide Falcons, Adelaide Ravens, Melbourne Kestrels, Melbourne Phoenix, Perth Orioles, Queensland Firebirds, Sydney Eagles and Sydney Swifts. The responsibility for revenue and marketing was allocated to The National Netball League (NNL) Pty Ltd. The choice of team names may lend support to the contention that the game seeks to retain its association with feminine images of the sport, which at the same time stress grace. However, it is unfortunate that the term 'birds' is an unflattering Australian slang term for women and girls. The justification for bird names was based on the argument that other sporting codes have not over-exposed this grouping. Netball Australia claimed that 'Birds also display grace, speed and strength, attributes displayed by elite netballers'. While it can be reasoned that using bird names gave the NNL Pty Ltd the opportunity to establish identifiable team logos, mascots and merchandising, the overexposure claim is difficult to substantiate. Within Australian sport there are the Sydney Swans, Adelaide Crows, the former

manly-Warringah Sea Eagles, Wollongong Hawks, Gippsland Falcons and Newcastle Falcons, spanning men's Australian Rules, rugby league, soccer and basketball.

In other domains of women's professional sport the Australian Women's National Basketball League has chosen to use a mixture of names such as Adelaide Lightning, Perth Breakers, Dandenong Rangers, Melbourne Tigers, and the Sydney Flames. Netball New Zealand's teams include the Otago Rebels, Southern Sting, Canterbury Flames, Auckland Diamonds, Northern Force and the Waikato Wildcats. These are all names that are seemingly much less 'graceful' and convey less feminine images than those the NNL have settled upon. It may be that netball is remaining true to its roots in choosing names that portray a softer more feminine image that is also competitive without being masculine or overtly aggressive. Or netball officials may have preferred a coherent set of brand symbols, whereas other sports have a motley assortment of birds, animals, vehicles, place names, colours and even saints.

Netball has also been resistant to other trends in merchandising female sexuality in sports. In recent years both male and female athletes have posed in rather revealing photographs for books, such as in the black and white *Atlanta Dreaming* (1996) publication and the *Golden Girls of Sport* Calendar (1994), which were produced to provide Australian female athletes competing in Atlanta an entrée to media coverage. These publications have been the source of academic debate and analysis about gendered bodies and the social construction of masculinity and femininity in the media. Mikosza and Phillips (1999) concluded that the *Golden Girls* calendar articulates a masculine versus feminine dichotomy that works against sportswomen, denigrates their athleticism and reinforces stereotypical feminine models of sport.

In late 1999 the Australian women's soccer team, the Matilda's, followed the golden girls' lead and posed in nude for a calendar to promote their sport. *Sports Today* (27 November 1999) quotes one of the players, Amy Taylor, as saying that she appeared in the calendar to prove to people that female soccer players are not necessarily all butch and masculine. This is further evidence of the pressure on female athletes to

prove that they are not 'masculine' and that they fit mainstream societal expectations of femininity. In the same magazine article netball player Liz Ellis commented that it was a shame that female athletes had to go to such lengths to prove their femininity. Ironically, in early 2000 the Australian netball team refused an offer to remove their clothes for a calendar. It was reported that the team had voted decisively against such a move (*Sydney Morning Herald*, April 2000). The *Age* (May, 2000) ran the headline 'Taking a stand for skill over skin this calendar year'. A *Sports Today* (21 April 2000) article claimed that a number of the players were pressured to pose in the nude during the calendar shoot. The sessions had to be re-shot when netball officials stepped in to veto any nude pictures.

4.7 Commentary

In chronicling the history of netball in Australia it has been argued that the structure and delivery of this sport can be broadly interpreted as symbolic of societal expectations of women and sports. Societal conventions have governed both appearance and actions of women in sports, the sports they played and how they played these sports. The rules of netball, its administration and development have all promoted the social practice of a 'compliant femininity'. According to the rules of the game, players were constrained to a certain space and cannot roam the whole court; they can only take two steps and then must pass the ball. Although they may be in full flight, running hard, they must abruptly stop when they reach the defined boundaries they are allowed to operate within. Players are required to contribute their fair share to netball's operation by umpiring other games in the competition. Dress requirements are still strictly prescribed. Furthermore, netball was defined as a silent game, players were encouraged not to shout or be overly loud when playing. The negotiation of these boundaries and the way in which women have used the spaces created by their netball participation make for compelling analogies about the place of women in Australian society and the social construction of gender relations.

It is too easy to simply categorise and even dismiss netball as an extension of prescribed social practices, a sport that promulgated the subordination of women and

reinforced the existing social order. This categorisation would suggest that all women who played netball favoured 'compliant femininity' and did not challenge or resist socially constructed ideals of femininity. Conversely, the female domination of netball could be interpreted as a statement of independence, a form of resistance to the normative model of sport and an act of female solidarity. Netball created an acceptable avenue for women to strive for physical excellence within the established social order by reassuring that the dress, and behaviour of its players was appropriate. This constant reinforcement of femininity ultimately served to define netball from other sports and provided a space in which to applaud women's achievements instead of measuring women against male standards. Jobling (1994) contended that netball has been the antithesis to traditional domination of men in sport, as it has allowed females to become elite athletes and manage their sport at all levels of participation. As such, netball has had the unique opportunity to challenge hegemonic definitions of masculinity in sport. Netball was able to provide a sport that women could feel free to express their abilities, not just as players, but as coaches, umpires and administrators.

Herein lies the paradox of netball, has it been an avenue of emancipation or one of restriction or both? Have its participants contested societal expectations of women in sport or accepted a compliant adherence by restricting the game to women only for so many years? Have the players accepted and agreed with conservative official rules and regulations or have they been able to develop a form of resistance from within the sport? This thesis suggests that to categorise netball participation in one extreme position or another would oversimplify the complexities of the sport and ignore the fact that women and girls may appropriate netball in various ways.

Netball players do not necessarily believe that they are playing a 'soft' sport that is particularly less athletic or competitive. Within the boundaries of the game these women and girls have been able to negotiate a position that does not directly contest societal expectations but provides women with the space to enjoy the benefits and enjoyment of sports participation. In the world of sports women have typically been allotted to subordinate positions but within netball woman have not had to contend

with male claims of superiority. Netball has changed over the past decades from a gentle form of exercise to fast-moving, highly athletic a game that is even occasionally a rough and violent sport.

On its own terrain netball has gone some way to reconstructing gender and breaking down the binary distinctions between masculinity and femininity. However, in public domains netball has reinforced and supported those very distinctions. The female ownership of netball as a sport is juxtaposed with a broader societal perception that netball is just a 'girls game' and therefore it is unofficially ranked below men's sports in the sports hierarchy. Rules that ensured particular posture and movements that were distinctly feminine have reinforced such notions of inferiority. And while the boundaries were often reached, and sometimes even nudged, netball did not break through and set new standards for female sport. Netball administrators purposefully worked to retain a feminine aspect in the game's playing attire and movements, cognisant of public image and opinion. Netball was seen as one avenue for women to stake a claim on sports participation and still be viewed as ladies. In this way it has been serendipitously used to socialise women into sex-based, socially acceptable roles. Ironically this strong image of femininity associated with netball has served to entice several gay men to take up the sport and enter teams into competitions thus reinforcing the gendered nature of netball (Duncan and Weatherburn, 1997).

On the other hand netball has been a significant institution in the constant struggle by women to change public opinion and exercise their right to participate in physical activities. In this role netball has contributed to the acceptability of women playing sports. At a societal level it could be concluded that netball has both facilitated and stereotyped women's participation in sports. Its conservative approach has constrained female involvement, yet it provided an avenue that was socially acceptable for women to pursue. Thus, netball has been faced with the same dilemmas and contradictions of most female team sports. In striving for mass appeal the adoption of a more 'compliant femininity' has been necessary to attract large numbers of women into the game by

avoiding the risk of alienation associated with sports that are labelled as too macho for women.

Netball has taken on a multitude of varying roles in the lives of its participants. It is important not to lose sight of this individual dimension of the sport, as experiences that are empowering for one person may be constraining for another. Netball has contested the dominant male terrain of sports provision and involvement on its own terms and within the shifting parameters of social values and expectations. It has been ahead of its time and it has been behind the times. Given this dichotomous situation the precise positioning of netball in discourses of women in sports is elusively ambiguous.

4.8 Cultural Diversity Issues

In terms of the involvement of women from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in netball little has been written in articles, books, coaching and umpiring books and manuals, or archival material. This is not entirely surprising, as few Australian sports have directly addressed multicultural issues. Sports policy, strategy and marketing energies have targeted the mainstream population. With assimilation and integration practices dominant in all institutions of Australian society, until the 1970s the allied position of sports was no different. New arrivals were expected to fit into the existing social order and not to expect to be given any 'preferential' treatment. It is also evident that some sports administrators held fears that particular ethnic minority groups might 'take over' the sport by the very nature of their inclusion, that they might try to change the culture of the sport, and that the involvement of some ethnic groups would alienate others from participation. As cultural diversity has become more widely accepted and sports organisations find their traditional markets shrinking, this attitude has begun to shift. Many traditional sports are now undertaking multicultural marketing strategies to try and increase their player bases.

Existing evidence strongly suggests that women from British origins dominated netball from its inception, a contention that is supported by the list of Anglo-Celtic

surnames of women representing their state associations and Australia. The names of state and national representative netball players from 1928 onwards (not the most accurate method of differentiation but at least an indicator) revealed that there are very few surnames that are not of English derivation. This impressionistic conclusion may overstate the English predominance because of the past common practice of families and individuals to Anglicise surnames. Additionally, it does not account for women who married men with Anglo-Celtic surnames. However, other research has concluded that most women stopped playing competitive netball when they married (Australian Sports Commission, 2000; Broomhall, 1993). National captain, Anne Sargent's (1989:19) comment about her teammate Monica Pukallus, 'we could never pronounce Monica's name so she has always been Rucklebuss to us' is another telling statement about the dominant culture within netball. In his study of Greek-Australians and sports, Georgakis (1999) reported that even though the Orpheus Club of Melbourne changed its constitution in 1947 to allow women members the only team formed was for social tennis and is was not until 12 April 1952 that females of the Melbourne Orpheus Club and the Sydney Olympic Club competed in netball. By 1948 the Perth Hellenic Youth Club had female netball and tennis teams but they were 'the only Australian Greek youth club to embrace women' (Georgakis, 1999:223).

The reasons for the minimal presence of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in netball participation are sparsely documented and the reasons for non-involvement are the focus of the research presented in Chapter Seven of this thesis. One possible explanation that has been offered is that ethnic minority women were just not interested in playing netball. Gladys Waugh, who had a long time association with netball in New South Wales, and was on the NSW Executive and AANA treasurer, explained that, 'many of our ethnic people coming into Australia come from countries where netball isn't a sport and women don't participate in sports … I think another generation could see a difference as the children are assimilated through the school system and the sports system here' (in Duncan 1994:33).

The attitudes of the administrators clearly influence how cultural diversity is perceived and subsequent handled. Chris Burton, a former player and national umpiring director, expressed her view when asked about low ethnic minority involvement, 'I think if you come from an Asian background, your one focus at school must be academic studies and success. If you come from a European background, and I'm talking the Italian, Greek, Central European grouping, sport wasn't really a part of that cultural make up; certainly not for women. So you're battling a whole range of social issues' (in Duncan, 1994:71). Viewing non-English speaking women as cultural victims does not help to facilitate increased access, equity or opportunity. Ethnic stereotypes serve to limit participation and further marginalise women who have little power to challenge these inaccurate and misleading perceptions.

An analysis of national and NSW state association minutes and committee notes did not disclose any discussions about issues of ethnic diversity in netball. The closest mention of non-traditional player involvement centred on notes which acknowledged the development of a Koorie's Netball Club in the 1970s in Victoria (referred to in 1/3/71 minutes of the Victorian Netball Association). A number of Aboriginal women have played netball and a small number have gone on to represent their state and country. Currently, both Australia and New South Wales are actively promoting the game in rural areas and attempting to encourage more Aboriginal players into netball. The involvement of Indigenous Australian women in netball is an interesting issue and warrants further investigation.

The low level of Indigenous involvement is in contrast to the New Zealand scene where the game is very popular among Maori women, who generally have high participation rates in New Zealand sports (Melnick and Thomson, 1996). New Zealand netball was found to have fully accepted, by integration and inclusion, Maori players. However, Melnick and Thomson cautioned against drawing any wider parallels from this situation in majority-minority relations with other Anglocentric countries. Within Australia, netball has been historically an English game and large-scale participation by minority cultural groups has not yet occurred. Netball officials

have not seen that it has been necessary or desirable to encourage a multicultural or indigenous focus. The push to capture 'middle' Australian market has dominated netball strategy in its desire to appeal to the largest number of girls and women.

In terms of its cultural inclusiveness netball has clearly been slow to respond to changing community demographics and has continued to rely on traditional player bases. Netball has remained a colonial game with institutionalised cultural structures of social relations. Whatever the reason, netball has not been an attractive sport for many female ethnic minority players despite its widespread appeal to the general female population in this country. Rather than challenging these ethnocentric boundaries, netball has been content to reflect an ethnocentric view of sport.

4.9 Conclusions

Netball has had to negotiate its position within the social practices in this country to ensure its continued growth and development. To successfully chart its progress netball officials recognised the contradictions and multiple realities of gender and worked within these boundaries. In doing so netball has acted to construct a specific feminine identity that has grown from its middle class Anglo-Australian roots and is firmly located and accepted within a patriarchal society. Players demonstrate their femininity through physical appearance, image, dress and behaviour. These elements combine to present the qualities of co-operation, fair play and camaraderie as essential qualities for a netball player. But can this stereotyped image be applied to all netball players? Most likely not, as many girls and women have operated outside these confines in their participation in netball, shortening their skirts, playing aggressively and using physical strength and endurance to their advantage. These forms of resistance were aligned with other tensions faced by netball administrators and players in trying to promote a game that would appeal to women and also support prevailing community values and attitudes. Applying and maintaining this middle-of-the-road appeal is problematic for groups on the margins, such as girls and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, as their needs and expectations are not specifically addressed.

CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

The thesis research questions were outlined in Chapter One along with an overview of the methodology used to empirically investigate the associated propositions. This chapter provides further details of the methodology and fieldwork undertaken to collect data to analyse the research questions.

The research problem is: to investigate how sports discourses, organisations and practices have influenced the sporting experiences of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The primary data collected served two key functions. First, data were used for the macro level purpose of revealing the 'big picture' about women, sports and ethnicity. Macro level data and statistics on sports and females from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were obtained via a questionnaire survey method. Second, micro level information represents individual accounts of the situation. Individual interviews were undertaken to complement and personalise the data collected in the surveys and provide women with the opportunity to tell their own stories. The data set was further augmented by the use of an applied case study to explore application and practice in netball.

This chapter provides a detailed account of the specific research methods employed, sampling procedures, questionnaire and interview content and protocol, case study methodology and data analysis techniques. The general empirical data findings and analysis are presented in Chapters Six and the case study is documented in Chapter Seven. The conclusions from the research are offered in Chapter Eight.

5.2 Research Principles and Paradigms

The choice of methodology for this research was determined through consideration of a number of issues raised in both the feminist and ethnicity literature reviews on sports research. The literature was able to provide background material on the social, environmental and systemic conditions that impact upon women's involvement in

sports and that effect different ethnic populations' involvement in sports. The present research was informed by two basic assumptions based on previous research. First, was the notion that sports play a powerful role in constructing gender and in the affirmation of identity. Therefore, the interpretation of sports discourse needed to be approached from the perspective of the researched population. Whatever the theory, or the research question, it needs to acknowledge the impact of gendered social structures and the nature of gendered social behaviour in sports. Second, was the premise that research about gender and sports should strive to provide information, insights and theories about human behaviour that can then be translated into improved quality of life for the researched population.

As there were few published works that investigated sport and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the replication or testing of a specific method or data collection instrument was not feasible. Therefore, in selecting the appropriate methods for this study, considerations of pertinent research methodologies were necessarily informed by allied perspectives. Feminist theoretical concerns with how power is exercised through everyday social and institutional practices and how these practices are manifest in the organisation, delivery and participation of sports provided the ideological basis of the method selection.

Analyses of women and sports have moved beyond merely considering relative opportunities and participation toward a more far-reaching consideration of the cultural meaning and significance of this participation (Theberge, 1991). In order to effectively research the latter considerations it was crucial that appropriate methods were employed which had the scope to offer insights into the essence of the issues under investigation. The current research was based on the underlying premise that the use of research methods that collect baseline data on variables such as participation and other useful macro level information were secondary to the research methods that ascertain meanings and context. As qualitative research is best suited to ascertain meaning and context it was selected as the principal data-gathering procedure.

The research plan was further influenced by two study imperatives. Firstly, the need to provide a space for women's own interpretations of their experiences, and secondly, the desirability of placing the research in a specific sporting context. These imperatives reflect concerns voiced by feminist researchers who have suggested that research should always acknowledge the location of women in a wider socio-cultural context and concurrently provide an examination of intersecting statuses held by women of various marginalised groups (Lenskyj, 1990). In order to satisfy both of these requirements it was decided that the data collected should be located in both positivist and interpretive paradigms. This would serve as a secure base from which to gain an understanding of the particular social phenomena (as per Henderson, 1991).

Furthermore, in discussing appropriate research techniques involving ethnic women in American sports, Eisen (1990) has commented that research on the experiences of ethnic women should not be forced into existing models of exact, explicit and quantifiable data collection but should instead be located within socio-cultural theories that capture qualitative and explanatory elements. With these underlying principles identified the research design was determined. The data collection process involved the design of two surveys to collect quantitative data; one for general information and the other for the netball case study. The purpose of the surveys was to gather general demographic information in the study regions and to canvass opinions about women and sports, which could be followed up on in the interviews. In the research design the survey data was meant to be secondary to the interview data. Two sets of interviews were also deemed necessary; one canvassing broad issues in sports and the second focussing on netball. These were the key information gathering procedures. The next section further outlines the research assumptions about the primary form of data collection, its qualitative methodology.

5.2.1 Positioning the Empirical Research within a Qualitative Frame

As previously noted, a qualitative methodology was chosen to explore individual construction of meanings by women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Qualitative research is best employed to be able to tease out meanings, implications and perceptions as context and subtleties are critical in understanding experiences. It has been argued that qualitative methods can overcome the implicit

problems of context stripping, exclusion of meaning and purpose, inapplicability of general data to individual cases, and the exclusion of the discovery dimension of inquiry often found in quantitative studies (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). All of these criteria are central to the present research.

Another of the identified strengths of qualitative methods is their use as exploratory tools when precedents are difficult to find. This was of particular relevance to the present research as the majority of existing research on sports has been based primarily on an ethnocentric hegemony with few works touching on cultural diversity issues (Stanfield, 1994). Qualitative methodologies can allow the cognitive and affective components of sports and ethnicity to be explored in greater depth than quantitative methodologies. Qualitative methodologies encourage the informant to introduce concepts of importance from their perspective, rather than adhering to subject areas that have been pre-determined by the researcher.

The identification and explanation of longitudinal changes in women's sports can also be addressed by qualitative approaches. For example, the use of case study methodology provides the structure to examine the changes that women have experienced over the history of a given sport and locates these changes in the social reality of the time. The understanding of these lived experiences and the ensuing interpretations are placed in their appropriate cultural context. Case study methodology incorporates various forms of expressions of language, both written and oral, and provides a mirror through which to view others' interpretations of their situations (Van Maanen, 1998) within the social reality of sport.

Previous qualitative studies have examined the place of sports in the social reality of a narrow grouping of women (Hall, 1996). In her analysis of perspectives used by feminist historians, Vertinsky (1994a:7) contended that, 'there is a realisation that analyses of social reality are incomplete or inaccurate if they do not include critical accounts of women in every race, class and culture'. Vertinsky further argued that historians could never be satisfied with the reproduction of knowledge about personal experience without analysing how it was produced and represented in the first instance. In the same vein Jarvie and McGuire (1994) commented that a number of

female scholars have attempted to explain the significance of sports in the lives of Asian and African-American women at a theoretical level whilst neglecting empirical and historical level studies of non-English-speaking and non-white women and the structures that disempower or empower their involvement in sports. The present research aimed to develop an empirically based understanding of sports in the lives of women of different classes, races and ethnicities.

Qualitative research embodied the above concerns and questions as it captures the character of naturally-occurring human behaviour, social events and processes that are then examined in terms of their relationship to the context in which they occur (Hammersley, 1990). As Costa and Guthrie (1994:250) speculated, 'when qualitative approaches that respect the diversity of human experience are more generally accepted and employed by the dominant groups in sport research, we will likely gain a better understanding of sporting women and a celebration of difference may also result'. Qualitative research is representative of the assumption that experiences can be told in a multiplicity of ways in order to broaden understanding of all women's lives (Clarke, Hargreaves and Humberstone, 1997).

Qualitative research is not without its limitations. In reporting their Australian research on women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and sports Lewis and Roman (1980) stated that they had several problems getting this group to participate in their research. Many of the women's groups that they approached did not view the topic as relevant and others were suspicious of the motives of the researchers. Lewis and Roman concluded their report with a call for systematic research on this topic but cautioned that findings were likely to be community specific and could not be generalised beyond this level. When only interviewing a small number of people extending the findings beyond this group can be tenuous. Accordingly, theory building from a limited set of experiences can also be problematic.

The necessity to recognise the limitations of research with limited numbers of participants has been highlighted as a potential issue when qualitative methodologies are employed. Fleming (1994) has cautioned about the failure of much research to

recognise the heterogeneity of ethnic groups. The emergence of a 'false universalism' can lead to collective treatment of all minority groups, crude stereotypes about their sporting aptitude and preferences, which, if generally prevalent, may become internalised by group members. McConnochie *et al.* (1988) have argued that all human relations are socially constructed and political; and there are differences in power as well as roles within cultural groups. McConnochie *et al.* warned that developing stereotypes can lead to assumptions that sex roles are an inevitable part of a static culture and this serves to freeze these or at least give them credibility. In turn these stereotypes encourage people to blame the more oppressive aspects of cultural relations, such as inequality of women, on the women's culture. Additionally, Hammersley (1990) commented that ethnic groups might develop distinctive ways of orienting themselves, which must be fully explained from the perspective of group members not the researcher.

Ensuring that research participants are aware that they will not be judged by inappropriate Anglo-Celtic feminist standards is another important factor in qualitative research. This means avoiding what Martin (1991) has termed 'hegemonic feminist ethnocentrism'. This is where 'the analytical and political preoccupations of an ethnically dominant group are falsely universalised and normalised with respect to women from minority and colonised groups' (Martin 1991:125). To put it simply, 'People who have been under researched generally want their story told in a way that avoids stereotypes and gives them dignity' (Henderson 1998:169).

An interpretive, discovery-based paradigm that views human behaviour through the individual's frame of reference was chosen for the qualitative research component due to its 'best fit' with the basic requirements of this study. The investigation of the individual or groups in a social context examines how ideas or beliefs can reflect a sense of 'social reality' while recognising the subjectiveness of the researcher (Henderson, 1991). Bottomley (1991) further suggested that processes of identity formation, including cultural resistance and transformation, should be explored through examination of the cultural content of activities undertaken, patterns of interaction, and the perspective that the person offers about their situation.

In summary, the selection of a qualitative method in the present research was based on its ability to offer insights into the nexus of sports, ethnicity and gender. Grand narratives about specific ethnic groups or women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds as a sub-group are not drawn from these findings in acknowledgment of the limitations of 'single overarching ontological and epistemological paradigms' (Lincoln and Denzin, 1994:575). Each individual interviewed had their own story to tell and while there were similarities within and between ethnic groups there were also many differences. The aim of this research was not to generalise to some broad 'ethnic minority' population but better understand and interpret the stories of the women interviewed. The experiences of these women have been used to provide insights and understandings into the research questions and the refinement of sports and cultural diversity theory.

5.2.2 Role of the Researcher

Feminists strongly argue that methodologies that disempower women in the research process should be contested. Some of the power-based considerations are the researcher's role, the social significance of the researcher's gender, the validity of research, which does not have emancipation of women as a starting point, and the use of creativity in the research method (Jarvie and McGuire, 1994:164). The latter two considerations have been discussed in the previous section; this section will address issues relating to the gender and role of the researcher.

The relationship between the researcher and the research participants is critical in qualitative methodology, particularly in interview situations. One of the main strengths of this form of information gathering is its capacity to avoid the creation of a negative power relationship between the researcher and participant. However, inequalities of class, age, ethnicity, and sexual preference may all influence interview dynamics and thus the outcomes (see Cotterill, 1992; England, 1994) and therefore need careful consideration in the research design and implementation. Another aspect to negotiate is the researcher's capacity to accept and respect the interview participants' views, even if these are radically different or opposite to those held by the researcher. Even when the opinion of a study participant is disconcerting or discomforting for the researcher the

researcher must respect the right of the interviewee to express such perspectives and must take such views into consideration (Cotterill, 1992).

In the research design for the present study the participant interviews were constructed as interpersonal situations and it was recognised that the interviewer's characteristics, sensitivity, and other qualities may have affected what was said. The presence and necessary participation of the interviewer was not viewed as a negative, as the interview was a process during which meanings are not only brought forth but also sometimes discovered. Importance was placed on understanding the interviewee's sense of her life experiences from her perspective. The context, fabric and feeling that were embedded in this experience were revealed through a process of exchange and empathy between the researcher and the interview participant. In this sense the researcher had a multiplicity of roles to play, rules to adhere to and parameters to stay within.

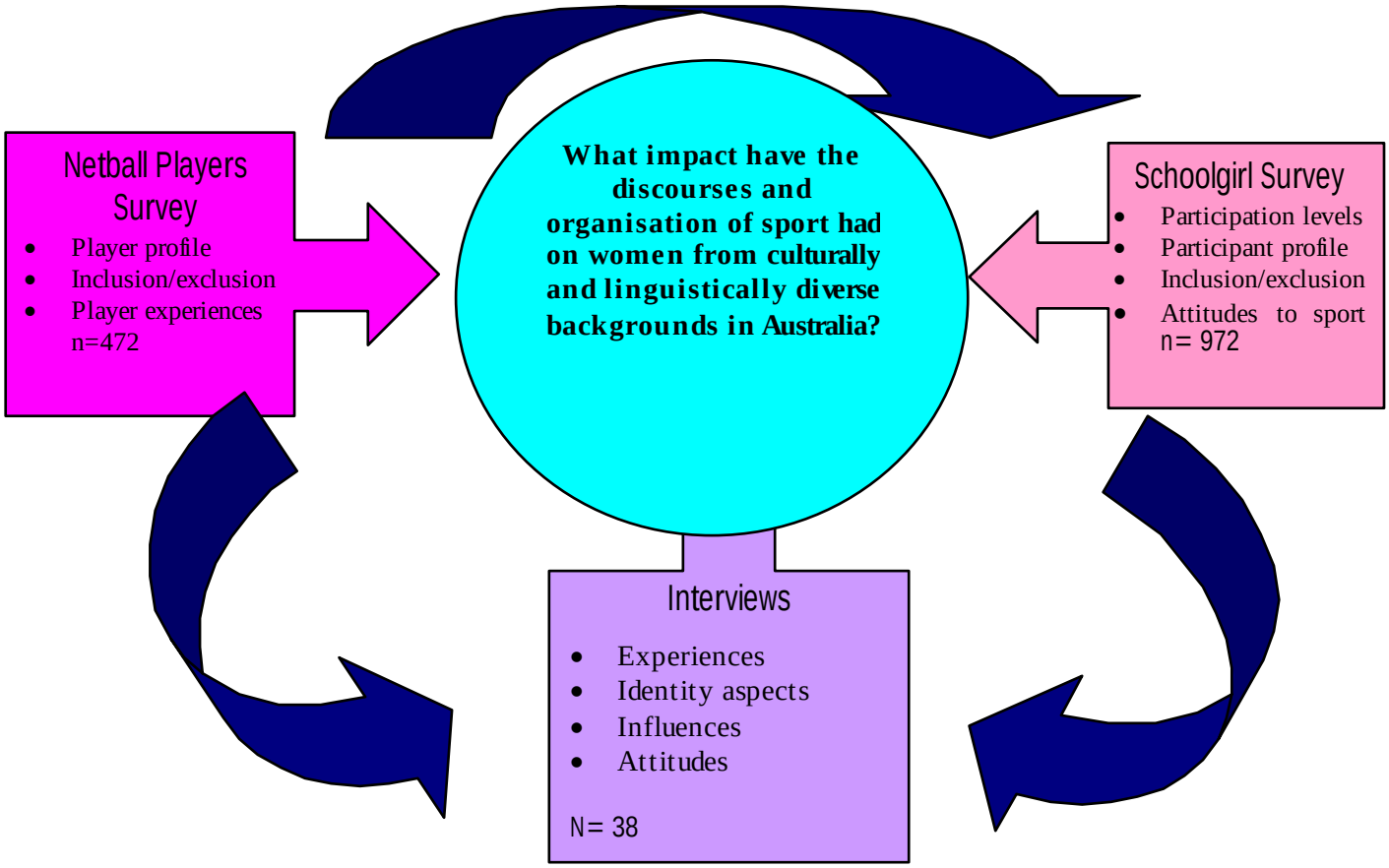
As the researcher, where was I positioned within this research framework? As a white, English-speaking woman I should acknowledge that my interpretation and construction of knowledge of 'others' might be seen as coming from a position of power. My approach to this research has been shaped by my cultural background as a third generation Polish Canadian of working class origins living in Australia since 1982. Therefore this research is located within a perspective shaped by my cultural background, class, race and gender. Additionally, as a relatively active sports participant over an extended period of time I bring to this research my personal experiences of sports and a belief that sports participation can be a positive activity.

5.3 Overview of Research Procedures

The specific research methods used in this research were a questionnaire survey of schoolgirls, a questionnaire survey of netball players, interviews with girls and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, a sub-set of whom were also interviewed about netball, and netball administrators. The linkage of the methods used is represented in Figure 5.1 on the next page. The quantitative methods, that is, the schoolgirl sports participation survey and the survey of netball participants were used to develop an overall 'picture' of the topic under investigation. The questionnaire method

was employed to assess the general behavioural and descriptive components of female sports participation or non-participation. The survey of schoolgirls was undertaken to gain a broad sense of sporting participation patterns and general attitudes to sports. Sports participation involves cognitive and affective characteristics as well as overt behavioural aspects. Therefore to complement the broad data on female attitudes to sports and their participation in sports, a socio-demographic profile for netball participation was obtained via a representative sample of three district level competitions. This survey allowed for comparisons with the general schoolgirl study and to provide base-line data for the netball case study. These methods were secondary to the qualitative components of the research that formed the substantive basis of the investigations.

Figure 5.1 Depiction of Research Questions and Data Collection



Qualitative methods were used to provide detailed explanations of individual sports experiences. Specifically, the stories of women were told through the use of interviews.

The first interviews with women and girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds focused on the participant's reactions to sports in general and more precisely on the perceived benefits and constraints of sports participation. The second series of interviews were with women and girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who have played or are playing netball as well as netball coaches and administrators. These interviews provided specific material about the experiences of the participants in netball. The interviews contributed to the development of the case study and were analysed in combination with the secondary data and historical analysis on netball.

Case studies are useful for explanatory research when the questions deal with tracing links over time, rather than just focussing on frequency. Case studies are designed to flesh out the details from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data. Therefore in this research the case study was used to explore the experiences of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in netball. The strength of the case study lies in its ability to deal with a variety of evidence, documents, interviews, and observations in a contemporary setting (Yin, 1989). As such the case study was used to explain causal links, describe real-life contexts, illustrate the phenomenon and explore related issues.

The essence of case studies is that they strive towards a holistic understanding of cultural systems of action (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1990). Cultural systems of action refer to sets of interrelated activities involving actors in a social situation. The case studies must always have boundaries (Stake, 1995). Case study research is not sampling research and as such it is crucial that the selection of cases aims to maximise what can be discovered. As noted earlier, the sport of netball was chosen for the case study for several reasons. It is the highest participation team sport for females in Australia, it is primarily a female sport and therefore issues of gender difference are largely mitigated. It is also played in schools and communities across Australia with numerous competitions located in areas with a high proportion of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

5.4 Survey Data Collection – Selection of Sample Regions

The first stage of the empirical data collection involved questionnaire survey research conducted across several schools within the greater Sydney metropolitan district. The schools chosen for the study were located in regions with an identified high proportion of non-English-speaking background population and were chosen to parallel the same districts to be surveyed in the netball component of the study. The information gathered from these questionnaires was used as a basis for documenting general sports participation patterns, experiences and attitudes of high school girls living in these regions. The data collected are also useful to assess if there are significant inter-cultural differences in sports participation and attitudes to sports.

The three regions chosen for the survey were Blacktown, Fairfield and Wollongong. All of these regions had a higher than average proportion of people born in non-English-speaking countries and also hosted sizeable district netball competitions. The following information provides an overview of each of these geographical areas and is used as the basis for the comparative demographic analysis section in Chapter Six. All figures are taken from the 1996 Census Data.

As indicated in Table 5.1 and 5.2 in the Blacktown statistical area the proportion of non-Australian born persons was 33 per cent. Residents born overseas were predominantly from the United Kingdom, Philippines, Malta, the former Yugoslavian Republic and Italy.

Table 5.1 Blacktown population by country of birth, 1996

Blacktown	Male	Female	Persons
Total persons	**115,043**	**117,176**	**232,219**
Australian born	75,074	76,764	151,838
Born overseas:			
Canada, Ireland, NZ, SA, UK, USA	8,529	8,273	16,802
Born overseas:			
Other country	27,540	28,008	55,548
Total Born overseas:	36,069	36,281	72,350

Table 5.2 Blacktown born overseas compared with Sydney metropolitan area: the top five categories of overseas born, 1996

	Blacktown	Sydney
UK	5 %	6 %
Philippines	3 %	1 %
Malta	2 %	1 %
Yugoslavia	2 %	1 %
Italy	2 %	2 %

As outlined in Tables 5.3 and 5.4 Fairfield could be classified as substantially multi-ethnic with Australian-born residents comprising just 45 per cent of the population compared with those born in other countries (55 per cent) and of these 50.4 per cent were not born in a main English-speaking country.

Table 5.3 Fairfield population by country of birth, 1996

Fairfield	Male	Female	Persons
Total persons	**90,970**	**90,815**	**181,785**
Aged 15 years +	68,572	69,824	138,396
Australian born	39,300	38,964	78,264
Born overseas:			
SA, UK, USA	2,780	2,793	5,573
Born overseas:			
Other country	45,802	45,828	91,630
Total born overseas	**48,582**	**48,621**	**97,203**

Table 5.4 Fairfield born overseas compared with Sydney metropolitan area: the top five categories of overseas born, 1996

	Fairfield	Sydney
Vietnam	8 %	1 %
Italy	4 %	2 %
Yugoslavia	4 %	1 %
United Kingdom	3 %	6 %
Lebanon	2 %	1 %

As can be seen in Table 5.4 the largest concentrations of overseas born, four out of five countries, emanated from non-English-speaking countries.

Table 5.5 Wollongong population by country of birth, 1996

	Male	Female	Persons
Total persons	**88,195**	**88,814**	**177,009**
Aged 15 years and over	69,440	70,926	140,366
Australian born	62,746	63,496	126,242
Born overseas: Canada, Ireland, NZ, SA, UK and USA	7,810	8,131	15,941
Born overseas: Other country	14,388	13,823	28,211
Total Born overseas:	**22,198**	**21,954**	**44,152**

Wollongong had an Australian born population of 71.3 per cent with the largest proportions in overseas born countries from the United Kingdom, the former Yugoslavian Republic, Italy and Germany.

Table 5.6 Wollongong born overseas compared with Sydney metropolitan area: the top five categories of overseas born, 1996

Wollongong		Sydney
UK	8 %	6 %
Yugoslavia	4 %	1 %
Italy	2.5 %	2 %
Germany	1%	1%
Netherlands	1%	0.5%

These three districts Blacktown, Fairfield and Wollongong provided the locations for the survey data collection.

5.5 Questionnaire Survey Implementation

As previously discussed, two questionnaire-based surveys were conducted to collect primary data for the research. The questionnaires were constructed with reference to issues raised in the literature review, secondary data analysis and for comparability with existing data categories. The first survey involved schoolgirls (see appendix 1) and the second surveyed competition netball players (see appendix 2). The surveys were used as information seeking devises and to provide key indicators for further investigation in the interviews. The principle underlying the present research to value the comments and experiences of females from diverse cultural and linguistic

backgrounds in their own right. Therefore, it was deemed ideologically inappropriate to use a control group or to 'test' their responses against those of other girls and women.

5.5.1 Survey of schoolgirls

All public and independent high schools in the survey region were contacted and invited to participate in the research project. The schools that accepted the invitation were sent the questionnaires to be administered by class teachers during school hours, along with a covering letter explaining the purpose of the research and survey protocol. All students were given a verbal briefing outlining background information on the study and all responses were voluntary. The questionnaire canvassed the girls' participation in sports and attitudes to sports. There were specific questions about netball for the subsequent phases of the empirical research. The completed questionnaires were returned by post to the researcher and subsequently coded and the data entered. Table 5.7 outlines the questionnaire distribution and return rates.

Table 5.7 Schoolgirl questionnaire distribution list

Region	Number of questionnaires distributed	Number of questionnaires returned	Return rate
Blacktown	350	299	85.4%
Fairfield	500	434	86.8 %
Wollongong	300	239	79.6%
Overall total	1150	972	84.5%

5.5.2 Survey of netball players

The second stage in the survey data collection process involved the implementation of a questionnaire survey of netball participants. The rationale for using this second survey instrument was two-fold. Firstly, the questionnaire was designed to gather base-line data and information about current netball participants. Secondly, the questionnaire was used to contact potential interviewees for the subsequent stage of the research.

Netball NSW was approached to gain permission to contact their associated clubs about participating in the study. The Association approved the application and they sent a letter to three district associations requesting permission to survey their members. The three associations chosen were Blacktown, Fairfield and Wollongong. Each of these three geographical areas has a relatively high level of cultural diversity as discussed in the previous section.

Consultations were undertaken with representatives from each of the three associations to select the best method of distributing the questionnaires to all players. As none of the associations had a database of players that could be easily accessed for a mail out, it was decided that the best approach would be to attend a Saturday competition day. While not an ideal surveying situation this method was used to gain as many responses as possible in a limited timeframe. A day during the autumn 1997 competition season was chosen in consultation with each association. The dates selected were the 27 April for Blacktown, 3 May for Fairfield and 29 June for Wollongong. On the nominated day I arrived before the women's competition started and briefed the officials about the survey. Before the netball matches began the coach or manager of each team was handed one questionnaire for every team member present on the day. The verbal instructions were that each player was to complete the questionnaire and the coach or manager would then submit the completed questionnaires to the administration area.

Limitations to this method emerged as the data collection was undertaken. These included: coaches and managers failing to hand out the questionnaires or providing incorrect instructions; players not having sufficient time after the game to fill out the questionnaire; and players taking the questionnaire home to complete for the following week but either forgetting to do so or losing the questionnaire. While not a part of the original survey implementation strategy, the associations agreed to collect any 'stray' questionnaires that came in the following weeks and forward these to the researcher. A reply-paid envelope was left with the associations to facilitate this process and a further 55 questionnaires were returned after the initial collection date. The response rates for the netball player questionnaire are noted in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8 Netball survey distribution

Association	Number of questionnaires distributed	Number of questionnaires returned	Return rate
Blacktown	180	91	50.5%
Fairfield	220	158	72 %
Wollongong	160	119	74%
Overall total	560	468	66%

The overall return rate was 66 per cent. Respondents were deemed to be representative of the sample population across all of the requested demographic variables.

5.6 Individual Interviews

The interviews were the major focus of the research. They were conducted as open-ended interviews as recommended by Yin (1994) and used to expand the depth of data gathering and to increase the number of sources of information. The data collected in the schoolgirl and netball questionnaire surveys was enhanced with the interviews of selected individuals. Criterion-based sampling was used to select interviewees living in New South Wales from a range of social and sporting backgrounds. That is, women were chosen to generally reflect the range of ethnic backgrounds present in Australia. It was not intended for the sample to be representative of the general Australian population.

Interviews were conducted with 38 women for this research. Eight of the women were from English-speaking backgrounds, four of whom were born in Australia and had a long history of involvement in netball, and 30 were from non-English-speaking backgrounds, of which ten had some experience of playing netball or had children who had played netball. The CEO of Netball New South Wales was also interviewed to provide comment on the administrative dimension of the sport.

The first subset of interviews were undertaken with women from the general community who were either first or second generation from a non-English-speaking country. The second subset of interviews was conducted with netball players who

volunteered to be interviewed when completing the netball questionnaire survey and selected netball administrators. In both instances an initial list of interview participants was developed from referrals provided by regional multicultural associations. These women subsequently provided the names of additional women who met the selection criteria. Women participants were chosen to reflect first and second generation migrants and the range of ethnic backgrounds within the community. All of the netball players interviewed (except the administrators) had volunteered for interviews on the questionnaire. Every volunteer from a non-English speaking background was followed up for interview.

The potential participants were contacted in two ways. Firstly, if the participant indicated that they were comfortable to be interviewed in English they were telephoned and the purpose of the research was explained. Each person was then asked if they would agree to participate in the study. If the woman contacted agreed to participate an interview time and place was determined. The participant selected the interview location. According to Reinharz (1992) researchers should listen to people and empower them and should go to the respondent's space or a 'safe' place. The women who had agreed to be interviewed were immediately sent a letter to confirm the interview details.

Secondly, if the potential participant had initially indicated that contact was to be made in their native language the first telephone call was made using an interpreter. All explanations about the research, decisions whether to participate or not and subsequent arrangements were given in the participant's nominated language. In the end only one woman opted to have her interview facilitated by an interpreter.

The interviews with the female participants ranged from 25 to 75 minutes in duration. A female interviewer or interpreter facilitated all the sessions, as it was felt that this was a vital consideration for the female participants. Reinharz (1992:23) has suggested, 'that for a woman to be understood by a woman in a social research project, it may be necessary for her to be interviewed by a woman'. While gender itself is not sufficient to establish rapport, it is a factor, and contributed to the establishment of trust between the parties involved.

The researcher conducted the interviews using a conversational style format that guided the interviews by questions and discussion. The interview method was drawn from Franklin's (1997) conceptualisation of the shared understanding model of interviewing, wherein the interview is seen as a situation in which the interviewer attempts to gain understanding of how the interviewee experiences aspects of her own life as well as the world of objects and other persons. Interview formats vary along a continuum, ranging from structured to unstructured (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Guba and Lincoln; 1981; Patton, 1990). Unstructured interviews were employed in this study, whereby the interviewer conversed with the respondent who provided the content of the interview as well as the structure and definition of the problem. Guba and Lincoln (1981) proposed that open-ended questions are most appropriate when, 'the issue is complex, the relevant dimensions are unknown, or the interest of the research lies in the description of a phenomena, the exploration of a process, or the individual's formulation of an issue' (pp.177-8). Bogdan and Biklen (1982:146) believed that the purpose or goal of the research dictates the type of interview. They stated:

> Even when an interview guide is employed, qualitative interviews offer the interviewer considerable latitude to pursue a range of topics and offer the subject a chance to shape the content of the interview … Some people debate which approach is more effective, the structured or the unstructured. With semi-structured interviews you are confident of getting comparable data across subjects, but you lose the opportunity to understand how the subjects themselves structure the topic at hand … From our perspective you do not have to choose sides. You choose a particular type to employ depending on your research goal.

The decision to structure the interviews in this manner was also influenced by Smith's (1992) suggestion that women's behaviour can be studied as a reflection of social context, discussing everyday routines and social practices and then locating these in structural contexts and social processes. The guide was formulated in consultation with ethnic community workers and researchers (see appendix 3 for the interview guide). Advice on how to phrase questions, relevant cultural mores and ethnically sensitive areas were invaluable in constructing the interview. Aspects of cultural difference and diversity were taken into consideration when conducting the interviews and each

individual interview situation was treated as unique. The conversational-style questioning allowed for flexibility in terms of inherent language and translation constraints and acknowledgment of cultural values sensitivities. The interviews provided the opportunity to follow up issues raised in the questionnaire survey stage of data collection and to search for reasons and explanations behind the quantitative results. Furthermore, during the survey research stage many of the women respondents expressed an interest to participate in further discussions about their experiences and views on sports and netball and the interviews provided these women with the opportunity to be heard.

The interviews covered issues encompassing the place of sports as well as netball in each woman's life, their attitudes to and experiences of the former, and exploration of issues related to their cultural background. The aim was to create an environment where a natural flow of discussion occurred and the issues could be covered without rigid adherence to order or precise wording of the interview items (Rubin and Rubin, 1995). While it was ensured that the core issues were covered the interview content was otherwise shaped by the respondent's answers and no attempt was made to constrain respondents to a pre-determined line of questioning. The women interviewed were encouraged to speak freely about their experiences in life in general and sports in particular. Consequently, while the subject matter of the interviews was ostensibly non-threatening, the directions of discussions were to a certain extent unstructured and the potential existed for the conversation to move to sensitive issues. In fact, the richer insights about sports tended to emerge in the interviews where the participant engaged in discussion about all dimensions of their life.

The interviews with netball administrators were slightly different as they were conducted to explore service providers' perspectives. These interviews focussed on the administrators' perceptions of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in netball (see appendix 4 for interview guide). These interviews also aimed to identify any specific policies, strategies, programs and other initiatives, which have been instigated to meet the needs of these women and to increase their access to netball. Administrators interviewed were chosen to represent both the state and

national associations. The information collected from the administrators was interwoven with the main interviews to enhance the understanding of both narratives.

The richness of the data collected in these interviews varied considerably. This could be traced back to two factors. In the first instance, the amount and extent of experience that the interviewee had in providing netball for the various ethnic communities impacted on the expansiveness and depth of their contribution. Secondly, the level of candour with which the participants spoke about their experiences was clearly influenced by their perceptions of organisational expectations and political correctness. While the data obtained in these interviews provides valuable insights into netball provision it has been interpreted within these limitations.

All of the interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim. In the one interview that used an interpreter only the English language discussions were transcribed. The transcripts were read through several times to obtain an overall sense of the content before being themed and coded for analysis. Individual experiences and reflections were initially grouped by concept theme and then further differentiated by category as a framework for organisation, analysis and reporting of the findings. Although it is acknowledged that each woman's experience of sport and their own expression of this experience was unique, exemplars derived from these constituting factors were consistently identified throughout the data. The aim was to let the women who participated in the research speak for themselves as far as possible. Each of the women interviewed had their own story to tell and their own personal perspective on their situation. While the stories contained some similarities, there were also many differences.

5.7 The Case Study

The case study of netball was used to explore the involvement of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in a given sport. The purpose of the case study in this research was to evaluate the extent to which netball has been culturally inclusive. The methodology used in this research study was based on the seminal case study methodology designed by Yin (1994). The four steps undertaken were:

1. Design of the case study protocol.
2. Conduct of the case study using historical documents, questionnaire surveys and interviews.
3. Analyse case study evidence.
4. Develop conclusions, recommendations, and implications based on the evidence.

Step 1, design of the case study protocol involved setting the research questions for the case study. The **exploratory** questions posed for this research were:
What is revealed about minority group women from historical netball records?
What are the current patterns of netball participation for women/girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds?
What are the current needs for these women/girls in netball?
Is netball inclusive of women/girls culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds?
What is needed to create a culturally inclusive netball environment?

The **explanatory** questions for the case study were:
How do the women surveyed view the 'attractiveness' of netball in comparison to other sports?
Can netball meet population and societal changes and maintain its number one position in women's sport?
How does netball evaluate the cultural inclusiveness of its sporting environment?

The nature of these questions classifies this research as an explanatory-exploratory case study (Yin, 1994). The events and experiences examined are contemporary, although historic information has been used.

5.7.1 Selection of sources of evidence

Stake (1995) and Yin (1994) have identified at least six sources of evidence in case studies. These are:

Interviews.

Direct observation.

Participant-observation.

Physical artefacts.

Documents, such as letters, memoranda, agendas, administrative documents, newspaper articles.

Archival records, such as organisational records, lists of names, survey data.

Case study evidence was collected via numerous sources for the development of converging lines of inquiry. In the interest of triangulation of evidence each source served to corroborate the evidence from other sources. All of the sources for the case study protocol in the present research were used to cross verify the authenticity of allied information. These sources included documents, for example letters, agendas, minutes of meetings, written reports and media clippings; archival records, encompassing membership lists, organisational records, survey and study data; a questionnaire survey that was administered to a sample of schoolgirls and players competing in an autumn 1997 netball competition; and interviews with women and girls from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

5.7.2 Limitations

A frequent criticism of case study methodology is that its dependence on a single case renders it incapable of providing a generalising conclusion. Hamel (in Hamel *et al*, 1994) and Yin (1989, 1994, 1994) have forcefully argued that the relative size of the sample, whether two or 200 cases are used, does not transform a multiple case into a macroscopic study. The goal of the study should be to establish the parameters and then these should be applied to all research. In this way even a single case could be considered acceptable, provided it met the established objective.

There are some clear limitations associated with the choice of netball as a case study in relation to the main research questions. The first limitation relates to netball's origins as a Commonwealth sport, that is, it is played mainly in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand and other countries colonised by Great Britain. It is not a popular sport in many of the non-English-speaking countries from which Australia draws its migrant population, such as Greece, Italy and Vietnam. Therefore, netball is not embedded in the cultural milieu of women from non-English-speaking countries. The second major limitation of using netball instead of a range of sports is that it isolates the

research in one domain of sport. Thirdly, the often constraining factor of male hegemonic practices within a sport are largely absent in netball given its female orientation. Acknowledgment of these limitations is inherent in the research presented.

5.8 Validity and Reliability in Case Studies

The general tenet of validity is that the data collected and analysed accurately reflects the phenomenon under investigation. As such, validity is achieved when the instrument used measures what it was intended to measure. Thomas and Nelson (1990) outlined three types of validity: content, criterion and construct. Construct validity, which relates to theoretical expectations, is of particular relevance to this study. Construct validity can be problematic in case study research with criticism occurring because of potential investigator subjectivity. Yin (1994) proposed three remedies to counteract this: using multiple sources of evidence, establishing a chain of evidence, and having a draft case study report reviewed by key informants. Internal validity is a concern only in causal (explanatory) cases. This is usually a problem of 'inferences' in case studies, and can be dealt with using pattern matching. External validity deals with knowing whether the results have more general application beyond the immediate case. Much of the criticism against case studies in this vein relates to single case studies.

Procedures were put in place to address issues of validity. Operational sets of measures were developed to collect data. These included the use of multiple sources of evidence during data collection, establishment of a chain of evidence and the use of key informants to read and comment on the draft of the case study report.

In reference to the question of whether this study's findings have validity beyond the immediate case study is the question 'do they need to be?' The research was concerned about individuals and meanings within their lives, and in the case study its value is in its uniqueness and the lived experiences of the women. Thus, the study aimed to provide different insights, to raise fresh issues, to collect new data, and to suggest alternative interpretations that might be applied to larger data sets in the future. Generalising is left to those who can apply the findings to his or her situation (Thomas and Nelson, 1990).

The strength of the study relates to the extent to which the researcher has been able to access relevant documents, gather comprehensive data and analyse it correctly.

Reliability is the degree to which the same results would occur if the study were to be repeated. Reliability is achieved in many ways in a case study. One of the most important methods is the development of the case study protocol. Detailing the specific procedures, questions, citations of relevant documents and databases, and the use of case study notes has been employed to assure maintenance of a chain of evidence. This does not necessarily mean replication is guaranteed or even warranted. Protocol is a major component in asserting the reliability of the case study research (Yin, 1994:64). A typical protocol will have the following sections: an overview of the case study project (objectives, issues, topics being investigated); field procedures (credentials and access to sites, sources of information); case study questions (specific questions that the investigator must keep in mind during data collection); and a guide for case study report (outline, format for the narrative).

The cover letter (appendix 5) and verbal explanations communicated the general topic of inquiry and the purpose of the case study. Therefore, the purpose of the research was clearly communicated to each study participant in both the survey and interview phases of data collection. The subject's schedule dictated the activity (as recommended by Stake, 1995). The field procedures involved data collection issues and were structured to adhere to ethical considerations. In this regard the wording of the questions in the questionnaire for schoolgirls was checked via a pilot survey using 120 female undergraduate university students. The questionnaire for netball players was pre-tested with 52 female netball players. The questionnaire surveys were used only as a preliminary information gathering, issue-raising tool.

5.9 Procedures for the Analysis of Data

5.9.1 Questionnaire Surveys

Data from the questionnaire surveys was coded, entered and was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Variables were analysed to create a socio-demographic profile of the respondents, to investigate the links between ethnicity and involvement in sports generally, and netball specifically, and to assess which issues

were of concern for girls from non-English speaking backgrounds. These issues would be further explored in the interview phase of the research.

5.9.2 Individual Interviews

Qualitative research methods, such as those used in this study, focus on understanding the meaning attached to the phenomena using the participant's words as the primary source of data for generating theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). While the participant's definitions, values, meanings and so forth are necessarily unique; commonalities, interdependencies and differences were examined to develop an understanding of these experiences. As Coffey and Atkinson (1996: 26) stated, 'the segmenting and coding of data are often taken-for-granted parts of the qualitative research process. All researchers need to be able to organize, manage, and retrieve the most meaningful bits of our data.'

This study is inductive whereby the intention was that new understandings might emerge from studying the data. Through analysis of the data it was expected that two basic forms of theory could emerge, substantive and formal (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Substantive theory relates to practical issues and in the present research is associated with the aim of developing strategies for ameliorating constraints to sports participation for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Formal theory relates to the conceptual area of sociological inquiry. In this study it is linked with the aim of exploring the role and place of sports in the lives of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds within Australia. These two forms of theory are revisited in the conclusions in Chapter Eight.

Data categories, defined and redefined and were organised into clusters for analysis. In practical terms thematic analysis focuses on identifiable themes and patterns of living and/or behaviour. From the transcribed conversations, patterns of experiences were listed. These experiences, key phrases and statements and recurring features were then located in the broader conceptual framework developed for analysis. The first pattern of experience included any respondent comments about sports. The second pattern of experience listed related to external influences on perspectives about sports or actual participation. The next step in the thematic analysis was to identify all data that related to the already classified patterns. To continue the above example, the identified patterns were then expounded on. All of the narrative that fitted under the specific pattern was

identified and placed within the corresponding pattern. For example in relation to external influences one respondent said that her father was ‘anti-sport for girls’ and her mother was ‘ambivalent about sports’.

The next step in this thematic analysis was to combine and catalogue related patterns into sub-themes. Themes are defined as units derived from patterns such as ‘conversation topics, vocabulary, recurring activities, meanings, feelings, or folk sayings and proverbs’ (Taylor and Bogdan, 1989: 131). As similarities of units were found these were assembled into piles of ‘look-alike’, ‘feel-alike’ groups. From this process sixteen categories emerged, into which the data seemed to fall naturally. Themes that emerged from the informants' stories were pieced together to form a comprehensive picture of their collective experiences.

Once the major task of transcribing interviews was completed the rest was simply a matter of coding and sorting the data according to the category schemes that had been developed through analysis of the data. The following is the step-by-step process of how this was accomplished. First the name was coded (an alias) and in turn a number for each interview transcript was allocated and each line of the transcript was numbered as demonstrated in this excerpt:

100 Q What do you do for your leisure and recreation here in Australia?

101 A Here? Swimming, going to the gym, playing tennis with my brother, this is more exercise and things like that.

102 Q And is that different from what you used to do at home?

103 A It’s healthier I can say cause I exercise more as I can’t go out at night .

These numbers 100, 101 and so forth enabled quick location and tracking of interview information within the original interview transcript. It was often necessary to review context and consult back to the core transcript, to validate the meaning of the respondent and ensure the interviewee's comments were not just reduced to unconnected data bits. Since the names were aliases, these were used as a ‘code’ forthe person. This ensured that the identity of the respondent was kept confidential. The coding information was kept separate from the body of the data to assist with identification and analysis.

Next, initial categories were assigned to the data. Then the pages of categorised data were used to create a new file for each interview (the original files were kept intact), and added the category coding (for example 3001) to the data in the new file. A code page was designed to explain each category. Numeric coding was chosen because of the multi-level categories as evidenced in this excerpt:

31000 Sporting experiences: those experiences of life directly relating to sport.

31001 Authority Figures: experiences of coaches, parents, teachers or others who served as authority figures.

31002 Peers: experiences with others within a peer group

31003 Self: experiences with self; thoughts, feelings, values.

This coding system is applied in illustration:

31000 100 What do you do for your leisure and recreation here in Australia?

31000 101 Here. Swimming, going to the gym, playing tennis with my *brother*, this is more exercise and things like that.

31000 And is that different from what you used to do at home?

31003 103 It's *healthier* I can say cause I exercise more as I can't go out at night.

This framework for analysis, with a subsequent variation based on country of origin, formed the basis for reporting and analysing the interview findings in the Chapters Six and Seven.

5.9.3 Using reflexivity

As identified in section 5.1 this research recognised that reflexivity was a salient criterion in data analysis. Approaches to research were framed by my interpretation of occurrences. These interpretations reflect the social interaction between myself and the participants and are therefore not just a simple reflection of what exists. Therefore, reflection about values, identities and experiences that might impact on interpretation was required. In this study the use of reflexivity in a methodological sense had two

outcomes. The first was in relation to process and involved a constant awareness on my part to recognise my impact on the research and acknowledge any bias that may emerge. This included the literature that was read and its interpretation, through to the way in which the questions were phrased in the surveys and interviews. The second aspect of reflexivity related to the analysis and representation of the research findings. As my personal experience and position most certainly impacted on the way in which the data has been interpreted the chapter 8 includes a component of reflections on the implications of my personal perspective on the analysis.

The use of reflexivity assisted to locate my perspective and my place in the research. While the social nature of interpretation cannot be truly neutralised by explaining how interpretations have been made and the logic of the methods used, I am highlighting the fact that there may be complexities that are beyond my experience to recognise or interpret correctly. As Roberts (1981) so aptly pointed out, objectivity is unachievable when individual participants in the research define their own values and view of social reality. Researchers are encouraged to develop reflexivity about their own views, categories, and contexts, recognising the unavailability of a context-free voice through which either researchers or subjects may speak (Phillips, 1996). Related to this issue is the recognition that research may not produce a complete set of responses and therefore crucial information may be missing from the study and the researcher may not be aware of these gaps (Holland and Blair, 1995). Reflexivity is a methodological process as well as an ethical imperative.

5.10 Ethical Considerations

The nature of the research is such that some ethical concerns that currently exist in the Australian sporting environment were discussed, namely gender, racial discrimination and failure to address issues of access and equity. All effort was taken to ensure that the interviewees' comments were accurately represented and individual responses were not generalised as reflecting group behaviour. Questions were phrased to be culturally sensitive and to take account of the ethnic diversity of the subjects. University guidelines for students undertaking research were complied with in the design and implementation of the study.

Participation in all components of the study was completely voluntary. All subjects were required to read (or have read to them in cases where they were not literate) and sign a research consent form. Consent of participants was obtained before audio taping the interviews. Interpreters were used to ensure accuracy of responses and correct understandings. All of the material contained in the interviews has been kept in confidence and all respondents have remained anonymous. The names used to report the findings in chapters 6 and 7 are pseudonyms. The choice of name was intended to reflect indicative names for a particular cultural group. 'English' names were used for the Chinese women whose 'real-life' names were Anglocised.

5.11 Summary

This chapter has described the principles and paradigms that informed the choice of methods for the empirical data collection phase of the research. The focus on qualitative research was positioned within feminist theorisation about research paradigms. It was argued that qualitative methods respect the diversity of human experience and are best suited for creating a comprehensive understanding of 'difference'. The role of the researcher in the data collection was described and limitations outlined. The relationship of each of the research methods to the thesis questions was drawn, along with sampling and fieldwork details. The following two chapters will report the empirical findings.

CHAPTER SIX: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE MARGINS - THE FINDINGS

6.0 Introduction

Chapter Five identified the methodologies that were selected to empirically investigate the research propositions. This chapter reports on the outcomes of the data-gathering phase. The data collected and information are analysed in relation to the overarching research question posed in this thesis:

> ***What impact have the discourses and organisation of sports had on women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Australia?***

Inherent in this question is the assumption that male experiences are different from female experiences and that women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have different experiences than those from Anglo-Australian backgrounds. The notion of 'difference' recognises that there is more than one valid form of representing human experience and through investigations of behaviours, activities, experiences, perspective, insights and priorities a better understanding of these differences can be achieved (Ross-Smith, 1999). This notion is explored in the subsidiary question:

> ***What are the sports experiences and perceptions of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and are these perceptions and experiences different from those of other women?***

Survey research and interviews were utilised to investigate these questions. The surveys were designed to address the subsidiary question, that is, to ascertain if females from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds had different sporting participation patterns from females of English-speaking backgrounds. The central

question was qualitative in nature therefore interviews were used to address its concerns.

The empirical research component of this thesis encompassed four distinct phases that were detailed in the preceding methodology chapter. This chapter outlines the findings of the broad level investigations into women, ethnicity and sports. The presentation of the netball specific data is located in Chapter Seven. In the first instance the schoolgirl questionnaire survey findings are presented. This survey was conducted with girls from several schools within the greater Sydney Metropolitan district. The schools chosen for the study were located in regions with an identified high proportion of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The survey component of the empirical research data collection provided macro level information on girls and sports. The survey was also used as an exploratory tool to gauge relevant issues. These issues were then explored in the interview narratives, which provided the basis for the examination of the research question from an individual perspective. The interviews reflect the participants' perceptions and interpretations of their experience in sports and of sports organisations. As the thesis aimed to investigate the research question using the words and stories of women in sports it is the interviews that provide the substantive commentary for the thesis.

6.1 Theoretical Perspective

The intention of the data collection phase of this research was to canvas women and girls about their sports experiences and perspectives in general terms and then locatethe experience of women and girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds within this broader context. The theoretical framework required what Deetz (1996) has called a 'local narrative' which means detailing the situated nature of women's experience of sports in a specific place, at a particular time and from the women's own perspective.

Two theoretical perspectives fundamentally inform the discussion and theoretical interpretation of the research findings. The first perspective is represented by the collective ideas of Bottomley, de Lepervanche and Martin (1991). Essentially, these women have questioned the dominant patriarchal theoretical paradigm on ethnicity and

its interpretations of the immigrant experience. They have argued that the prevailing ethnicity paradigm has largely avoided the issue of female subordination and that ethnicity based discussions and analyses have been located within a framework of 'hegemonic ethnocentrism'. They have suggested that the challenge is to move beyond such analyses by acknowledging that gender and ethnicity cannot be separated and ensuring that research is embedded with an understanding that the social context is centrally located in any examination of issues concerning ethnicity.

The second perspective that has been used as a basis for this research is presented in the writings of Connell (1987, 1990), Hall (1996) and Paraschak (1996). Connell proposed that the historical progression of institutionalised processes of interaction and group formation determine the structure of gender relations and identities. These complex structuring processes are socially constructed and therefore can be either maintained or transformed. This theoretical approach has previously been used to empirically analyse gender relations, identities and how gender regimes in sports interact with race has already been proven to have particular relevance to Australian sports (McKay, 1997). These ideas are interwoven with Hall's treatise that sports are sites of cultural struggles that can be better comprehended through a thorough understanding of history and exploration of diversity. Creating such understandings provides the foundation for women to negotiate their place in the male dominated world of sports and create their own identities in that world. Applying these frames to the research for this thesis, the place of women in sports will not be analysed in relation to the place of men. Instead it focuses on women's inclusion, where inclusion is presupposed as an issue of social justice and equity. The investigation of inclusion will involve an exploration of the discourses and social contexts of sports. The third element framing the analysis draws on Paraschak's (1996) proposition that two groups of 'others' should be investigated in research. One group of 'others' are those who define the rules and have access to power and resources that they use to reinforce their vision of sport for the second group of 'others' thus reproducing a hegemonic order. The second group of 'others' are the individuals with little access to power and resources and therefore minimal choice in creating options for participation.

Collectively, these perspectives form the foundations for analysis. Issues of power, control and influence are discussed in relation to the attitudes, values, beliefs and

experiences of women from ethnic minority backgrounds within Australian society. The empirical data presented in this chapter will therefore be contextualised within the parameters of these theoretical foundations. The survey data are presented in the first instance and are used as an introduction into the key study issues. These are followed by the interview data and analysis, which form the prime focus for empirically substantiating the research propositions.

6.2 Schoolgirl Questionnaire Survey

The following data relate to the questionnaire survey that was completed by girls from schools located in the three collection regions. The survey was designed to collect data for the subsidiary question and to provide the researcher with data on issues and questions that could be further explored in the interviews. Some 1150 questionnaires were distributed and 972 were returned completed, the response rate was 84.5 per cent. Respondent characteristics, sports participation patterns and preferences are presented in the following results sections.

6.2.1 Schoolgirl Respondent Demographics

Of the 972 questionnaire respondents 90.4 per cent (880) were born in Australia and 9.6 per cent (92) overseas. However, a sizeable proportion, 48.3 per cent, had a mother born overseas and 63.7 per cent had a father born overseas. The details on the girls' countries of birth are presented in Table 6.1 and the parental countries of birth are outlined below in Table 6.2.

Table 6.1 Non-Australian born distribution: Schoolgirl survey

Country of birth	Number	Per cent
Lebanon	12	14.2
Vietnam	6	6.3
China/Hong Kong/Asian	3	3.2
Italy	2	2.2
Greece	1	1.1
Other English-speaking country	30	32.3
Other NESB country	38	40.9
Total	92	100.0

Table 6.2 Parents Country of birth: Schoolgirl survey

Mother's country of birth	Nos.	%
Australia	**503**	**51.7**
Lebanon	**71**	**7.3**
Italy	**42**	**4.3**
Vietnam	**30**	**3.1**
Croatia	**14**	**1.4**
Greece	**14**	**1.4**
China/Hong Kong/Asian	**5**	**0.5**
Serbia	**1**	**0.1**
Other *ES country	**186**	**19.1**
Other NESB country	**106**	**10.9**
Total	**972**	**100.0**

Father's country of birth	Nos.	%
Australia	**450**	**46.3**
Italy	**82**	**8.4**
Lebanon	**78**	**8.0**
Vietnam	**30**	**3.1**
Greece	**22**	**2.3**
Croatia	**18**	**1.9**
China/Hong Kong/Asian	**6**	**0.6**
Serbia	**3**	**0.3**
Other *ES country	**95**	**9.8**
Other NESB country	**188**	**19.3**
Total	**972**	**100.0**

*= English-speaking

In comparing the survey figures to 1996 census data on each local government area the sample can be seen to reflect community patterns of migration. In the 1996 Census data reports for Blacktown the proportion of Australian born persons was 67 per cent and those born overseas are mainly from the United Kingdom (5%), Philippines (3%), Malta (2%), the former Yugoslavian Republics (2 %) and Italy (2%). These figures were mirrored in the school survey when the first and second generation respondents were combined; Australian born 60 per cent, United Kingdom (8%), Philippines (3%), Malta (3%), the former Yugoslavian Republics (2.5%) and Italy (9 %).

The Fairfield local government area had a significant population born in Vietnam (8 per cent), Italy (4 %) and the former Yugoslavian Republics (4 %), this was reflected in the school survey where the proportions of respondents (first and second generation) were from Vietnam (6 %), Italy (4 %) and the former Yugoslavian Republics (3 %).

The Wollongong sample was equally reflective of its comparable 1996 local government census results with an Australian born population of 69 per cent with the leading overseas born countries being the United Kingdom (10%), the former Yugoslavian Republics (3 %), Italy (3 %), Germany (1 %) and the Netherlands (1 %).

Given the above comparisons it is a reasonable assumption that the schoolgirl survey was broadly representative of the community where each school was located.

6.2.2 Sports Participation and Experiences

The schoolgirl participants were asked to respond to a series of questions about their current sporting involvement, attitudes to, and experiences of, sports. For the purposes of the survey data interpretation two categories of schoolgirls from non-English-speaking backgrounds were identified; the first grouped data set are girls born overseas in a non-English-speaking country (NESC1) n=92, the second are girls with at least one parent born overseas in a non-English-speaking country (NESC2) n=335 and the third category (ESC) n=545 represents all other girls.

Some 83 per cent of NESC1, 85 per cent of NESC2 and 85 per cent of ESC girls answered that they had participated in sports during the two weeks previous to the study. This data implies a much higher rate of sports participation than has been found in previous research, which has suggested that an estimated 40 per cent of girls are actively participating in sports by the time they reach 15 years of age (Fitzpatrick and Brimage, 1998). The high participation rate in this research is more than likely linked to the fact that the majority of respondents completed the questionnaire when in a physical education class and therefore had just participated in a sporting activity. The responses should be viewed within this context. Therefore no conclusions are drawn from these rates of sporting participation in the school environment.

A better indicator of participation in formal sports is activity level in sports outside of school. The sports club system is prominent in Australia for school-aged children. In response to sporting club membership the data show an interesting pattern with very low NESC1 sports participation, significantly higher participation amongst NESC2 girls and significantly higher again for ECS respondents. The data presented in Table 6.3 indicate that while new migrant arrivals are unlikely to join sports clubs, girls from subsequent generations are more likely to join but to a slightly lesser degree than girls from English-speaking backgrounds.

Table 6.3 Membership in a sporting club: Schoolgirl survey

Respondents	NESC1 (n=92)	NESC2 (n=335)	ESC (n=545)
Club membership	11.9 % (11)	51.9 % (174)	53.76 % (293)

In assessing the explicit nature of sports participation the data presented in Table 6.4 indicated that the sports activities most frequently participated in for were similar for all girls but the frequency of participation varied.

Table 6.4 Sports participation: Schoolgirl survey

Sport	NESC1 M	SD	NESC2 M	SD	ESC M	SD
Netball	2.07	0.88	1.73	0.76	1.22	0.58
Other team sports	2.96	1.12	2.21	1.67	2.30	1.40
Swimming	2.92	1.32	2.84	1.20	2.66	1.22
Racquet sports	2.96	1.14	2.53	1.21	1.97	0.35
Cycling	2.98	0.80	2.64	0.98	1.50	0.80
Athletics	2.33	1.22	2.14	1.02	1.81	0.35
Martial Arts	3.87	1.80	3.01	1.56	3.33	1.40
Dance	3.87	1.75	2.86	0.90	1.50	0.40
Sample size	93		341		566	

Scale: 1= more than once a week; 2=weekly, 3=monthly, 4=a few times a year, 5=never

The girls surveyed were asked why they played sports and Table 6.5 lists the responses. Since the question was a categoric multiple response the corresponding percentage responses are noted. These showed that each grouping of girls' believed that the 'fun' dimension of sports was most important followed by health and fitness related reasons. Notably 'social aspects' listed by less than half of the respondents. There was a significant difference at the five per cent level between first generation girls from NESB and the other two groupings on every dimension but no significant difference between NESB2 and ESC.

Table 6.5 Most common reasons indicated for playing sport – Schoolgirl survey

Reason for playing sports	NESC1 %	NESC2 %	ESC %
Fun	100.0	87.7	88.9
Physical/Health	85.8	74.5	75.5
Looking fit	85.8	70.9	71.8
Skill development	55.5	55.8	58.7
Social aspects	38.6	42.5	48.4

Table 6.6 lists the limitations to sports participation as indicated by the survey respondents. The NESC1 girls indicated a higher level of perceived limitation than the other respondents. The most strongly felt limitations were similar across all groups. A one-way analysis of variance was used to compare the three sample means and the results are noted.

Table 6.6 Most common limitations to sports participation: Schoolgirl survey

Limitations to sports participation	NESC1 M	SD	NESC2 M	SD	ESC M	SD	Sig
No one to go with	**1.92**	**1.01**	**2.01**	**1.07**	**1.82**	**1.01**	***.006**
Time	**2.30**	**1.10**	**2.26**	**1.04**	**2.06**	**0.92**	***.006**
Lack of skills	**2.01**	**1.10**	**1.88**	**1.00**	**1.69**	**0.94**	****.005**
Family responsibilities	**1.95**	**1.12**	**1.81**	**1.03**	**1.70**	**0.95**	**.118**
Not enough information	**1.86**	**1.10**	**1.78**	**0.98**	**1.65**	**0.93**	**.062**
No appropriate programs	**1.83**	**1.16**	**1.91**	**2.41**	**1.62**	**1.01**	**.058**
No appropriate facilities	**1.83**	**1.22**	**1.67**	**1.04**	**1.54**	**0.99**	***.048**
Can't afford	**1.73**	**1.18**	**1.58**	**0.96**	**1.49**	**0.93**	**.121**
Don't enjoy sports	**1.65**	**1.13**	**1.73**	**1.13**	**1.54**	**1.01**	***.031**
Parental restrictions	**1.81**	**1.17**	**1.71**	**1.12**	**1.56**	**1.12**	**.086**
Co-ed environment	**1.61**	**1.20**	**1.55**	**1.21**	**1.54**	**1.10**	**.062**
Racist attitudes	**1.78**	**1.31**	**1.58**	**1.52**	**1.39**	**1.02**	***.025**
Language	**1.85**	**1.41**	**1.65**	**1.35**	**1.47**	**1.19**	***.029**
Cultural difference	**1.61**	**1.20**	**1.55**	**1.21**	**1.41**	**1.10**	**.138**
Religion	**1.68**	**1.29**	**1.62**	**1.30**	**1.48**	**1.19**	**.169**

Scale= 1. always, 2.frequently, 3.sometimes, 4. seldom, 5.never

There were significant intergroup differences for seven of the items. The most striking finding was in relation to perceived lack of skills with girls born in non-English-

speaking countries finding it significantly more limiting than other girls. 'No one to go with' and time limitations were also very significant. As would be expected language and racist attitudes were also significantly different between groups. It is interesting to note that the girls born in English-speaking countries found cultural differences more limiting than girls born in non-English-speaking countries. Birthplace differences within the former group could be not tested due to small cell size.

The survey findings reinforced existing assumptions about low levels of female minority group involvement in formal sporting organisations outside of schools, reasons for playing sports and perceived limitations to sports participation. The data highlighted a number of issues about sports that were then explored in further detail in the interviews.

6.3 Individual Interviews

Interviews were entered into with thirty women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to investigate their experiences of sports. The interviews were undertaken to delve into the detail and personal insights that are essential to address the research imperatives. Each interview participant had a different story to tell and the presentation and analysis offered here has recognised this difference. The integrity and identity of the cultural narrative was respected and left open to self-definition and self-differentiation.

6.3.1 Interview participants

Thirty women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds shared their stories, experiences and opinions in these interviews. Table 6.7 lists the background of the interview participants.

Table 6.7 Interview participants

Country of birth of respondent or parent(s)	Nos. interviewed
China	2
Croatia	1
Germany	1
Greece	3
Hong Kong	2
Indonesia	1
Iran	2
Italy	2
Japan	1
Lebanon	1
Malaysia	1
Malta	1
Netherlands	1
Philippines	3
Poland	1
Serbia	1
Singapore	1
South Africa	2
Turkey	1
Vietnam	2
Total	**30**

Table 6.7 illustrates that the women interviewed were from a wide range of countries and cultures. Only first and second generation country of origin are noted here. While specific demographic information outside of cultural background was not explicitly sought, some personal details were openly discussed in the course of the interviews. These complementary details are presented to provide the reader with a better understanding of the group of women who participated in the study.

Fourteen of the women interviewed held tertiary qualifications and four had post-graduate qualifications. The others did not refer to their level of education. Two interview participants were in their final year of high school and three were studying at a University or technological college. The ages of the women ranged from 17 years to mid-50s and at the time of the interview 21 were married, two were divorced, five were single and the others did not state their martial status. Twenty mentioned that they had children, 18 of whom had more than one child. For those born outside of Australia, the length of time in Australia ranged from those who had arrived here as young girls to those who had only been in the country a few years.

The interviews are presented in two layers. The first overarching layer, presented in this chapter, discusses the overall findings and analysis. The second layer, presented in Chapter Seven, narrows the analysis and focuses specifically on the women who had experiences of netball.

6.3.2 Breaking through silences

The specific text of the narrative is the level at which the women account for and make sense of their own actions and those of others. These stories are their own best explanation of interpretations of experiences as related to gender, culture, religion, or sports. In reporting the findings, and in the analysis of the interviews, the participants' words are the primary source of data used to understand the meaning, value and place of sports in the lives of these women. The interview narratives allow for personal and cultural expression by which these women communicate about their identities and the complexities associated with their lives. The diverse narratives, which emanated from the interview process, articulated a range of stories and feelings about the social context and everyday reality of power, patriarchy, discrimination and resistance vis a vis sports in the lives of these women. While the uniqueness of each participant's experience is acknowledged, commonalities and interdependencies will also be identified and examined. The narratives were categorised using the research problem and research questions as a framework. The interview material was coded accordingly (see Chapter Five for more detail) and the categories that emerged during this process are represented in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8 Categorisation of interview narratives

Category	Sub-category
Experience of sport - child, teen, adult	Myths and stereotypes
	Inclusion
	Exclusion
	Difference
Attitudes to sport	Environmental
	Intrinsic
	Cultural
Perceived outcomes of participation	Environmental
	Intrinsic
	Cultural
Perceived limitations to participation	Environmental
	Intrinsic
	Cultural
Sports organisations and discourses	Limitations
	Opportunities

While these categories and sub-categories are presented as discrete items in Table 6.8, in reality the boundaries between the classifications were blurred, shifting, ambiguous

and enigmatic. Within these analyses aspects of broader institutional discourses, policies and practices are positioned in relation to their impact on the women's experience of sports. The individual stories are self-positioned within personal and family domains and incorporate dimensions of interactions with others.

In the remainder of this chapter the categories are discussed within the context of the women's narratives. The original intention was to report the women's experiences as they related to each identified category. This reporting structure appeared to be the most 'ideologically acceptable' given feminist concerns about the further marginalisation of 'others' when ethnicity is used as a categorical variable. While this theoretical argument was attractive its premise was abandoned when a stronger structuring category emerged after listening, reading, re-reading and coding the interviews. Despite attempts to keep away from using ethnicity as the differentiating variable, the women's experiences clearly fell into three separate narratives in the representation of articulations. The three groupings were: Asian, European and Muslim women's experiences. Ethnic and religious representations transpired to be significant in the way in which the women's sports experiences were constructed despite the dispersed identities of the group members within each of the these classifications. Therefore, the interview findings will be presented in the three categories identified above.

6.3.3 Women from Asian Countries

Twelve of the women interviewed were born in Asian countries. Each woman's experience of sports has been different but several unifying themes emerged in their narratives. These patterns of experiences represented constructed racial attributions and stereotypes, feelings of difference and intragroup cultural values and expectations. Each of these patterns is discussed using the women's stories as the focal point.

Mary moved to Australia from Hong Kong with her parents when she was still in high school. Her story illustrated how racial stereotypes can impact on sports opportunities. When Mary first arrived she did not play the sports that were popular at her new school and she felt uncomfortable during sports sessions. While Mary acknowledged that she did not have the pre-requisite skills to play most of these

sports, she felt that her teachers did not encourage her to learn or develop these skills. Mary believed that her virtual exclusion from sports was not just related to previous experience but that it reflected her teachers' and classmates' perceptions of Asian students. *'I felt that people didn't expect that I would want to play, they thought all I wanted to do was study, but I would've loved to at least been asked.'* Mary further explained that she felt the teachers at her school thought that they were doing her a favour by exempting her from sports and letting her have extra study time instead. In his seminal work on ethnic identity Cohen (1969) suggested that people do not just self-choose an ethnic identity, it can also be attributed to them by others. Long *et al.* (1997) further concluded that contemporary stereotypes of Asians are likely to portray them as physically weak and timid and not sports-minded. In this instance the imposed stereotype about Asian girls was placed on Mary by her teachers and peers and it served to limit her sports opportunities.

Kikko had lived Australia for six years. Her parents resided in Japan and she was a boarder at a private girls high school in Sydney. Kikko played baseball for seven years in Japan before coming to Australia. Kikko said that she felt that she was quite a good player but when she first arrived at her Sydney school she was automatically put into the bottom softball team. When she arrived for the first practice session Kikko was taken back at the composition of the team she explained, '*basically in our team there's nine players and each of them Asian, except one*'. Most of the other Asian girls in the team did not have strong ball skills and Kikko suspected that the teachers thought that she would have poor skills simply because she was Asian. The team lost all of its games and Kikko felt very discouraged and switched sports to tennis. *'Lots of Asians are good at tennis so I didn't have the same problem.'* Kikko was graded at an appropriate standard and enjoyed playing tennis. However, she indicated that she felt forced into tennis for the wrong reasons.

Lisa was born and raised in China and had lived in Australia for eight years. In discussing her experiences of sports Lisa said that 'looking different' made her stand out which in turn made her feel uncomfortable. Lisa believed that her appearance unduly influenced how people interacted with her. She said, '*as a Chinese woman I was treated differently and not made to feel very good. One woman at the swim pool I took my children to said that Chinese around here were always demanding this and that*

and we should be happy just to be able to live here … I changed pools.' While Lisa was not overtly forced to change swimming pools her decision to abandon her local pool was clearly made because she was made to feel uncomfortable and unwelcome because she was Chinese.

Unintentional exclusion and inadequate inclusionary practices can function to restrict sports opportunities in many ways. Mi's story was an example of such restriction. Mi is of an ethnic Chinese background and came to Australia from Hong Kong five years ago. Mi had played several sports including swimming, basketball and trampolining when she was in high school in Hong Kong. Mi said that she swam regularly for exercise and enjoyed other sports. While Mi was able to speak English proficiently she still felt that there were a range of other cultural issues that have had a significant impact on her own and her daughter's involvement in sports. Mi explained that she experienced problems in trying to work out how the Australian sports system operated and in building up her confidence to approach others for assistance. Mi also said that she felt uncomfortable when she engaged in sports when she was the only Asian participant. These concerns all represented potential restrictions to her participation. While each of these uncertainties on their own was not unsurmountable put together they had the potential to create significant barriers. '*I have to search out the information and maybe to have some families to go with so we can go together. I don't know what the people think about you, sort of the odd person*.' Mi said that she felt most comfortable doing activities with an organisation that she was familiar with and where she was not the only Asian woman present.

Phuong also described how her sports participation made her feel different and how it turned into an alienating experience. Phuong grew up in Vietnam and came to Australia when she was 20 years old. At the time of the interview she was 45 years old. Phuong explained that she felt discouraged after her first attempts to engage in physical activity in Australia and the thought of trying again caused her great uneasiness. Phuong said, '*when I went to do aerobics, I feel embarrassed because my sister and I were the only Asian people. We felt like everyone was looking at us!* Phuong thought that many Vietnamese women felt the same way she did when she first arrived in Australia. These women do not play sports because they feel different. '*If they have to go themselves, they may have some sort of fear. I think everyone has*

fear when they are in a new environment.' It takes time for many women to adjust to a new culture and feel comfortable participating in activities when they feel outside the 'norm'.

Several years after settling into her new country Phuong became quite physically active. She goes swimming, dancing and attends aerobics every week. Phuong learnt to swim as an adult when her son started swimming lessons. She said that she felt welcome at the pool because there were other Asians in her class. '*And when I went there, gee, I find a lots of Asians just like me! So I felt quite good!*' This was in contrast to her earlier experiences of aerobics when Phuong felt that being Asian marked her as different and made her feel uncomfortable. Phuong's preference to be in a sports environment that did not feel alienating to her was a experience common to many of the women interviewed. There are many benefits associated with participating in sports with other women from similar cultural backgrounds. Such environments provide them with a feeling of security and difficulties with language, customs and differentness are minimised.

Trang, an Indonesian university student, said that when she first came to study in Sydney she wanted to just quietly slip into the Australian way of life, unnoticed. However, she soon changed her opinion, '*In my first class another student from home came up to me and invited me to come along to some things with other international students. I went and then we just started doing everything together, even playing tennis. It was just easier this way as I knew how they were and they just accepted me. With Australians I felt that I was different, just being tolerated, not really accepted.'* Trang had wanted to keep playing tennis as she had played for many years and the opportunity to play with her university friends was ideal, '*I never really gave much thought to sport, it was something that was around me at school and my parents both played tennis so I played as well*'. Trang's Indonesian friends booked the tennis courts, looked after the administration details such as payments and also organised after tennis dinners. Trang regarded these group activities a major part of her social life and said that they also acted to keep her connected with her cultural heritage.

During her interview Bong also commented that she used her sports and recreational involvement to keep in touch with the Philippine community. Bong came from the

Philippines two years prior to the interview with her husband and three children and she gave birth to her fourth child one month after arriving in Australia. Bong revealed that she had to make several adjustments to her lifestyle, especially with household duties because in the Philippines she had a student nanny to assist her with the children. In Australia she was on her own. Bong's initial sense of isolation and alienation prompted her to organise a support group for Filipinos to discuss the difference between Australian and Filipino lifestyles and cultures. Bong explained that the opportunity to use sports as a social activity to mix with people from the same cultural background was very important for her and her family. '*We have a lot of socialising during the week too with other Filipinos and those Filipinos married to Australians … we are learning from these discussions how Filipinos and Australians differ … I know people here who every weekend go to sport, it becomes a religion, an obsession. For us sports are for watching or having a good time.*' Bong said that she felt more comfortable with other Filipinos because she had experienced racial discrimination and preferred to avoid future situations where this might occur. Bong explained that she has hardened herself to the racism and has learnt to live with it, '*there are some who are not really fond of Filipinos but I didn't find it offensive because I thought that might happen … one way or another you sense this coldness so you avoid it if you can.*'

Loreta, who was also from the Philippines, settled in the western suburbs of Sydney with her husband and children. Loreta has six children, three boys and three girls, and she works in local government. Although Loreta was a teacher in the Philippines her qualifications were not recognised when she came to Australia. When interviewed, Loreta was an active member the local Fillipino community who organised social, recreation and sporting activities. Loreta said she believed that cultural support groups were important in assisting people to make a smooth transition to another culture, '*we can share problems, and people from the same community can understand how we feel because we know they have had the same experience.*'

Rose, born in the Philippines and resident in Australia since 1983, also felt that cultural support groups were important for women who did not have work outside the home. Rose had played volleyball and softball in high school but said that she became too busy raising a family to play sports. However, she was an active member of a women's

support group whose membership was comprised of Asian women from the local community. Rose explained that the women in her group shared many of the same concerns and experiences, '*sometimes you can talk with each other and share things that are happening in terms of common experiences … so far we have no Australian women in our group, they invite us for a drink but we don't drink beer*.'

Cultural values and expectations influence sports opportunities and the attitudes people hold about particular sports. It is important to recognise how these attitudes are formed and their impact on sports participation. Phuong was initially hesitant to join social and ballroom dancing sessions because of her family's strong opposition to dancing. These concerns arose from her family's Vietnamese experiences. As Phuong explained, '*when we were teenagers we were forbidden to go to the dances because they actually did not dance … in Vietnam they (dances) were always associated with some kind of sexual activity and the underworld*.' After living in Australia for a number of years Phuong realised that dancing classes were not seen in the same context in her new country and she started to take lessons. Phuong now feels that her dancing has benefited her many ways, '*of course get fit. Also feel young. And you know a lot of people there. And I get the chance to talk to my husband more!*'

Linda had lived in Australia for just under five years at the time of the interview. While she had been very active in sports in Vietnam she was not involved in any sporting activities at the time of the interview. Linda had mainly played sports in school and university in Vietnam. She explained that sports were, '*only encouraged in some specific environments, the schools, the pubic sector ministries*'(interpreter's words). In Vietnam sports were also integrated into work environments and several factories held scheduled physical activity sessions for their workers to facilitate better productivity. Linda believed that many Vietnamese women were like her and did not participate in sports in Australia because of their cultural background. '*Firstly due to the shyness of the Asians/Vietnamese women. Secondly because of the clothing required in some centres does not suit the Vietnamese custom, a little bit revealing, the Vietnamese women when they wear the outfit they feel shy and uncomfortable*' (interpreter's words). While living in Vietnam Linda was able to play sports in female-only settings and in clothing that she deemed was appropriate for women.

Linda said that since coming to Australia she had not been able to find anywhere that would provide a sports environment that was accessible, affordable and culturally appropriate.

Many of the women interviewed said that sports were a low priority in their lives, particularly when family pressures were exerted. Lisa explained, '*my family always said to be the best you can be but I think that was about school and work, we did not speak about sport at all*'. In high school in Hong Kong Mi had participated in many sports such as volleyball and basketball. However, when she got to Year 10 she began to focus on her studies and explained that the school and her parents felt that, '*sports distract you from your study. That's why you tend to cut yourself away from sports*.' Phuong also spoke about the priorities of the other people she knows from Vietnam, '*one thing about the parents that I have contact with here, I don't know if it is because we are in a different country and we have to establish ourselves here, we find difficulties in language and finding jobs so most of the parents here really encourage their children to learn … to do well academically rather than to do well at sports*.'

Loreta felt that her beliefs and experiences of sports were related to the expectations of women in sports in the Philippines, '*girls in the Philippines are looked upon as being fragile. Women in the Philippines are not really that sporty … in the Philippines if a girl joined a basketball team she would be perceived as being lesbian. It isn't really considered a female sport ... if you play bowling, tennis and golf, those are sports looked upon as prestigious*.' Loreta spoke proudly about the achievements of her daughter in a community ten-pin bowling competition. She boasted that there are several Filipina[1] bowlers who compete professionally and are internationally recognised for their talents. Loreta said that bowling is a 'good sport for women' because it is socially acceptable for women to go bowling, it is a highly valued sport that is played by the middle-classes and it is also a sport that women are able to participate in with the whole family. Many of the other women interviewed also indicated that they wished to participate in sports that were able to meet these criteria. Loreta also spoke about her efforts to influence her daughter's sporting endeavours and she discouraged her from playing sports that Loreta considered either too rough or beneath her daughter's dignity.

[1] The interviewees used the term Fillipina when speaking about females from the Philippines.

Loreta's experiences with ten-pin bowling represented a rarely discussed story of cultural inclusivity in a sports organisation. Loreta spoke about how the bowling centre where she was a member undertook a range of initiatives to embrace the cultural diversity of its competition membership. The strategies employed included the encouragement of particular ethnic groups to enter bowling competitions, an awareness of scheduling events not to conflict with any religious or cultural holidays, and generally making everyone feel welcome and not 'different' or 'lucky to be let in'. However, Loreta said that she laughed when the bowling centre ran a mixed 'United Nations Competition' which had to be abandoned because of the political conflicts that surfaced when one former Yugoslavian country was bowling against another. The two teams were subsequently placed in different divisions and as far as she was aware there were no more problems. While the issue of sports contributing to ethnic tensions is a topic that is raised in relation to ethnic participation in Australian male sports (Hughson, 2000; Mosely, 1994), it appears to be relatively absent from debates about female sports. Even in Loreta's bowling story she was careful to explain, '*it was the men on the team that got all heated*'.

For many of the women interviewed family expectations and responsibilities were of utmost importance and clearly took precedence over sports or recreation pursuits. Linda found herself in a new country with few support networks and as her interpreter relayed, '*she said that in Vietnam she has been involved quite a lot in sport activities but when she came here she had no conditions to continue due to her family situation and she had to take care of her children'*. Rose, who had played sports at school in the Philippines, did not believe that involvement in sports was a priority for her, '*at the moment we have no time for sports because during the day I work at home, looking after the family*'. Bong also commented that she found her leisure time much more limited due to changed family arrangements. '*I had a student nanny who used to work for me. When we came here I had to do everything from washing to cooking to looking after the baby and this was a big adjustment … plus the new place.*'

For these women moving to Australia meant adapting to a different culture and, for many, a new language. Their stories reflected a continuum of frustration about not knowing how the Australian sports 'system' works. Cindy came to Australia as a

university student 10 years ago; she is now married to an Anglo-Australian and works full-time. '*When I came to Australia I would have liked to play table tennis but I didn't know anyone or anywhere to go. There were other things to do that were more important, especially when you don't know where to get the information.*' In Vietnam, Linda was a Tai Chi leader for 13 years and was very involved in university sports through the students' community. Linda has not been involved in sports since she arrived for a number of cultural reasons discussed above. Linda has also experienced more practical limitations to her participation. These comments were made through an interpreter, '*the first reason was the language barrier, the second was the transport, she does not have the means of transport. The third one was that she does not know where suitable sport facilities are ... the fourth is that she is experiencing to some extent some of the racial discrimination.*' Linda provided an example of such an occasion when she told the story of when she had once gone to a sports club and the instructor spoke very quickly and she could not follow the instructions. When Linda explained that she needed the instructions to be said more slowly, the instructor spoke to her in a condescending manner leaving her very embarrassed.

Patsy expressed a somewhat different viewpoint from the other women interviewed. Patsy came from Singapore and was living with her aunt and uncle in Sydney. Patsy had played several sports before immigrating and continued to be active after arriving in Australia. She felt that being Asian had not restricted her participation in sports but she felt that racial difference influenced the behaviour of other Asian women. '*I know people who think of going to the local swimming pool there are all locals and maybe they would be the only Asian during the day, that day, and not feel comfortable. To me it doesn't really make a difference I see sports are sports, like everyone doing the same thing it doesn't really bother me when I am the only Asian person there.*' Patsy stated that she believed Asian women should try to learn the language and fit into the Australian way of life. During the interview Patsy was critical of Asian women who socialised mainly with other Asians and said that these women were responsible for they own disadvantage and isolation. Patsy commented that she had never experienced any racial discrimination in Australia, whereas when she lived in Hong Kong she had been subject to racist attitudes and treatment.

6.3.4 Discussion

All of the Asian women interviewed had played sports in their birth country during their school or university years. Parallel to the sporting participation patterns of Australian born women many of the Asian women stopped playing sports when they left school or when they had children. Most of the women interviewed spoke about the constraints that the migration process had placed on their freedom to engage in leisure activities and the impacts that changing culture and language had on their lives. McCoy (1997:147) suggested that this process is a common experience amongst immigrant populations, in particular with Vietnamese communities, saying that, 'the comparatively low level of interest in organised sports is a product of Vietnamese cultural conditions and the often difficult socio-economic conditions which characterise resettlement. Other sites of socialisation – family, religion, culture and education – are considered more important.'

The women interviewed also spoke about community perceptions and how they felt that as Asian females it was assumed, often incorrectly, that they would not be interested in sports. It was also assumed that if they did participate in sports these would probably be tennis, badminton or Tai Chi. Fleming (1994) came to similar conclusions in a study of Asians living in England where it was established that sporting activities were constrained by stereotypical expectations about which sports Asians would play. For Asian women the migration process not only entailed a substantial cultural change but it also included the added dimension of observable racial difference, which clearly acted to accentuate perceptions of 'otherness'. Feelings of difference were in turn closely associated with decisions about sports participation. In the United Kingdom research likewise identified embarrassment and associated emotions as major contributors to the low sports participation rates of Asian women (Bhandari, 1991). Other research on Asian minority ethnic populations has confirmed that sports choices and levels of access are negatively affected by racially based discrimination of Asian populations (Jarvie, 1991; Long *et al*, 1997). Similarly, in another research study it was established that African-Americans were less likely to participate if they felt uncomfortable because of their 'difference' (Philipp, 1995). In reply to this racial disadvantage David (1991) suggested that elimination of racial stereotypes and the eradication of racial harassment are key components that must be dealt with if sporting participation of Asians living in Eurocentric countries is to

increase. While these dimensions are important it was clear from the interview participants comments that the opportunity to participate in a safe, comfortable environment with people who have similar experiences and cultural expectations was critically important to most of the Asian women interviewed. Feelings of difference and infliction of negative stereotypes were common but not universal amongst the Asian women. In the interviews Patsy clearly stated that her Asian background did not restrict her sporting choices. Patsy felt that while there may be a lack of diversity within Australian sports, many of the feelings that Asian women held about being 'outside' the mainstream were self-limiting rather than culturally constraining. Presumably, Patsy is not alone in her beliefs.

Asian definitions of femininity have been traditionally associated with domesticity where sports are perceived as the domain of men. However, most of the women interviewed for this research indicated that they did not feel that gender constraint was critical factor in their sports participation. Other limitations such as time, language, family commitments, and economic realities were perceived as more substantial restrictions. The women's lack of knowledge about how their local sports system worked, access to transport and level of English proficiency were identified as tangible barriers to sports participation.

6.3.5 European Women

Six women of non-English-speaking European backgrounds were interviewed for the research. In analysing the interviews it emerged that their participation in, and attitudes to, sports were shaped by their experiences at school, at home and within the community. Ethnic stereotypes, discrimination, cultural expectations and family responsibilities were highlighted as significantly impacting upon these women's involvement in sports.

Similar to the experiences of the Asian women interviewed many of the European migrants believed that they were discouraged from sports participation by a perceived hostile school environment. This was clearly the case with Teresa, now in her late twenties, who was born in Italy but went to school in Australia. Teresa spoke animatedly about how she was ridiculed and called names during her physical education classes. Rude and nasty comments and racist jokes from classmates

discouraged her participation and the teachers did nothing to rectify the situation. Teresa explained that the jibes made her feel uncomfortable in sports classes. *'I used to feel left out, they called us 'wogs' and assumed we couldn't play the games, so we went off and did other things and avoided sport and PE.'* Negative experiences in school sports were a common theme in the stories of the women who had been born overseas but attended school in Australia.

Nadia is Serbian-Australian and moved to this country when she was 14 years old. Nadia had played handball and volleyball before coming to Australia but these sports were not played at Cabramatta where Nadia completed high school. Nadia felt alienated, excluded and discriminated against during participation in school sports. *'I had a Russian friend and an Arabic friend and the three of us stick together. If there was one or more people with you when you wanted to enrol in a certain sport you wouldn't worry about being called a wog by the others.'* For Nadia, entry into sports was difficult, her motivation and will to participate eventually faded and was replaced by resignation. As she said in reflection, '*the first two years was very hard. Especially with sport. That's when you give up really.'*

Feeling different, estranged or left out, especially when you are not confident in English or do not know what is expected behaviour in Australian culture can all be substantial disincentives to sports participation. These are very real fears for many women. Marica, a multicultural community coordinator who came to Australia when she was 13 years old, spoke about her isolation at school. *'Most of the girls were in the same boat whether they were Italian, Greek whatever, kind of isolated … we didn't want to have Australian friends because we were embarrassed to bring them home.'* The reasons she did not play sports were varied and wide-ranging. *'Language was always a big factor. There was no information. No interpreter services. People were uninformed. So I missed out. I did play a bit of softball though and badminton.'* Marica explained that her parents could only afford to buy a house in a relatively poor suburb where there were several bike gangs and high levels of crime. These factors led to her parents restricting her activities, including her sports participation, due to concerns about her safety.

Sofia, an older Greek woman who has lived in Australia for over 30 years spoke animatedly about how she was made to feel unwelcome on several occasions at community exercise program. Sofia felt that she was not treated in an appropriate manner when she tried to ask about the time and details of the activities offered. Sofia attributed this rude treatment to discriminatory attitudes. '*Some people feel that you should be able to speak perfect English, well it is not so easy*!' Sofia also commented that when she finally joined a class with a group of Greek women the instructors did not create an inviting environment. '*I remember our exercise teacher, she talked to us as if we were children, it was very humiliating and most of us dropped out of that class*.' These experiences left Sofia and her Greek Australian friends with a sense of alienation when they went to exercise classes. Sofia felt that new migrants were let down by the government and no attempts were made to find out what sports they liked or wanted to learn. She commented, '*who ever was in charge at the time, they didn't give much thought to immigrants and their different needs to sport'*.

Nadia also felt that safety concerns restricted her sports involvement. Nadia explained that, '*we are very protective of our kids here. Too protective … back over there you know every person by name for 20 kilometres around, and people know you, and your kids go out and somebody else will look after them … but here the fear of the unknown is so great that you just want to enclose your kids in a bubble*.' Christina, who migrated from Greece 40 years ago when she was four years old related similar concerns within her family and attributed these aspects to her father's restrictions on his daughters activities and school sports, '*it was the new environment in this country. Whereas my sister who went to school in Greece, she was very sporty … but here it was the protective mechanism, protecting the daughter … not knowing the facilities and not knowing the people.'*

While the above stories suggest that organised sports have not been overly inclusive for minority ethnic women, not every woman interviewed had negative or discriminatory experiences of sports. Nicole, who is German by birth, joined a local swimming club when she first arrived in Australia. Nicole commented that she fitted in easily and quickly to the Australian sports scene. '*Funny, I thought that people expected me to be better at sport than I really was. It might have been because I arrived here when all the East Germans were winning gold medals like mad in*

swimming, beating the Aussies.' Nicole also spoke about her rapid assimilation into the Australian culture. *'I didn't hang out with other Germans. I wanted to be an Aussie. I lived by the beach, I also joined a Surf Lifesaving club and learned to surf and really got into the whole beach way of life where everyone was good and very welcoming.'* Nicole explained that she felt that as a woman from East Germany it was almost assumed that she would not only be good at sports but aggressively competitive as well. '*My determination to learn Aussie sports and broad shoulders certainly helped create that impression*'. Nicole said that while she theoretically believed that gender and cultural discrimination existed she had not personally encountered any unfairness in her sports experiences in Australia, only 'positive discrimination'.

Anna was another woman interviewed who felt that her ethnic identity as a Polish woman was both recognised and valued in terms of her sports participation. Anna arrived in Sydney from Poland with her boyfriend over 20 years ago and decided to join a local volleyball club. Anna explained, *'I had played volleyball back in Poland so when I got settled in Sydney my Polish friends were playing for a team which I played for too … there were many people from Europe in the league and many Australians too. Everyone just played for fun and the love of volleyball, nobody cared if your English wasn't too good.'* Anna also reflected on how the social club of her volleyball team acknowledged the diversity of cultural backgrounds of the players by hosting social events that celebrated other cultures. The club organised South American music nights, Polish dinner parties and hosted visiting teams from a range of other countries. Anna found Australia to be an easy country in which to play sports. *'For me it has been very great, good facilities, good people, good weather. What more could you want*?'

Some of the women who had initially experienced a sense of alienation and isolation revealed that their perspectives changed over time as their cultural dissonance decreased. For example, Marica had felt estranged and not accepted when she was growing up but she not felt a part of the community. Marica believed that her English skills had improved to the point where she was no longer treated as an outsider. '*I went with my next door neighbour who played tennis but I spoke English very well and we invited everyone in the neighbourhood so we mixed.'* Marica encouraged both her son

and daughter to play sports and her daughter was selected to train at the Australian Institute of Sport on a basketball scholarship.

The women interviewed also discussed the influence of their culture, beliefs and families on their attitudes to sports. Teresa believed that her school experiences combined with her family's lack of encouragement contributed to her minimal involvement in sports. '*My mother did not like sports and she did not help me to play any sports. My father went to games with my brother but never said anything to me about sport. I do not think that he would have liked me to play.*' Nadia, who was involved with support work in the Serbian community observed that for many women arriving in Australia participating in sports is a very low priority '*most women are coming as refugees, they are so stressed. Sport is not yet a thing for them to think about. How to look after the family, how to get to school, how to get the food is more important for them*.' Nadia felt that the Serbian community was quite supportive of women playing sports, '*providing the sport is for women … you could do a man's sport if you don't mind an ear bashing. You'd have to be really strong and don't care about the remarks! You have to be really stubborn too*!'

Christina believed that cultural expectations prevented many older Greek women from participating in sports. '*Women in the Greek culture … it's not common for them to be doing any form of exercise or sport. I'm talking about these women who migrated early. I mean they're doing it now, at home (in Greece) because they've moved on but the women who came out here didn't move on … we were a traditional Greek family where girls were not allowed to do a lot of things whereas boys were allowed to do whatever they liked … I wasn't that interested in sport because I wasn't allowed to pursue it outside of the school.*'

The importance of a family friendly environment or sports that could incorporate family involvement was also raised during a number of the interviews. Christina said '*we try and look after our family and there's not enough time to do other things*'. Marica suggested that childcare facilities would make playing sports much more convenient, '*plenty of childcare, plenty of play for children, it would make it much more acceptable*'. Marica believed that many women just do not have the necessary support networks that would allow them to get more involved in sports. Marica

observed that while there was a strong Croatian sporting club system, these ethnic clubs catered primarily for males. She explained that these, '*mainly provide soccer for males and nothing for the female gender. So the girls lose out, the parents are stuck in the club for the cultural aspect, friends*.' Marica commented that within the Croatian community family responsibilities were seen as the domain of women, '*most of my cousins played golf or tennis and their wives work and they (the wives) are also stuck at home looking after children so there is still a lot of inequality there … I believe that most of the women aren't very assertive and when they get married they want to please, that is the first mistake*'. Nadia likewise felt that family commitments were the largest barrier to sports participation for many women. '*I had no time for sport. So, no time. No time for myself … you can think of others, but not yourself.*' Marica suggested that many first generation migrants are caught in a cycle whereby sport is seen as an indulgence, '*All they have been taught since they migrated was to work hard, provide for their children and buy a house, car, get a good education, clothing etc. with hardly any time for themselves*'.

The women interviewed expressed a range of opinions about the impact of cultural dissonance on sports participation. For some women the differences were significant deterrents to sports involvement but other women argued that such 'excuses' were not valid reasons for non-participation. Natalie was of the latter opinion. Natalie was an elite level athlete and was employed as a role model for a state-wide program aimed to encourage more girls from disadvantaged backgrounds into sports. Natalie felt that many girls from other cultures do not play sports because of inadequate encouragement from home, poor sports skills and family responsibilities, '*that's why the girls don't play sport, they're too busy cooking and cleaning, they need to stand up for themselves*'. She argued that the girls use their cultural background as an excuse to get out of sports and that the teachers let them 'get away with it'. Natalie said that she has found that the boys in the schools she visited did not think that the girls should be playing sports. She suggested that this factor influenced the girls' decision to a much greater extent that what their parents wanted. Natalie felt that if these girls were going to live in Australia they should '*start acting like Aussies*'. Natalie explained that playing for the national team meant she was 'Australian' first and foremost but she was still proud that the Maltese community have used her as a role model in sports, even though she has had little contact or association with them.

Some of the newer arrivals to Australia expressed astonishment at the difference between their home country and the equivalent ethnic community in Australia. Maria arrived from Italy seven years ago when she was 25 years old. In Italy, Maria had been an avid skier, dancer and roller skater. In her new country she continued to dance, started swimming for exercise and said she wanted to learn to ride a boogie board. Her parents encouraged her to play sports while she was growing up and she was actively involved in many school sports. Maria said that, '*in Italy, the girls tend to play whatever is fashionable, like tennis or golf. It's different here where the Italian girls sit in the corner. In Italy, the girls are pushed into sports of some kind.*' Maria revealed that she was very surprised at the Italian community in Australia, '*when I went to their cultural club I felt like a foreigner! Seriously! Really incredible! It was very foreign to me … they keep the traditions of 60 years ago!*' She believed that Italian-Australian women were less confident and had more restrictions than Italian women living in Italy. '*The Italian women here are at a disadvantage because of isolation, language, driving and confidence*' all of which affect their ability to participate in sports.

Eleni, who lived in Australia for just over a year, found the disparity between young women in Greece and Greek-Australian women quite startling. '*I was so surprised it was like the last 50 years never happened!*' Eleni had coached gymnastics for several years in Greece and came to work for the Sydney Olympic Organising Committee. Eleni believed that in Greece many girls got involved in sports because, '*it is the fashion*' but she felt that it was not the same in Australia. Eleni has had some involvement with the Australian-Greek community and offered this opinion: '*the girls seem much different to Greece, maybe it was because I grew up with sport and I became a physical education teacher and so did my friends. Here the career of sports is not too popular with the girls.*'

Natalie's observations about first generation migrants conflicted with the perspective of Eleni and Maria. Natalie commented, '*I think that they are here and should learn English … they have obviously came to Australia because it is a better country, it has so much more to offer so to get their kids away from all these rules in societies that happen back home you know that the opportunity to participate in things at school.*' Natalie's

perception that there is a more liberal climate in Australia toward women was not shared by recently arrived migrants such as Maria and Eleni.

Maria, Nadia and Eleni all spoke about the class base of sports in their home countries and how this differed from the Australian system. Maria said, '*in Italy, some sports are very much designed for some people. It's a class thing. When I was younger tennis was only for the upper class. The elite … whereas in Australia, sport is just sport*!' In consequence Maria said that she felt more encouraged to play sports in Australia because of the access to low cost government facilities.

6.3.5 Discussion

The European women interviewed shared a number of common experiences associated with migration and transition to a new culture and language. The older women who had migrated when they were still in school experienced ethnic-based discrimination and exclusion that influenced their sports participation. Discrimination experiences at school were not uncommon and support other research findings. Daly's (1996) exploration of sexist behaviour has provided empirical evidence of discrimination within the Australian school system. His research found that peers collectively assisted in the construction of a sexist repertoire and often sanctioned actions and comments that were regarded as sexist. Daly also established that in most instances the teacher took no action to curtail the unacceptable behaviour.

Another common thread in the stories of older women migrants was the fear and sense of cultural dissonance that they experienced in their first years in Australia. These women arrived during an era when assimilation and integration were the prevailing ideologies and they were expected to conform to the mainstream culture. However, assimilation was not easy because they had limited access to English language classes and ethnic support centres. However, as their English language skills and financial circumstances improved they felt better equipped to move into mainstream settings. These women indicated that their children, and in particular their daughters, did not have to face the same barriers to sports participation that they encountered.

While all of the women had participated in sports at some level very few of the women saw their identity linked to sports involvement, unlike many males from these same ethnic community. They considered other dimensions of their lives, such as their identities as mothers or community leaders, as more important. Ujimoto (1991) reached similar conclusions in an American based study, suggesting that sports were not given a high priority or value by many ethnic minority group members. Many of the women's comments could be interpreted as indicative of a set of values that centre on family, security and attaining a better lifestyle. It has been suggested that such values often serve to limit the freedom imposed on women's time due to an 'ethic of care' whereby sports participation is an indulgence rather than a right (Henderson *et al*, 1989). In such instances women were made to feel guilty if they put their needs ahead of others in the family. This follows Hunter and Whitson's (1991) argument that much of women's leisure time is taken up with work for others which makes leisure possible for others rather than them. These messages are certainly resonant in the stories of the women interviewed.

While many of the women interviewed participated in sports their involvement appeared to occur primarily within predetermined boundaries and in uncontested territories. This suggests that these women were operating within what Wimbush and Talbot (1988) termed 'relative freedoms', that is, these women chose to engage in activities that were allowed within a framework of patriarchal, ideological, hegemonic and structural limitations. The women who spoke about how sports experiences provided an avenue to freely express their identity without cultural constraint indicated that, for them, sports participation was intertwined with assimilation into the Australian culture and environment.

The younger women interviewed were particularly critical of women who did not attempt to learn and speak English, integrate into the dominant culture and adapt their behaviour accordingly. These younger women did not feel that their sports participation was culturally restricted and they believed that many long-term migrants were living in the past and should change their attitude and recognise that times had moved on. For the members from this group of women the expression of their ethnic identity was not a priority; they were content to maintain a 'loose-knit' ethnic

association (Hughson, 1997). Their ethnic identity was not perceived as core to their everyday social life.

6.3.6 Muslim Women

Muslim women are a religious minority in Australia. They can also be a 'conspicuous' minority because of the clothing they choose to wear. An increasing number of Muslim women follow the dress code called *Hijab*, which literally means curtain or veil in Arabic, and a smaller number a wear the chador, full-length black dress and veil (Fawzi el-Solh & Mabro, 1994). This attire represents an act of faith and establishes a Muslim's life with honour, respect and dignity. However, wearing such garments marks these women as 'different' and many Australians perceive this 'otherness' as representative of a restrictive and repressive lifestyle. The Muslim women interviewed described how they felt being seen as 'different' impacted on their sports opportunities.

Modi, who had lived in Australia for several years, believed that most Australians are not only 'ignorant' but that they also hold negative views about Islamic practices. Modi stated that, '*most Australians are not familiar with Islam and many of their assumptions are not accurate*'. Modi explained that in her experience there are many assumptions made about Muslim women that are false, hurtful and lead to discriminatory treatment.

Fatima also spoke about the negative stereotypes that she encountered on a daily basis and how these beliefs acted to limit the sports opportunities of Muslim women. Fatima came to Australia from South Africa and at the time of the interview worked for a Muslim Women's support group where she was in regular contact with sporting organisations and authorities. Fatima said that some of the most common and frustrating myths that she had encountered were that Muslim women are oppressed, they are subservient to their husbands, and they do not think for themselves. These widespread beliefs appeared to be applied equally to all Muslim women regardless of their cultural background. Fatima was adamant that each woman should be seen as an individual not as a veiled or hooded clone, she said: '*don't patronise and don't underestimate the women. Just take them as women … Muslim women come from*

different backgrounds, Indian, Asian, Arab, you've got different cultural practices that they adhere to.'

Ishel was in her late twenties when interviewed and was born in Turkey. She attended school and university in Australia and worked as a casual teacher. Ishel believed that Muslim women do not have religious limitations to sports participation but rather participation problems arise because of the way sports are constructed in Australia. She explained that, '*religion encourages me to do well in life and there are a lot of sayings which encourage women specifically mentioned sports like swimming and archery … you can be a practising Muslim women and still partake in these sports. It's just the way we practise sports in a western society that we have problems like in terms of clothing.*'

Discrimination and prejudice are also evident in the story of Mabel, a woman who came to Australia from Iran when she had just finished university. Mabel explained that in Iran she was able to play many sports and still fulfil her religious requirements since Iran's sports system recognised the Islamic conditions that were necessary for participation. '*In Iran we have separate sporting places for women and men. That gives us complete freedom of playing sports … all the referees and all the people there are women only.*' Mabel spoke about her desire to continue her sporting pursuits here but she was frustrated in her attempts, ' *I wear the hijab but I couldn't find a swimming pool that's specifically for women. They were all mixed. The only place at last I could find was a small swimming pool for elderly people … I used to take my daughter to that swimming pool but it was in Bankstown so it was far away.*' Mabel did not face explicit exclusionary practices in her quest to swim nevertheless her opportunities to engage in this sport were limited due to lack of appropriate venue programming. Mabel believed that sports opportunities for many Muslim women were constrained by most Australian sports organisations through ignorance, prejudice and lack of understanding. She pleaded for access and equity in provision saying that, '*for Muslim women to have freedom of choice in sports, to have the environment that they can play in and can play sports in … no men are allowed, that's exactly what we want!*'

Mabel persisted with her efforts to continue playing sports and searched for a basketball competition that would provide a female-only environment, to no avail. Finally, she met a group of Muslim women who decided to enter a social team in the local volleyball competition and play in the *hijab*. Mabel laughed as she recounted, '*All the other teams they were wearing shorts and they were pretty lucky to have movement of joints, but we were wearing these long dresses and hijab because we didn't have women only venues or environment but we played and we came first.*' Mabel felt that the women were united by their difference and shared not only the common bond of Islam but also of women who had wanted to play sports but were unable to find religiously appropriate environments and overcame these limitations together.

Bet warmly spoke about a gentle exercise program that the local women's group had organised which scheduled classes to take into consideration her Ramadan requirements of the daily fasting that is required from dawn until sunset during the ninth month of the Muslim year. She explained that other programs she had been involved with did not accommodate her desire to work around Ramadan provisions. Her previous requests had met with hostile reactions that left her feeling ostracised. These were not isolated incidents. Other women interviewed told similar stories that emphasised the prevalence of an organisational expectation that they should be able to 'fit-in' to mainstream services. For these women fitting in meant foregoing religious requirements, which the women viewed as crucial but which were dismissed by the organisations as merely a 'luxury'.

Zeema, who came to Australia from South Africa, also discovered that women-only environments were hard to find. Zeema decided to join a women's private health and slimming salon. Even though this option was quite expensive Zeema felt that is was worthwhile it as she could exercise in a female-only environment which was comfortable and sympathetic to her religious requirements. While she had the financial resources to do this Zeema observed that many of her friends were not so fortunate.

Fatima was a facilitator of a group of Muslim women who walked, swam and exercised together. She felt that support groups were important because of the

alienation that many Muslim women experienced in Australia. She believed that getting together as a group facilitated action, '*there is strength in numbers*'. Fatima has lobbied her local community for better access to public facilities and more equitable treatment for Muslim women and to recognise their specific religious requirements. Fatima argued that most sports organisations have taken the easy way out and have used social and economic arguments to justify not meeting the women's needs when in reality it is because they are, '*too lazy to bother*'. Fatima explained that the extra effort involved when her requirements for participation were different than most others were discouraging. '*You need to have not only motivation but everything else has to be convenient … I found myself that I always had to make an extra effort. We had to travel there [to a suitable venue] being Muslim women.*' Finding a program or service that met religious requirements required contacts, research and perseverance.

Most of the women said that they had heard a multitude of reasons why their needs could not be accommodated. They expected responses such as, '*we can't afford to make special arrangements*'; '*keeping men out would not be fair to the other women who want their husbands or boyfriends to watch them play'; 'we would have to cover the windows and that would be too expensive*' and even '*your clothing will clog the pool's filter*'. Ishel said that she was so used to hearing these excuses that when she received a swimming pamphlet in the mail that highlighted its inclusion of Muslim women she was completely taken back, As she related, '*When I was looking at the Swimsafe's brochure there was a sentence in bold that the wearing of headgear is permissible during swimming lessons. I thought "wow"!'* Ishel joined the swimming classes and spoke with feeling when she said, '*we had been deprived for so long. A lot of women want to get out there and do something. Swimming is fun and when it's fun you don't feel you need to be encouraged … there's so much happiness among the women because they are able to dress as they want to.*'

Being able to play sports in an environment that facilitated 'fun' and where each person could feel accepted and not compromised was a common theme in the Muslim women's stories. Simal, who had lived in Australia for five years, arrived from Iran where she had played many sports at university. Simal stated that she wanted to play competitive volleyball when she first arrived but she found it too difficult to find

anywhere that provided the appropriate circumstances. Simal decided to just play socially and she now enjoys volleyball and soccer at informal gatherings with other Iranians, mostly when they get together outdoors for picnics and days in the park.

Ishel spoke passionately about the stigma of difference and the embarrassment that it caused her especially at school. Ishel explained, '*I remember in PE all the other girls wore short skirts, we just wore a tracksuit. I suppose I knew it was different and I didn't feel comfortable back in those times so whenever I could avoid it I avoided it (PE).*' Ishel revealed that her Muslim friends felt the same, '*You've got to wear those short little dresses, it's against our practices, so what do they do? They can't wear that so they opt out. They pretend they can't run, they pretend they can't play softball … it becomes a chain reaction.*' Ishel felt that as a consequence she missed out on activities that fostered school spirit, '*I couldn't participate at swimming as a team sport which I feel is a shame.*' As an adult Ishel was not as concerned about standing out as different but as a teenager it was important to fit in and this avoiding a situation where your difference was accentuated, as happened in sports classes. Clearly the school system was not supportive of these girls and did not address their difficulties or acknowledge differences in accessing physical recreation activities.

Several of the women interviewed felt that their families did not encourage their sports participation. The reasons for this generally fell into three categories: the activity was seen as frivolous or trivial and not worth the time or resources; particular sports were not viewed appropriate for women; and activities which required the contravention of religious requirements were deemed inappropriate. Parents felt that many sports activities were not suitable pursuits for girls. Ishel played softball in primary school but she had to quit for two reasons. Firstly, her mother felt it was too aggressive for teenage girls and secondly, she had reached adolescence and she had started to wear the *hijab*. Bet also had to discontinue playing her favourite sport of volleyball because her family did not want her to play a game that had uniform prerequisites that did not comply with their religious dress requirements. Ishel indicated that many Muslim women were restricted in sports because clothing requirements could not be met. She explained that, '*first of all that most of us are interested in sport and secondly, well, that we need the uniform has to be proper and*

we have to be covered from head to toe … they have to be loose and covering and appear very modest. There also can't be contact between anybody.'

6.3.7 Discussion

The common thread amongst the interview stories of these Muslim women was that they did not find Australian sports structures very friendly. The pervasiveness of an ethnocentric patriarchal sports culture coupled with a lack of community awareness about the tenets of Islam is a possible explanation for these feelings. The women described frequent instances where stereotyped beliefs about their religious requirements resulted in alienation in sports participation. Previous studies have found that the majority of sports providers entertain the belief that most Muslim women do not want to or are not allowed to play sports for religious reasons (Benn, 1996; Taylor and Toohey, 1998; Zaman, 1997). In consequence providers do not actively facilitate conditions that would make sports participation possible for Muslim women. These findings are supported in the stories the women interviewed told about their attempts to be physically active. Sports participation becomes a contested terrain full of prohibitions and exclusions rather than a site for fun, freedom and enjoyment.

The absence of venues and programs that are able to fulfil religious requirement clearly plays a role in limiting Muslim women's choice of sports activities as evidenced in the numerous examples provided by the women interviewed. In addition, the anticipation of discrimination and attempts to avoid such situations were alluded to by a number of the women. These perceptions have conjointly influenced the selection of sports activities and the choice of where or with whom to participate. The women enjoyed sports when they could be undertaken in environments where they felt comfortable and participated with people with whom they could relate to in terms of language, culture and religion. In most cases this meant participating outside the formal sports system.

In a limited number of instances the absence of family encouragement for sports was mentioned as a factor in the decision not to participate in sports. Other research has suggested that Muslim women typically do not receive family support for sports participation and United Kingdom studies have found that in many instances family values act to exclude sports participation (Benn, 1996; Carroll, 1993). Reporting on sports in Zanzibar Giulianotti (1999) found that the 'Womens Fighters' soccer team

was required to play in *Hijab* and on several occasions their 'disgraced' male relatives beat-up the female players. However, it should be noted that in these interviews family support was typically not the deciding factor for non-participation and there were certainly no mention of physical retribution! The women's sports choices are more closely related to what Shaull and Gramann (1998) have termed, 'selective-acculturation'. This term referred to the choice to participate in activities that occur in the context of family and friendship groups. Such groups have few social limitations and provide a supportive environment for the expression and transmission of sub-cultural identity, that is, the retention of certain core cultural or religious traits. This phenomenon was evident in many of the sports choices taken by the women interviewed. Participation with family and friends was identified as a comfortable and non-threatening, and non-discriminatory option. Several of the Muslim women interviewed chose to follow the path of least restriction to meet their sports needs and play sports outside formal sports organizations. They feel content and able to freely express their religious identity in these informal environments.

Muslim women are numerically a small population in Australia. They do not have the power or influence, politically or economically to effect institutional change. The interviews demonstrated that in contemporary Australian sports provision the prevalent attitudes and practices are not explicitly inclusive of women who want to define their participation in terms of Islamic ideals.

6.4 Women on the Margins

The survey and interview findings have suggested that within Australian society social relationships and institutions, including sports, produce, maintain and perpetuate gender and cultural inequities. In particular, the systemic power structure that surrounds sports provision is based in a patriarchal and ethnocentric ideal that is constantly reinforced in discourses of sports. Practices of inclusion or exclusion do not just indiscriminately occur; they are institutionalised and historically conditioned responses that are situated in a larger cultural context. Gender and cultural diversity does not appear to be valued within most sports organisations.

The schoolgirl survey established that girls from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds perceived that barriers to their sports participation were slightly more limiting than those faced by girls from Anglo-Australian backgrounds. The women interviewed were able to elaborate on the restrictions that they had encountered in their sports participation. They spoke about how, as individuals, they dealt with these limitations that included negative stereotyping and unresponsive community attitudes. Other research has likewise concluded that stereotypes about lifestyle, beliefs, customs and traditions influence the way in which ethnic minority women are perceived and treated (Pallotta-Chiarolli, 1994). A UK based study of the impact of stereotypes on sports found that the vicious cycle of myth development and perpetuation can lead to significant disadvantage and constraint in sports opportunities (Fleming, 1994). The wide-ranging interpretations of the effects of cultural stereotypes on sports experiences and perspectives described in the interviews have illustrated the subjectivities associated with interpreting narratives across a diversity of individuals. In spite of this diversity a recurring theme amongst the women was a sense of powerlessness of women to change or challenge the erroneous stereotypes. The resounding message that was conveyed over and over again was that girls and women needed to learn how to fit into the current model of sports provision or find an alternative environment in which to engage in sports activities.

Many of the women interviewed had participated in sports in non-formal settings with family, friends and other women. The importance of these forms of sports participation has been highlighted in other research with ethnic women. Research on the health aspects of Italian-Australians revealed that women placed great emphasis on the need for physical activity to be social and recreational rather than competitive (Thomas *et al.* 1995). Barriers to participation were largely related to family concerns and it was considered inappropriate to spend 'free time' outside of the family. This tallies with other research which has found that certain cultural groups' beliefs, for example, Greek, Italian, Spanish cultures, are more likely to have collectivist oriented values. Other groups, by contrast, American, Australian, German, are more individualist in their outlook (Nishisa, Hammer and Wiseman, 1998).

Inclusive sports practices can facilitate the social, environmental, emotional, economic and cultural understanding and valuing of individuals. Inclusive sports

experiences relate to instances where individuals benefit from proactive approaches that address diversity issues and felt that their specific needs were listened to, addressed and valued. Stories of genuine inclusion were not abundant in the interview participants' experiences. On the other hand accounts of exclusion were commonplace in the interview narratives. Exclusionary incidents were embedded in the stories of most of the women interviewed for this study ranging from explicit racial discrimination to the subjection to subtle forms of culturally based alienation. These experiences were illustrative of Philipps' (1995) contention that sports and leisure activities are inherently constrained by intersections of marginality and discrimination. Sports as a critical site of cultural struggle and reproduction of privilege (as per Theberge and Birrell, 1994a) has been represented in the feelings of frustrated exclusion that the women interviewed conveyed.

Levels of perceived exclusion were strongly related to length of time in the country, proficiency in English and degree to which the person's expectations varied from the cultural norm. Previous studies have also indicated that the relationship between first generation migrants and the cultural dimensions of their country of origin is much stronger than for subsequent generations. For example, a study of Chinese adolescents from Australia and the United States found that the tendency to self-identify as Chinese, to engage in cultural specific behaviour and activities, and to have social networks of only Chinese friends, declined from first to second generation (Rosenthal and Feldman, 1992). Correspondingly, in the present research the younger interview participants expressed a strong sense of self-determination and were less concerned about cultural dissonance and incidents of discrimination. Such data also support arguments that suggest that new migrant arrivals undergo an acculturation process with subsequent generations more likely to adopt the host cultures' institutional practices and activities (Allison, 1979). That women and girls from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds revealed that they faced limitations to their sports participation is consistent with Bottomley's (1991) assertion that ethnicity and gender based constraints; limitations and possibilities are created by social structures.

While in other instances minority youth have been known to generate cultural practices of resistance because of their social marginalisation (see Wearing, 1998) the manifestation of such resistance in sports was not identified in the interview narratives.

The potential for resistance was an undercurrent in the stories of some of the younger women. As peer acceptance is of paramount importance in girls' culture a real subversion of dominant norms could potentially be located in a peer group structure where the group identity was linked to sports. However, this is pure conjecture as no interview participant explicitly said that she used sport as a space for resistance or freedom of cultural expression. Sports activities were often loosely associated with socialising and maintaining contact with other individuals from the same ethnic or religious background.

The older women interviewed discussed the lack of family encouragement and in a few cases, outright refusal, to play sports. In some of the interviews these restrictions were explicitly outlined in other situations they were simply embedded into the family's lifestyle choices. Attitudes to sports were grounded in culture, religion, ideology and historical precedent. While the feelings, values and beliefs varied in context and practice between the women interviewed, what was strikingly common was the relative acceptance and incorporation of these family expectations of gendered behaviour into their lives. The older women appeared more collectivistic, that is, focused on their culture group and identifying more with social and ascribed attitudes as these related to their specific cultural background and traditions. Such feelings and expressions of belonging are exactly what Bottomley (1979) found in her work on Greek Australians; that respectful and positive interactions based on cultural understandings can be attained when participating in 'community-type networks'. Hughson (1997) suggested that this occurs when group members are less mobile therefore maintaining their ethnic allegiance through community networks. Men from ethnic minority groups have used sports in Australia to construct a collective identity through assuming dominance in soccer administration (Vamplew, 1994), using soccer as a focal point of ethnic club development (Mosely, 1994) and being soccer fans (Hughson, 2000). The women interviewed provided no evidence that would indicate a similar collective practice in sports.

Many of the current limitations in sports provision appear to be derived from a lack of knowledge, understanding and consideration about cultural diversity. This was coupled with a minimal contact with ethnic group members, few past experiences to draw upon, limited role models and the prevalence of stereotypes that suggest certain

ethnic minority women, for example Muslim and Asian women, do not particularly want to engage in most sports activities. These circumstances have combined to shape informal exclusionary practices that have denied many women the right of participation. Herein is the paradox of hope. If left to its own devices sports provision may merely reflect the broader inequities and misconceptions of society but with changed direction, vision and leadership it could become a vehicle to propagate and represent alternatives.

6.4.1 Impetus for change

The moral argument for such change is ingrained in three specific government policy documents. The vision of 'Active Australia – a national participation framework' is to increase and enhance lifelong participation in physical activity; to develop quality infrastructure, opportunities and services to support participation; and realise the social, health and economic benefits of participation (Active Australia, 1997). Active Australia is a collaborative venture that encompasses federal, state and local governments and sports industries. The social, economic and health benefits that accrue from increased physical activity are outlined in the documentation and used to justify its aims. Active Australia has suggested that females from non-English-speaking backgrounds should be specifically targeted for increased physical activity. Widening the opportunities for involvement increases market share, raises membership and participant revenue and increases the talent pool for volunteers and participants (Active Australia, 1997).

The *National Policy on Women and Girls in Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity 1999-2002* was developed from initiatives taken by Active Australia. The policy states that, 'Australian women and girls, regardless of social, economic, cultural or physical backgrounds and circumstances, should have opportunities equal to men and boys to participate in every aspect of sport, recreation and physical activity, and when they do so, be treated equitably' (Australian Sports Commission, 1999: 6). The policy has suggested that equitable provision would benefit individual women and girls, the Australian community and sports providers. The disadvantage of female from non-English-speaking backgrounds was targeted for specific attention within policy initiatives.

The third policy initiative relates to the 1999 National Physical Activity Survey. Research was undertaken to provide an indication of the impact of the Active Australia campaign and suggest directions for health policy (Armstrong, Bauman and Davies, 2000). The research found that overall levels of participation were declining and women from non-English-speaking backgrounds with lower levels of education were particularly 'at risk'. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has developed health policy initiatives for all at risk groups to increase levels of physical activity that in turn will decrease health risk factors for these populations.

However, despite government policy directives a review of Commonwealth involvement in sports and recreation concluded that strategies have not increased participation over the last 25 years (Commonwealth of Australia, 1999). The review found that women were still under-represented in sports participation and leadership and recommended that more action be taken to increase participation. It was recommended that sports and recreation clubs, 'must be more creative and adaptable in order to capture this market' (Commonwealth of Australia, 1999: 85). It was also stated that sports would need to become more self-reliant for funding, implying that sports organisations would not remain financially viable unless they broadened their market base. Change or be threatened with financial hardship.

The 'survival' scenario provides a more pragmatic impetus to create more inclusive sports environments. Anyone concerned about organisational survival should reflect on the significance of a basic equation: L >= EC. The originator of the equation, Revans (1982) stressed that learning (L) must be equal to or greater than environmental change (EC), or the organisation will die. As the proportion of people from ethnic minority backgrounds increases sports will need to attract these individuals into their sports to maintain their participant base. This base is not limited to players but also includes volunteers, spectators and other persons involved in supporting the sport. In a number of geographical areas the proportion of the population born outside Australia has increased significantly and in order to maintain local community teams and associations sports will need to attract these populations into sports. Reticence associated with the resource implications of such initiatives along with concerns about potential cultural conflicts can be countered by promoting the positives. Better positioning in global markets, sponsorship arenas and in the community are potential incentives associated

with a more ethnically diverse participant base. In a world of increasing global competition sports organisation must attract public and private support to survive, as well as human and financial resources. By achieving this they will enhance their chances of survival. To remain culturally insular will not be a viable option.

In the interest of equity sports organisations should aim to go beyond stereotypes and find out what the women's needs and requirements are and aim to address these accordingly. In the interest of economic survival it is imperative that sports organisations become gender and culturally inclusive and address the opportunities and challenges that this brings. It is evident that it is the way in which sports activities are organised and not the activities themselves that are the main limiting factor. The provision of programs that meet women's requirements, such as family friendly environments, flexibility in the clothing worn, or interpreter services, will assist in meeting women’s needs. However, these initiatives need to be more than isolated attempts to deal with the issue that ignore the entrenched systemic concerns identified by this research. Women should not have to subvert their identity to enjoy the benefits of sports participation. Ideally, sports provision should provide a model of inclusion and acceptance across religious, racial, gender and other social groupings that have significance in the wider community.

CHAPTER SEVEN: NETBALL CASE STUDY

7.0 Introduction

The detail of how the case study methodology was designed for this research was presented in Chapter Five and this chapter will present and analyse the findings. The analysis combines data from the questionnaire surveys and interviews with material from archival records, papers, documented histories, organisational publications and media reports. The netball-related results from the schoolgirl survey are presented first followed by the netball player survey findings. The interviews with women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, netball players and netball administrators are then discussed with the final section providing a synthesis and analysis. As noted in the previous chapter, the focus of the research is on the qualitative information gathered. The aim of this chapter is to offer a detailed examination of the place of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in the sport of netball. In particular, it will investigate if the organisation and discourses of netball have been culturally inclusive.

7.1 Schoolgirl Netball Participation and Experiences

This first section presents the netball-related data collected from schoolgirl survey detailed in Chapter Six. Of the 972 schoolgirl respondents, 59 per cent (574 girls) indicated that they had played netball daily or weekly in the 12 months prior to the survey. This participation figure is much higher than state and national figures that report approximately 20 per cent of girls aged from five to 14 years play netball (see Chapter Four). Involvement in school-based netball has substantially contributed to these high participation figures. Of the 574 regular players, 450 were from English-Speaking Countries (ESC), 108 had a least one parent born in a Non-English-Speaking Country (NESC2) and 16 were born on a Non-English-Speaking Country (NESC1). Given the small numbers of NESC1 the data have been combined with NESC2 for analysis. These respondents were asked to indicate why they played netball. Their answers are outlined in

Table 7.1. For the girls from non-English-speaking backgrounds social, fun and physical/health benefits were more important[1] than for other girls.

Table 7.1 Reasons for playing netball: Schoolgirl survey

Reason given	NESC1 & 2 %	ESC %
Social	88.4	54.8
Fun	87.3	79.5
Physical/health benefits	76.4	72.2
Competition	50.5	53.2
Skill development	45.6	35.6

The survey participants were asked to indicate if they had experienced any limitations on their netball participation. Table 7.2 provides the grouped response rates about perceived limitations. The most significant differences between the two groups were 'no one to go with', time, skills, appropriate programs, language, racism, information about competitions, family responsibilities and cultural differences. However, in general terms both groups of girls experienced similar limitations.

Table 7.3 Constraints to netball participation: Schoolgirl survey

Limitations to sports participation	NESC1 &2 M (n=104)	SD	ESC M (n=470)	SD	Sig
No one to go with	**2.31**	**0.97**	**2.82**	**0.81**	***.050**
Time	**2.06**	**0.84**	**2.78**	**0.94**	***.046**
Lack of skills	**2.98**	**1.10**	**3.29**	**0.64**	***.025**
Family responsibilities	**2.13**	**1.02**	**2.07**	**0.96**	***.048**
Not enough information	**2.38**	**0.78**	**2.90**	**0.91**	***.022**
No appropriate programs	**3.18**	**1.01**	**3.42**	**0.95**	**.138**
No appropriate facilities	**3.07**	**0.94**	**3.54**	**0.89**	***.048**
Can't afford	**1.88**	**0.96**	**1.99**	**0.98**	**.101**
Parental restrictions	**1.81**	**1.02**	**1.96**	**1.02**	**.068**
Co-ed environment	**2.56**	**1.01**	**3.54**	**0.10**	**.092**
Racist attitudes	**1.98**	**1.22**	**1.49**	**0.92**	***.015**
Language	**1.95**	**1.05**	**2.49**	**1.19**	***.026**
Cultural difference	**1.95**	**1.10**	**1.61**	**1.18**	***.048**
Religion	**1.82**	**1.20**	**1.88**	**1.09**	**.116**

Scale= 1. always, 2.frequently, 3.sometimes, 4. seldom, 5.never

[1] The relationship between reasons for participating and ethnicity was significant at the five percent level on all dimensions.

Intergroup difference

Given that the grouping of non-English-speaking girls included a small number of girls born outside the country (16) specific intergroup or intragroup inferences were not possible from the dataset. Some 108 girls were identified as having at least one parent born in a non-English-speaking country but in many instances their parents were born in different countries so analysing by ethnic-specific categories was not possible.

Summary

The survey of schoolgirls revealed that girls from first and second generation non-English-speaking backgrounds participated in netball to a slightly lower degree than other girls. While all the girls surveyed enjoyed the social aspects of playing netball these dimensions were of more significance to girls from non-English-speaking backgrounds. The level of perceived limitations to netball participation for girls from non-English-speaking backgrounds has some noted variations. However, as identified in Chapter Six, netball was the sport with the lowest overall level of perceived constraint. The netball survey and interviews were able to more fully explore dimensions of ethnicity.

7.2 Netball Questionnaire Survey

This section presents the findings from the survey of netball players. As detailed in the methodology chapter a questionnaire survey was implemented at three district association netball competitions during autumn 1997. The purpose of the survey was to profile netball participants in regions with high proportions of non-English-speaking residents and ascertain whether netball attracted similar proportions of players from these backgrounds in the local competitions.

7.2.1 Profile of respondents

The netball players who completed the questionnaire were primarily young women, with a more than half (55.5 per cent) under 24 years of age. Despite this relative young cohort, the mean length of time that netball each player had been playing was 10.8 years (SD 8.2). The majority of the player respondents were born in Australia with those born outside of

Australia primarily coming from other English-speaking countries. Table 7.3 outlines both the age breakdown and country of birth of respondents.

Table 7.3 Netball respondents by birthplace

Place of birth	under 18 yrs	18-24 yrs	25-34 yrs	35-44 yrs	45-54 yrs	55+ yrs	Total
Australia	114	85	78	46	5	1	329
Britain/Ireland	1	0	3	3	0	0	7
Other ES country	4	7	7	2	0	0	20
Europe	2	2	5	1	0	0	10
Asia	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
South America	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Other NES country	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Total	122	95	97	52	5	1	372

As the data in Table 7.3 indicated 83 per cent of netball respondents were born in Australia. Of the 17 per cent who were not born in Australia, 7 per cent were born in an English-speaking country and 10 per cent in a non-English-speaking country. Table 7.4 provides a further breakdown of these categories and shows the number of respondents who had at least one parent born in a non-English-speaking country. This analysis is possible because, unlike the schoolgirls sample, all second generation NESB respondents had either both parents born in the same non-English speaking region or had one parent born in an non-English speaking country and the other born in Australia. In comparing these figures to the national 1996 census data for Australia it is evident that the proportions of netball participants who come from non-English-speaking backgrounds were significantly below that found represented in the general population. However, this level of participation by non-Australian born players is higher than recent national survey figures which indicated that Australian-born players comprise 91.8 per cent of netball participants over 18 years of age (Australian Sports Commission, 2000).

Table 7.4 NESB Birth region of player or parent(s): Netball survey

Birth region of player or parent(s)	No.
Europe	41
Asia/ Middle East	4
South America	4
Other NESB	17
Total	76

Of particular note Table 7.4 is low representation of players from Asian and Islamic countries relative to their presence in the survey regions. This dimension was further explored in the interviews. It was originally intended to undertake a more precise comparative analysis using the geographical district variable by birthplace. However, the numbers of respondents from non-English-speaking countries were too small for any meaningful analysis by the three geographical areas represented in the survey. Similarly, the respondent sample was too small for analysis by country of birth so the distinction used in the following discussion refers to all player-respondents from non-English-speaking backgrounds (ie first and second generation).

7.2.2 Attitudes to Netball

The questionnaire requested the respondents to nominate the reasons why they played netball, the perceived benefits that accrued from such participation and their perceptions of the limitations on participation. Table 7.5 presents a comparison of motivations and influences on the decision to play netball. The relationship between the two groups and how they became interested in netball was significant at the five per cent level for school and friends (Chi square 10.40, 2 DF).

Table 7.5 How the player became interested in playing netball: Netball survey

	% of ESC players (n=296)	% of NESB players (n=76)
School	40.7	39.5
Friends	29.5	46.1
Sports club	11.5	3.9
Parents	12.9	5.3
Media	0.7	0.0
Other	4.4	3.9
All above	0.3	1.3

Players from non-English-speaking backgrounds nominated 'friends' as the prime influence on their decision to play netball. The other players listed 'school' as the most common reason for their decision. The influence of parents was important for respondents from English-speaking backgrounds. The data show that only 18.2 per cent of players from non-English-speaking backgrounds had mothers who played netball, while 35.2 per cent of other players had mothers who played netball. Of the 18.2 per cent all were second generation migrants. Of those respondents whose mothers had played netball a substantial 67.5 per cent chose 'parents' as the main reason they started the sport. Family history clearly had an influence on the decision to play netball. This finding might be explained by the fact that since netball is primarily played in Commonwealth countries women and girls born in such countries have a greater likelihood of having parents that are familiar with the game.

In response to the questions about why they continue to play netball, all of the players clearly indicated that they found the sport fun and valued the physical benefits associated with playing. The respondents from non-English-speaking backgrounds placed more emphasis on fun and physical benefits as outlined in Table 7.6. Social benefits were perceived as less important for respondents from non-English-speaking backgrounds than for other respondents.

Table 7.6 Reasons given for playing netball: Netball survey

	% of ESC players (n=296)	% NESB players (n=76)
Fun	80.2	90.3
Physical benefits	73.1	60.4
Social aspects	54.3	44.9
Competition	54.6	48.7
Skill development	35.3	26.2

Table 7.7 presents the results of perceived limitations of respondents to netball participation. The findings follow a similar pattern to the schoolgirl survey responses.

Respondents from non-English-speaking backgrounds indicated similar limitations to other players.

Table 7.7 Perceived limitations to netball participation: Netball survey

Constraints to netball participation	ESC responses (n=296) M	SD	NESB responses (n=76) M	SD
Time	2.41	0.66	2.45	0.67
No family support	2.76	0.32	2.50	0.73
Family responsibilities	2.69	0.52	2.63	0.62
Lack of skills	2.84	1.93	2.66	0.53
Not enough information	2.84	1.94	2.76	0.49
Financial	2.82	1.94	2.79	0.53
Fear of injury	2.76	0.53	2.89	0.30
No one to go with	2.87	0.35	2.87	0.37
Language	2.94	0.32	2.91	0.37
Religion	2.95	0.25	2.94	0.23
Cultural difference	2.94	0.26	2.94	0.20
Racist attitudes	2.95	0.20	2.96	0.37

Scale= 1. always, 2.frequently, 3.sometimes, 4. seldom, 5.never

To compare the means an independent samples t-test was used and no significance was found at 0.05 level on any of the dimensions. This finding that there are no significant differences between the ESC and NESB respondents might appear to contradict previous data. However, it should be kept in mind that the NESB players surveyed were the women who had found a way to play netball, they represent those women who had found the constraints to playing not insurmountable. Viewed in this light the findings are not contradictory at all, but instead highlight the constraints that ANY women faces to participation.

7.2.3 Summary

The survey of netball players established that women from non-English-speaking backgrounds were proportionately under-represented in the competitions surveyed. Participation rates were particularly low amongst first generation players but increased for second generation players. Friends and school influences impacted significantly on the players' decision to join a netball team. Their reasons for continuing to play netball were primarily social. Culturally-based constraints were not identified a major limitation for the women from non-English-speaking backgrounds. However, this is not to say that cultural constraints were minimal, as the women who have chosen not to play netball were not represented in this survey of players. The surveys served to reinforce what is already known about sports participation rates for females from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The more important exploratory issues of exclusion, power, culture and the formation of personal and group identity in netball participation were then further investigated in the interviews with women who have had some experience with netball. These will be reported in the following section.

7.3 Voices From The Margins

The key information gathering exercise for this case study was the series of interviews that were conducted to explore the experiences, perceptions and interpretations of women from non-English-speaking backgrounds about netball. Ten of the women interviewed from non-English-speaking backgrounds had either played netball or had children involved in the sport. It should be noted that none of the Muslim women interviewed in the first phase of the research study had played netball. As one respondent, Zeema, explained: *'I'm sure that we'd like to play netball if they could allow us to do it and still wear the hijab or not have men there.'* Four women, who were born outside of Australia in an English-speaking Commonwealth country were also interviewed to provide English-speaking migrant experiences. Additionally, netball officials were interviewed to provide an administrative and policy based perspective. These included three women and one male who were born in Australia and who were interviewed in relation to their lengthy and significant association with netball, including the administration dimension of the sport. Table 7.8 provides a listing of the interview respondents.

Table 7.8 Netball interview participants

Country of Birth	Number interviewed	Pseudo name used
Australia	4	Judy, Kim, Rhonda, Colin
England	2	Dianne, Sarah
China	2	Lisa
Croatia	1	Marica
Hong Kong	2	Mary, Mi
Italy	1	Teresa
Japan	1	Kikko
Malta	1	Natalie
New Zealand	2	Adele, Kate
Serbia	1	Nadia
Singapore	1	Patsy
	18	

The stories told by the women interviewed will be presented using the same framework as in the previous chapter. The analysis will be then framed in Bottomley, de Lepervanche and Martin's (1991) 'rhetorics of exclusion' involving larger questions about power, culture and the formation of personal and group identity.

7.3.1 Women from Asian countries

In Singapore, Patsy played netball in school because it was 'the' sport for girls and the best players were idolised. As she explained, '*if you're a sporty person you definitely play netball ... when I first got into my first year in secondary I was so desperate to learn the game I see all the females all the juniors were worshipping … everyone in my school tried to play.*' When she left school Patsy discontinued playing netball and became involved in swimming and gymnastics. Patsy said that she is better at these sports and that she was not very good at netball but she played at school because it was the 'the norm'.

Mary was originally from Hong Kong and had joined netball at her Australian school, '*I tried netball when I changed sport in our class game and it was the first time I ever played netball. But I was not very good at netball but my best friend said why not try it*'. Learning the rules was difficult and as Mary said, '*always you run across the lines*'. Mary also explained that she was not really that interested in sports and neither were her family, '*in Hong Kong people don't really encourage you to play a lot of sport they encourage you to*

study and work hard and earn money … that's why overseas students when they come to Australia they're not used to playing a lot of sport so they sit down and hang around.'

Mi's daughter Zoe took up netball because it was a popular sport at her school. Mi said that her daughter did not have any idea what netball was about but she wanted to play since the other girls in her class were participating. Mi did not encourage Zoe to play 'rough' sports, which she identified as hockey or soccer, but she said that she would be happy for her daughter to play netball. However, Mi felt slightly hesitant about Zoe playing netball because Mi was not familiar with how the sport was organised and did not know how to obtain the relevant information. Even though Mi, as a Hong Kong emigrant, spoke English fluently, she still felt that she might not fit in with the other families whose daughters were playing netball.

Lisa, who was born in China, likewise spoke about her lack of familiarity with netball. Lisa's daughter had played netball at school but not in the club system. Lisa felt that her knowledge of particular sports and the sports system impacted on the sports that she, and other Chinese migrants, encouraged their daughters to play. *'Look at the countries that are actually playing netball … I just think because it's not played in their country they just sort of, don't play and they're not aware of it. I know we've got some Chinese in our associations, not a lot 4,5,6 … they probably don't know where to go and left it up to mum to organise, where the father is probably out working and speaking in their native language. You can get the son into soccer or football or something like that because the other fellows on the job know about the soccer club. But mum she's at home and doesn't know how to get the daughters into the sport.'* Lisa believed that women should not play 'dangerous' sports such are rugby or boxing but she thinks that netball is appropriate for women to play.

Kikko played netball for one term but then quit due to lack of time for training, *'sport I don't think is as important as study at the mument in Year 11… and also I have to wake up early in the morning Saturday to go for our games and stuff like that's a problem'*. She had no previous exposure to netball and had really wanted to play baseball a sport she had

played in Japan since she was seven years old with her brothers and father. However, she thought that only boys play baseball in Australia. Kikko noted that she was not very good at netball and found the rules very confusing.

In summary, the Asian women interviewed revealed similar reasons for their netball participation or their daughter's as the survey respondents. School and peers were nominated as having a significant influence on their decision to play netball. The older women were happy for their daughters to play netball but they knew little of the game's rules or administration. The perceived constraints to participation that were raised in discussions were comparable with the survey limitations with 'lack of time' figuring most prominently. The cultural issues that the women talked about related to issues of unfamiliarity with the sport. This ranged from how it is played to how it is organised. In particular the older women spoke about their uneasiness in registering their daughters in a sport that few other Asian girls played and that was perceived as outside their cultural support networks.

7.3.2 Women from European countries

Nadia had played basketball in Serbia and would have liked to continue with that sport but it was not offered at her high school. *'The Australian society, or the government, or sports and recreation, or whoever was in charge at the time, they didn't give much thought to immigrants and their different needs for sport'*. Nadia tried to play school netball but found the process very discouraging. Adjusting to a new game and a new language made playing difficult, *'with lack of English, with netball, I couldn't remember the rules. Like, what did she, the umpire, mean by "holding" and by "defence"? I had nobody to ask. The umpire couldn't explain it to me because she didn't know my language. So that was just trial and error'*.

Teresa's negative school sports experiences, outlined in the previous chapter, extended to netball as well. *'The Aussie girls never picked us for their teams and never invited us to be in the netball, us "wogs" tried to play for a few terms but then we just watched'*. Teresa also explained that her parents did not know how the sports club system worked in netball

as she revealed, *'so it would've been embarrassing for everyone if I had tried to fit into the team, for me, for my mother who couldn't speak English, for the other girls and for the other mothers … Even though I could speak English, you need more confidence to ask ... you never know where the coach is or the training.'*

Marica, a first-generation Croatian, said that she had always encouraged her daughter Suzie to play sports though she particularly wanted Suzie to play basketball. However, Suzie's friends all started playing netball and she decided that she wanted to join despite her mother's protestations. Marica related the story, *'in year six her friends convinced her to play netball and she was good, excelled very quickly … I didn't like the game myself, I thought it was irritating. I tried to talk her into playing basketball, a main sport in Croatia and Europe, but of course she didn't listen and I wouldn't force her to do anything she didn't want to do, so she played netball.'* Finally, in high school Marica talked Suzie into trying out for the school basketball team and after her first game Suzie was selected onto the representative division side and by the end of the season she was playing for the state team. Marcia explained that the second generation Croatian females play much more sport than her contemporaries did as the first generation migrants had few resources, *'for refugees it is very expensive with no money for membership fess, clothing, etcetera'*.

Marica believed that many girls from the Croatian community played netball because, *'they have Australian friends, netball is more popular with the Australian female population'* and playing sport with friends is very important. She felt that some girls that lose out because their parents' social networks are linked to ethnic clubs that mainly provide male sports and they are not aware of how the Australian sports system works. *'I think that there is a lack of information through schools. The structure, the system, where the sports stand in relation to the community and schools because it is all structured in the school system overseas, people think it doesn't exist here.'*

There are multiple sources of inequity that influence sporting opportunities and choices both directly and indirectly. The women interviewed here that were born overseas did not chose to play netball for any length of time because they did not feel comfortable in the

sport because of communication problems and cultural alienation. Their families did not encourage these women to play netball as they were focussed on managing the transition to a new language, culture and environment. For these women sport was not perceived as a high priority use of the family's time and limited financial resources. Netball was not a sport that was played in their country of origin and therefore it had no cultural standing within their ethnic community; it was not played or supported by the local ethnic community clubs. This has changed for subsequent generations. While their mothers did not play netball the daughters have joined with their school friends to play the game.

7.3.3 Women from Commonwealth countries

The five migrant women interviewed from Commonwealth countries all played netball from a young age. Sarah was born in England and came to Australia when she was eight years old. Sarah said that she doesn't even remember why she started playing, she just naturally moved into netball. *'My mother and all my sisters played netball, so I suppose you could say it was a family tradition. Mum coached my team for years and Dad used to be one of the loudest barrackers so I suppose you could say all of us girls had plenty of family support.'* Sarah played netball at school and for a local community club when she was younger. She then played for her university and the district team and when she started work she entered a team into to an evening competition with her friends.

Sarah had played soccer at primary school but there were no girls' teams at her high school. *'I wanted to keep playing but it was too difficult so I just kept with my netball … some of my friends played cricket but they were always getting called "lessies" so I steered way clear of cricket even though I was interested in playing. Looking back I guess you could say that I did netball 'cause it was girlie and we could flounce around in our short skirts.'* Sarah still plays netball and explained why, *'I know it so well, I don't have to think about it and 'cause I've played for so long I'm good. It keeps me fit and we have a great social side.'*

Dianne moved to Australia from England when she was in her early twenties. Dianne played netball at school and her sisters and mother had also played. She felt that, *'everyone I grew up with played netball'*. Dianne was invited to be on a netball team at work when she first moved to Australia and has been playing ever since. When she was first asked to join a co-ed netball team Dianne was slightly shocked, but now she loves it, and explained, *'Matt, from work, said that some of the guys would like to learn how to play netball and enter a team in the corporate comp. At first I thought, whoa, guys playing netball sounds a bit strange, guys play basketball not netball! But now I love it, it's a real hoot playing with them and since they are still learning us girls can still show them a thing or two.'*

Adele had played netball in New Zealand before moving to Australia when she was in high school. *'All the girls in my form played netball and hockey, those were the two most popular sports at school for girls. I would've liked to play rugby like the boys did but it wasn't offered. Now the girls can play rugby at school but when I was there it was only the guys.'* Adele continued to play netball throughout her school years and was on the regional and state representative teams. Adele also became an accredited umpire and coached younger girls teams in her club. Adele said that she had not noticed many players from different ethnic backgrounds come through the club or play at school. Her reply was, *'I never really thought about it, but now that you ask I can't think of many girls that were from other countries. And in my club there aren't many Asian girls even though lotsa Asian families now live in the area.'*

Adele's family were always supportive of her netball, especially her mother. She remembered, *'now I think back and wonder how mum did it all, driving me to practice, to the games, coaching clinics, umpiring, helping manage the team and working in the tuck shop during games. She put so much time into those things and at the time I just took it all for granted.'* Adele believed that her mother's involvement allowed her to become totally committed to playing netball and achieving her full potential.

Kate was also born in New Zealand and came to Australia in her early twenties. Kate is now married and has two daughters who both play netta (netball for young girls). Kate played netball in New Zealand from the age of eight years and joined a local team when she moved to Australia. *'It was really great, I called up the state office and they gave me the number of a club down the road. The women were very friendly when I called and I went to training and we all went to the pub for drinks after.'* Kate explained that she felt comfortable going alone to the first training session because she had played netball for years and believed, '*it's one big community. It doesn't matter if you are from NZ or Australia, the game's the same and I felt at home.'*

Kate encouraged her daughters to learn to play netball because, '*I got so much from the game and I hope that they will feel the same. Also, I think that it's best to learn to play when you are young then you can decide if you want to keep playing or not. Getting the ball skills early gives you options.'* Kate also believes that the social component is important, '*all the girls' friends play and their mothers come to the games and we all cheer them on together.'* When asked about the cultural diversity of netball Kate thought that Australian netball was less multicultural than New Zealand netball, *'in NZ you get heaps of Maori girls that are really good players, and some of the players from the Pacific Islands are really tall and really good too. Here you certainly don't see many Aboriginal girls playing, maybe you would in the outback areas but not here in the city. We do have a Jewish club in the competition, and several of the girls parents are South African but I don't know if that really counts as diversity and they certainly don't come from disadvantaged families.'*

Natalie's parents were born in Malta and lived in England before coming to Australia. Natalie became involved in netball because her brother was playing soccer and netball courts were across the road, *'so I went over to see what was happening and mum told me what it was and she asked me if I'd like to play.'* Natalie's mother was still playing netball at that time and Natalie recalls, *'I remember going to watch her play netball only playing with the mums that had their daughters playing netball, she enjoyed that'*. Her mother had first played netball in Malta and then in England and finally in Australia.

Natalie said that her parents were both very supportive of her netball career and were very proud of her accomplishments, which include playing representative level for Australia. In reflecting on her years playing netball Natalie observed, '*you don't see a lot of girls from NESB playing netball, especially at the representative level. You know a lot of ethnic girls are bigger and they get embarrassed by showing their body and doing that sort of thing … You know a lot of ethnic girls are probably quite hairy you know and that's embarrassing for them and they don't like having to wear a short skirt and t-shirt because they're dark they can feel embarrassed*.' Natalie does not have direct contact with the Maltese community and believed ethnic affiliations should be kept out of netball, '*they are given such a good opportunity here they should take what we do … if you start ethnic netball you may have other cultures that will pick on them*.'

These women all played netball from an early age, in both school sports and for netball clubs. Each of their mothers had also played netball and all the women indicated that their families were supportive of their sport. The women who emigrated when they were young appeared to easily slip to netball as it was offered in all Australian schools. The women who came to Australia after they had completed school seemed to have few difficulties or qualms in tracking down the information about their local netball club and joining. There were no comments about feeling embarrassed, different or not accepted in netball amongst these five women.

7.3.4 Australian born women

The three Australian-born women interviewed all had a long association with netball, as players, administrators and coaches. Their stories covered both personal playing experiences and reflections from the administrative side of netball. The General Manager of Netball NSW, a male, was also interviewed.

In 1956 when Judy first played netball it was one of the few sports offered at her Catholic girls' school, '*probably because it was about all the nuns knew … I went along to the trial and would you believe I got to be centre and my mother said that you're not playing netball.*' Judy continued to play despite her mother's desire for her to play tennis, which

was considered more socially useful, and she played throughout school and into her work years as well. Judy explained that when she started work netball was the only sport available to women in the public service lunchtime sports competition.

Thirty years later not much had changed when Kim began playing netball at school in the late 1980s. '*When I was at school a few years ago, basically girls could only play one or two winter sports which was hockey or netball. We didn't have the choices that kids at school now have, soccer and touch … so I decided to play netball which I think was a majority participation and because it was kind of a mind sport.*' Kim added that her sporting ability and height meant that she targeted at school, '*I was pretty tall when I was growing up so it was probably very much a natural thing for them to get me into netball*'. Kim has played netball since she was seven and coached from the time she was 14 years old. While Kim has witnessed a number of changes she believed that netball will always have strong female support, '*it is such a women's sport that girls always gravitate towards netball rather than, you know, previously male dominated sports … but I think because it's seen as a women's sport that that's where they go to*'.

Rhonda began playing at a young age and played netball for several years before becoming an umpire and then a salaried administrator. She also believed that for many years netball had an advantage over other sports because it was played in most schools and schoolgirls had few other choices. '*I think for a while there as far as women's sport was concerned we had no competitors. Every girl played netball at school and when you left you could play netball or hockey, that was about it.*' This situation is now changing, as Colin a netball administrator commented, '*in the past four months alone my daughter who is 11 has probably played in excess of five different sports and been introduced into five different sports and had the marketing approach of five different sports … netball's cognisant of the face that the marketing approach that it used 10 or 15 years ago which was in all likelihood sufficient, is no longer sufficient … there is greater competition for the kids.*'

The women interviewed all felt that netball had undergone significant change in the last 20 years. Judy observed that the game was very regimented when she began playing in the

1950s, *'the uniform of the '50s no more than six inches above your knee when you were kneeling down. You had to kneel down to be measured. The umpire would come and make sure that your had your black pants on.'* Judy believed that these netball rules merely reflected social relations of the period, *'it was a sign of the times everything was regimented you did your washing on a Monday, ironing on a Tuesday … it was mainly women running netball and women ran the homes in those days so they ran it the same way as the house.'* Rhonda's reflections about the rules were similar, '*you used to be confined more … if you were defence you would stand meekly and wait to get a rebound. They changed that.'* However, the changes were not without opposition. Rhonda recalled that she was an umpire's convenor at the time, '*there were nuns at the local school getting terribly concerned that it would be too rough and coming up and saying I don't agree*'.

While women may have controlled the home in the 1950s, they manage businesses in the 1990s and this has spilt over to netball. Judy spoke about how she used to run the whole competition with volunteers and from her kitchen table, whereas now '*even the 12 year old umpires get paid*!' Judy thought that other aspects of playing the game have also changed, *'it's much faster now … it's more athletic having got rid of some of the restrictions in what areas you're allowed to go into*'.

Kim likewise agreed that netball has changed in the way it is played, '*netball's evolved and the change of uniforms, the talents of the players, you know, the height, the athletic abilities have totally changed and you can see the difference*'. Even its base delivery structure is changing as Rhonda pointed out, '*traditionally netball was always played on a Saturday and now you're finding a lot of the competitions are indoor competitions or night competitions are becoming more popular because there's not the commitment to Saturdays'*. The introduction of men has been another shift. Rhonda explained, *'they (men) weren't officially recognised or allowed even to be members … a lot of discrimination against any man who played in the sport. In the beginning there were a number of gay fellows who played … that sort of had people making disparaging remarks about the sport, but now that's changed.'*

The women interviewed greeted the inclusion of men into netball positively. Judy's initial male experiences were frustrating, '*I was a pioneer in getting men involved at Baulkham Hills which is the first session they'd gone to way back in 1985. I found it very frustrating because men being men, they knew everything, ha, they knew nothing about netball. How many men have you really seen pivot, not many.*' While the men had inadequate netball skills because they had never played the game before Judy believed that when young boys are taught in schools the nature of netball will change even more as they bring more strength into the sport. In Rhonda's opinion the indoor competitions attract more co-ed teams and tend to be more socially oriented, and '*they pay more to play.*' And the men play netball differently, '*they have the speed and they have more strength and they have great aerial skills but they have to modify their tendency to just dive in… they have to be aware of other people on the court*'. Kim said she thought it was fun playing against 'the boys' and believed that as men become more involved in netball '*it's going to encourage more girls to play*'. However, Kim identified some negatives such as male intimidation of female umpires or the potential for fights.

Although the women interviewed indicated that netball was almost a 'forced choice' sport for them they all believed that it was a game that offered many benefits for its players. Judy explained, '*It's the only game that caters for all people at all levels and all ages… netball is a sport where if you're tall or you're short or you're fast or you're slow or you're fat or thin, you can fit in*'. Rhonda had similar sentiments, '*not everyone could shoot so you had to work as a team. That is the beauty of netball and it caters for all shapes and sizes as well as abilities because you don't have to be fast… you can usually find a spot for anyone that turns up.*'

As a coach of school netball teams Kim offered the opinion that netball was still by far the biggest schoolgirls' sport, '*it covers 24 schools and we have four and a half thousand girls playing netball on Saturday morning*'. Kim noted that more girls are starting to play basketball because of its more fluid nature but she feels that netball will continue to attract girls, '*I think a lot of girls till get enjoyment out of it, they sort of sweat a little bit and do a bit of fitness and balance'*. Rhonda wasn't so sure, '*there wasn't much for girls to do and*

then gradually girls were involved and the numbers started to increase but now I think there's too many things to do'. Colin, the senior netball official, echoed these sentiments, '*netball is still in that comfort zone of x number of years ago when they thought netball was just going to keep going and going … but I think slowly the realisation is coming across the board that that's not the case*'.

The women interviewed were specifically asked about their knowledge on the involvement of women and girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in netball. Rhonda said that while she knew of several schemes to encourage Indigenous Australian girls to play netball she had no knowledge of any action at the national level to specifically target girls or women from ethnic minority communities. Although she added, '*I know that exceptions have been made to allow people to be able to wear their own ethnic dress which is different to the uniform … I think that should be the case that they be allowed to wear whatever head covering or full length uniform*'. When asked if this might be extended to allow competitions to be held in female-only environments, the response was '*it's really going to be quite hard cause obviously you will have to start a competition for those girls cause Dads, brothers, grandfathers all go and watch so it's really hard to say females only, that's discouraging some to play sport and we want to encourage as many as we can but if we just restrict it to girls only then its not really good for the sport.*'

In reflecting back over her years of involvement in netball Judy's recollection of players from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds was limited, '*We've had like for instance Stazinski I don't know what nationality that is but I mean, she's as Australian as the next person … oh these names I think, kids you're going to have to spell all these names because there was no way who was taking them down over the phone could have spelt them. I can remember this particular team they had about four or five of them and I wished they'd had Smith or Brown or something.*'

Kim said that in her experience many girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds did not play netball because of inadequate family support. '*Between their families they're not encouraging them at all. There are one or two exceptions to the rule*

but it's not often that you see their parents driving others around.' However, she noted that some girls do play school netball, *'I actually have a team that has a majority of Asians and they tend to play together. It also means that their abilities are about the same, they haven't had much experience in it so therefore they're usually put in the same team together. There isn't a whole lot though.'* Colin was of the opinion that, *'there are a number of areas that need to be addressed and not least of which is the ethnic background's impact on the women and what they're allowed to do and what they're not allowed to do. And if you get over that there's facilities and the sport have to be able to cater for that group of people.'*

Kim felt that netball currently has such a large player base that they are not overly concerned about targeting specific groups, *'I don't think there's anyone interested in it … I guess if they were a sport that was just starting out it might be in their interests to target certain communities or coaches but they just don't.'* Judy agreed that not much had been done to target players from different backgrounds and questioned the economics of such a move, *'it's probably something you should look at but how many would it attract? Probably the amount of money that would be involved in setting it up … I don't suppose you could send your netball things out in 65 languages.'* Colin expressed similar sentiments, *'I would suggest there is also a need to look at ethnic groups but our resources being what they are I would be very surprised if we could allocate resources particularly to that area*'.

Colin spoke about an alternative approach. Instead of directly encouraging Asians living in Australia to play netball Netball NSW have decided to develop the sport in the overseas country with a view to then translating that involvement to Asians living here. *'Netball tends to be played in Australia by people with a background from other countries where netball has traditionally been played … Netball Australia are doing a lot of work in Asian countries to get netball played'.* Colin expanded on this strategy, *'I would suggest that once we see more countries being involved in netball and those people competing in Australia then you will get more of an interest in the game from those groups within this country. At the mument I can't see us being able to target some ethnic groups, get them*

into netball, certainly it's a matter of resources.' Such a policy might produce greater cultural diversity in netball because the sport would need to adapt to gain acceptance in non-English-speaking countries.

For these women netball was a sport that they played almost without conscious choice. Netball was one of the few sports that was played in their school, by their friends and by their mothers. It was a sport that provided women and girls with uncontested access to facilities and community and work based competitions. Netball also provided these women with a sense of belonging and acceptance, players were encouraged to take on umpiring, coaching and administrative roles and the women interviewed felt that they were able to contribute to the development of the sport.

The women also spoke about the changes they have witnessed in netball and how the game has shifted its rules, style of play and administration to become more flexible and faster paced. Netball, like most other sports, has moved from a wholly volunteer run sport to a professionally run organisation that now has a strong commercial component. The women welcomed this change and also commented favourably about the introduction of males into the sport. They felt that netball is now moving into a new era where girls and women have many more sports choices than they used to have and netball will face significantly increased competition for players in the future.

As for the inclusion of a culturally diverse player base, netball has not attracted large numbers of girls from ethnic minority backgrounds. The women interviewed believed there were low number of netball players from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds because of cultural reasons and inadequate family support. Administrators of the game were of the opinion that netball has not targeted specific groups in the community because netball has held such a widespread attraction for the mainstream population that it has not had to worry about player participation rates or broaden its appeal to incorporate groups on the margins. To target an 'ethnic' audience was perceived as inappropriate as it might diminish the appeal of the sport to the 'mainstream'.

7.4 Discussion

In Chapter Four it was argued that netball, to a certain degree, promulgated and reinforced societal expectations and practices in gender relations; a 'compliant femininity'. It was also argued that many women used netball participation as an entrée into sports activities and netball provided these women the freedom to participate in a sport without having their sexuality or femininity questioned. These arguments were made in relation to mainstream Australian society and did not incorporate cultural diversity issues due to the absence of substantiating secondary material. This chapter has sought to investigate empirically the cultural dimension of netball and ascertain whether these arguments are equally applicable to women from marginalised ethnic communities.

To begin with there are some specific observations that can be advanced about netball from the empirical data collected for this study. In the first instance the schoolgirl survey revealed that for all participants, regardless of cultural background, social reasons for playing netball were more important than psychological reasons. Girls played to have fun and be with their friends. This finding was replicated in the survey of netball players and is consistent with previous research on women in sports. For example Deem (1990) Leaman and Carrington, (1985) Henderson and Bialeschki, (1994) have all concluded that social and fun aspects of participation are of significant importance to women. However, in contrast to other studies, the respondents from non-English-speaking backgrounds in both the schoolgirl and netball surveys were more likely to list competition and skill as significant reasons to play netball than their English background schoolgirl counterparts. These results were followed up in the interviews with the few women from non-English-speaking backgrounds who played netball over a significant period of time. The women interviewed also enjoyed the skill required to play netball and found the competition elements rewarding.

While a lower proportion of girls from non-English-speaking backgrounds played netball, it was the sport consistently identified as having the lowest level of perceived limitation. It is argued here that this minimum level of limitation attached to netball participation

indicates that netball could be classified as an 'allowable' sport (Eitzen, 1996). This is a sport that women can play and still retain their femininity; a sport which does not require body contact with opponents or unacceptable overexertion and does not call into question the sexuality of the participant. Netball is perceived as a safe space for women to express their sporting selves and therefore provides for a 'compliant femininity'. It allows for individual expressions of femininity and women players do not appear to be in conflict with the masculine tag that is attached to many male dominated sports. The low levels of perceived constraint could also be related the level of skill and athletic ability required to play netball. The promotional material designed for netball pointedly stresses that all levels of ability are catered for (Duncan, 1994) and this certainly can be translated into the findings of the survey as 'lack of skills' was nominated much less frequently as a constraint than for other sports.

Several feminist writers have suggested that women experience difficulties relating to many sports because of the masculine images and often reject it as a symbol of competitiveness, aggression and physical stamina (see Birrell, 1988; Carrington *et al*, 1987; Hall, 1996). This derives from a cultural assumption that sport is a male domain and that sports idealise manliness. However, the survey and interview data collected for this study on netball did not find any evidence of women or girls not choosing to play netball because it was too competitive or aggressive. Whether planned or not, due to its social construction and imaging as a female sport, netball appears to have not been subjected to the masculine versus feminine dialogue that women playing soccer or cricket and many other sports have faced.

In concert with other studies the schoolgirl survey finding that there is a lower level of involvement of girls from non-English-speaking backgrounds in netball is reflective of national studies on levels of participation in physical activity (ABS, 1994). This finding is supported by other research on school-based physical education studies which have also found that exclusion from activities often relates to the race, class, and/or motor ability of students (Kirk, 1997). This lower level of involvement can be further explained by the finding that family history and influence was a significant factor in a girl's choice

to play or not to play a particular sport. This is to say that girls whose mothers had played netball were more likely to play netball than other girls. As many girls from non-English-speaking backgrounds did not have a history of netball being played within the family they were consequently not as likely to take up netball. In other studies the absence of minority female role models has been identified as another contributor to low participation of marginalised women in sports (Acosta, 1993; Glanvill, 1995; Harris, 1997; Lirgg, 1992). This is also the case in netball as there are very few role models for the girls from marginalised ethnic groups to emulate. While many young boys proudly display their heroes' names or number emblazoned on their football shirts there is not the same devotion given to female athletes. There are few young girls wearing netball jerseys with an adored player's name stitched on it. However, the lack of role models for women from the same cultural background was not in itself perceived as a significant deterrent. For most women it was a culmination of factors that constrained their netball participation and it was not isolated to just one or two factors.

While the women interviewed provided a range of individual commentaries about netball there were several concerns that were consistent across their experiences. Societal issues of power and dominance related to cultural homogeneity resonated in the stories. 'Power tends to get translated into a structure of dominance enabling the powerful to write their advantages into the system's very structure' (Sage, 1998:234). Those individuals or groups that control this power are afforded an unequal share of the benefits it affords. The power situation relating to maintaining an advantage was strongly reminiscent in the stories of the women interviewed. The women who were from the 'margins' had a very different set of experiences of netball to the other women interviewed. The first generation women from non-English-speaking backgrounds spoke passionately about their feelings of dissonance, alienation and differentness and how they felt unwelcome in mainstream sports including netball. Many first generation mothers were not familiar with netball and could not speak English well, and therefore were not able to assist with the coaching, managing or canteen duties. This situation added further to the girls' sense of 'difference', even alienation, as parental involvement was an expected aspect of the club system. For many culturally and linguistically diverse women the inclination to participate in netball was more often than

not overwhelmed by fears of rejection, discomfort at not being able to understand the English instructions and uneasiness at not being able to fully express their thoughts in English. In contrast, the women from English-speaking backgrounds spoke of their positive experiences of belonging, acceptance and family support and their easy transition into netball participation.

The interview narratives have indicated that different cultures function to uphold various aspects of dominant ideologies of femininity in different ways. Stanfield (1994) asserted that cultural concepts such as masculinity and femininity vary among ethnic groups, as some cultures do not necessarily distinguish between masculine and feminine as social and cultural attributes of females and males. Among some of the culturally and linguistically diverse women and girls in this study their strategy for blending into the dominant cultural group involved participating in activities that marked the limits of culturally acceptable femininity. Sexuality and the question of femininity has never been an issue in netball unlike many other women's sports (Cashman, 1995). Deviance from normative femininity was a means of identifying the social outcast; conformity was a way of embracing the dominant culture and netball was used as an instrument in the assimilation process. However, the netball players interviewed were for the most part uncritical and unreflexive about the assertion of subscribing to a 'compliant femininity'. Additionally, for the second generation girls and young women netball participation appears to be more related to their level of social interaction with peers and others who are part of the dominant cultural group. This mirrored the outcomes of other studies such as Floyd and Shinew (1999) that found the higher the level of interaction between 'whites' and African-Americans the closer the patterns of leisure participation, suggesting that greater exposure to the dominant culture's norms and shared frames of references will result in a convergence of preferred behaviours.

However, convergence with the mainstream culture is not always the desired outcome. Research has suggested that players often wish to be given the opportunity to make a contribution to the construction of a sport, which allows them to parade their unique cultural identity (Hargreaves, 1992). The way in which netball has been formally

structured and administered in Australia has left very few openings for such freedom of expression or uniqueness. To join netball has meant to conform to the set uniform, rules and unofficial social expectations.

Collectively, the narratives of both the women and the netball administrators suggest that there is a currently little being done to specifically address the needs of culturally diverse participants. Therefore, players, coaches and administrators need to be encouraged to understand the value of diversity and recognise the need for structural transformation if the netball is to truly embrace cultural diversity and to maintain its reputation as a sport for Australian women irrespective of class, ethnicity and religion. This overall absence of concern about the low levels of engagement by women and girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds was also found in a series of interviews conducted in 1995 of netball administrators (Duncan and Weatherburn, 1997). That study concluded, 'the overall impression was that the issue (trying to encourage cultural diversity) had not been explored' (Duncan and Weatherburn, 1997:223). If an institution's commitment to inclusive practices and diversity issues is reflected in the extent to which diversity policies are mutually understood and communicated (Cox, 1994), then there is obviously no commitment to cultural diversity in netball, a situation that is shared by many other Australian sports. In the interviews conducted the women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were unable to identify instances where diversity issues were specifically addressed in netball provision.

Key individuals in netball administration admitted that cultural inclusiveness was not an explicit policy initiative and any inclusion happens through chance rather than through direct planning. According to these administrators it would be an extravagant and financially costly gesture for the associations to cater for the specific needs of different cultures. They felt that netball associations would not be able to satisfy the expectations of the 'mainstream' and 'periphery' conjointly. Maintaining the existing player base was deemed to be of paramount importance. The interview participants seemed to assume that players from different ethnic backgrounds would eventually gravitate into the sport. The stronghold that netball has on school sport and its general popularity with a traditional

market have meant that it has not been necessary to actively pursue other avenues of player recruitment. This finding is consistent with other research on organisations that has demonstrated that organisational culture promotes hegemonic cultural practice (Alvesson and Deetz, 1999). As they dramatically claimed, 'they commend the homogenisation of norms and values within organisations … cultural diversity is dissolved in the acid bath of corporate values' (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996:534).

There have been some ad hoc efforts to deal with diversity aspects such as the sports role model program that Natalie was working for, however, this initiative appeared to be a superficial public relations exercise and was minimally resourced. Girls from non-English-speaking backgrounds were targeted for increased sports participation but within existing paradigms of delivery. It was clearly articulated by the staff involved in delivering this initiative that assimilation was the desired outcome rather than an acceptance of cultural diversity, making the program symbolic rather than substantive. Netball has not been the only sport that does not specifically target aspects of cultural diversity. Suggestions by the *Active Australia* campaign and the Australian Sports Commission that cultural diversity should be embraced by sports organisations appear to have gone unheeded. In reviewing the current lack of participation among ethnic minority groups, it was noted that, 'there is little understanding of the needs of these populations … strategies need to be developed to increase awareness of these groups of Australian adults' (Australian Sports Commission (2000:30). Four other national sporting bodies that have high levels of female participation were contacted for the present research to ascertain if they had specific polities on cultural diversity. Australian Swimming, the Australian Women's Hockey Association, the Australian Women's Soccer Association and Tennis Australia all responded that they had no policies or specific programs to support culturally diversity.

7.5 The 'Case' of Netball

This case study of netball is one step in this process in creating a better understanding of the place of culturally and linguistically diverse women in sports. The exploratory questions posed for this research are each addressed below.

What patterns of participation are revealed from historical records?

Social, gender and cultural relations within Australian society have been translated into the initiation, evolution and imaging of netball. Netball has historically positioned itself in the mainstream of societal expectations about women in sports and in doing so has avoided challenging the dominant discourse of sports. Netball created its own space for women who wanted to be physically active and not feel that their femininity or social acceptability was compromised. As few other sports were able to provide this type of all embracing acceptability, netball emerged as the game of choice for women. Its non-threatening nature meant that it was easily integrated into school's sports curriculum and its play was sanctioned in community and workplace competitions. This widespread appeal provided netball with the ideal base from which to emerge as the number one team sport for females.

Archival and policy documentation together with the interview narratives supplied by women with a long-term association with netball have suggested that the game has been aimed to meet the needs of women from the mainstream. While there is no evidence that netball has formally excluded other participants, there is no evidence that netball has actively encouraged cultural diversity either.

What are the current patterns of netball participation for women and girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds?

This question was primarily explored using existing national participation figures and the questionnaire survey data. The resulting pattern is one that demonstrates that a lower than average proportion of girls and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds chose to play netball. For the girls surveyed, school was a major factor in influencing play netball and for the women netballers 'friends' was the prime influencer. Feelings of otherness and difference, which were created by ethnic stereotyping, combined with cultural awkwardness were key deterrents to netball participation. As the acculturation process progresses these feelings diminished and the likelihood of participation increased. This is particularly notable between first and second generation minority group members. White, English-speaking participants with British ancestry

dominate netball; the further an individual is from this typology the less likely they are to play netball.

What are the current needs for these women/girls in terms of netball?

The survey and interview respondents indicated a range of desired requirements for participation that can be classified into four general categories: environmental, cultural, communication, and intrinsic. Environmental requirements related to: inclusive societal attitudes, disassembling negative stereotypes, and breaking down barriers of informal exclusion. Cultural requirements encompassed the respect of cultural diversity, provisions made for adherence to religious requirements, and acceptance of difference. Communication needs consisted of specific language-based requirements and better use of existing ethnic networks and channels for communication and information distribution. Intrinsic needs related to increased emphasis on skill development and specific training about the netball rules and practices; and creating a welcoming atmosphere in netball clubs that values cultural diversity.

Is netball inclusive or exclusive of multi-ethnic women and girls?

Research has found that sports that are rigidly timetabled alienate women from participation (Lenskyj, 1988). Netball is very regulated, from dress codes to competition timetables. Most competitions still take place on Saturday mornings or weekday evenings, which in itself is highly constraining, although a number of alternative competitions have emerged. Women who have family commitments during these times are almost by default excluded from participation. The dress regulations are also a potential deterrent for women with religious attire requirements that fall outside of the accepted attire.

Other managerial issues related to addressing the aforementioned needs of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Programs that incorporate aspects such as introductory coaching clinics with instruction in community languages, netball rules printed in community languages and the promotion of netball clubs through ethnic media channels and networks would serve to make netball more culturally inclusive. Giving cultural diversity issues consideration in the structure and delivery of netball competitions

will require a much better understanding of such issues by administrators of the game then is currently the situation.

What is the level of managerial commitment to culturally inclusive practices in netball?

At this stage the administrators of netball do not perceive cultural inclusivity as a priority issue. The achievement of social justice and equity in cultural diversity does not appear to be core to the policies of the delivery of netball. The 'others' in positions of control within the sport (netball administrators) have a vested interest in not changing a system that they are comfortable with and one that has evolved to suit their particular needs. However, a by-product of the drive to internationalise netball has been the introduction of netball into countries where it has not been traditionally played. The current aspiration of elite level netballers and administrators is to have the game recognised as an Olympic sport. Tangentially, this desire to be included in the Olympic program may provide the impetus for a more culturally inclusive approach to netball as the sport aims to prove that it is truly 'international' in nature.

What resources will be needed to create a culturally inclusive netball environment in netball?

Until inclusivity becomes a targeted outcome of netball it is unlikely that any action will be taken to embrace cultural diversity within netball. If such a strategy were to be pursued the starting point must be to imbue staff, umpire, coach and volunteers training for netball with a working knowledge of the issues surrounding the valuing of cultural diversity. Marketing and re-imaging the game to include players from different cultural backgrounds and actively targeting ethnic communities along with other such grass roots initiatives in schools with concentrations of ethnic minority populations would be useful starting points.

The explanatory questions for the case study were:

How do the respondents view the 'attractiveness' netball in comparison to other sports?

Given the survey data and interview narratives it would appear that netball participation has fewer limitation than other team sports. However, it is not a particularly highly valued sport for most of the women from non-Commonwealth countries. Interview respondents

spoke about how other sports such as tennis or ten-pin bowling were perceived as 'prestigious' sports for women from their respective countries. As netball was generally not a sport played in their home country it was an unknown quantity. Therefore, many first generation women encouraged their daughters into other sports that they knew and valued.

While not particularly highly valued netball was at least perceived as an acceptable sport. Several of the women interviewed indicated that they did not believe that a number of contact sports such as rugby and boxing were appropriate for them or their daughters. Women's reservations about netball were mainly related to issues of not knowing the sport, how it is played or how it is administered. Although netball was not viewed as hostile to diversity, neither was it perceived as particularly culturally inclusive.

Can netball meet population and societal changes and maintain its number one position?

To date netball has managed to successfully negotiate its position in the mainstream. This conservative approach to sports provision has provided netball with a large player base that has been largely drawn from its massive coverage and schoolgirl involvement. However, times are changing and an increasing variety of sports are now being offered to girls and women. These alternative choices may soon challenge the previously privileged position of netball.

Shifting immigration and settlement patterns also mean that higher proportions of women from countries that have not traditionally played netball will alter Australia's population. Unless netball broadens its appeal to attract girls and women from these ethnic minority backgrounds it is likely to start to have its market share eroded. Equally damaging might be the introduction of new sports which also target the market of 'mainstream' Australia leading to greater competition, and than the pursuit of the 'other' may provide a new mains for a sport to expand its base.

How does netball evaluate the cultural inclusiveness of its sporting environment?

Netball does not evaluate issues of access or equity in relation to female from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

7.6 Reflecting on the Analysis

Socio-cultural historians should never be satisfied with the reproduction of knowledge about personal experience without analysing how it was produced and represented in the first instance. The data gathered for this case study has been used to tease out meanings, implications and perceptions about netball. The cultural meaning and significance of this participation discourse for the women involved has been the focus of these investigations. The pervasiveness of popular culture was tied very closely to an important theme that emerged from the data; the dominance of the socio-cultural norm of femininity in the women's lives. While this was addressed and negotiated in different ways depending on various contextual factors, compulsory femininity functioned as the core ideology underpinning the women's interpersonal and intragroup transactions, although it was not explicitly acknowledged. What was striking was that this norm of femininity was central to the social worlds of both women and girls, and it guided their behaviour and beliefs across their racial, ethnic, and class differences, although it manifested itself in different ways based on cultural variances.

The question of how different cultures view netball participation and how women from different cultural backgrounds perceive femininity in netball has been raised in this chapter. While the analysis offered here has represented netball as a compliantly feminine sport (as outlined in Chapter Five) I must also question whether or not women from other cultures would conceptualise it in the same terms that I have proffered. In justifying my analytical position I have used data from various sources, archives, surveys and interviews in an effort to triangulate indicators and ensure at least surface reliability for the interpretations offered in the investigations. However, these analyses reflect my cultural background and biases and should be viewed within such limitations. At the end of the day the best explanations of culture and experience in netball will be found in each woman's own story.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

8.0 Introduction

In this final chapter the data collected and information obtained for this thesis are taken into consideration to offer some final comments on women, sports and ethnicity. Conclusions about the research problem and questions are presented. Principally, this research has demonstrated that many women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have felt that sports organisations have done little to facilitate gender and cultural inclusivity. Possible reasons for this lack of action on cultural diversity have been suggested in Chapters Six and Seven. The empirical findings presented in these chapters are a starting point from which to build a better theoretical understanding about the nexus of gender, ethnicity and sports. A conceptual framework for managing gender and cultural diversity in sports organisations will be proposed later in this chapter.

Furthermore, initiatives to assist the development of inclusive sports opportunities for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds will be outlined in the final section of this chapter. The strategies consider aspects of access, opportunity and equity while being sensitive to culturally constructed attitudes to sports participation. These suggestions are propositions for facilitating change and provide sports organisations with alternative perspectives on the ways to better address the sports needs of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. In concluding, the thesis offers reflective comments on the present research and puts forward several suggestions for further research on women and sports.

8.1 Thesis Propositions

This thesis was originally conceived as a research study investigating why the sports participation of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds was significantly lower than that of other women living in Australia. The motivation to pursue this line of research was supplied by a seemingly rational line of thought. I surmised that since women from non-English-speaking backgrounds were under-represented in sports participation data their situation was problematic and needed to

be better understood. The 'what' of this problem, the data showing low participation rates, already existed. However, 'why was this so?' was less evident. The reasons why women from ethnic minority backgrounds were not engaging in sports had not been empirically explored. However, these initial propositions shifted numerous times as I came to more fully appreciate the complex interrelationships between ethnic minority women and sports participation. As a result, the research refocused from its initial participation-based emphasis to encompass the examination of culturally restraining sports discourses and organisational practices. The study participants' experiences and stories of how their lives were shaped by discourses of inclusion and exclusion were to form the crux of the thesis.

Another shift occurred during the data analysis and reporting phase of the study. In respect of the many pleas in existing literature on ethnicity and women I planned to undertake the narrative analysis without using ethnicity as a defining variable. However, as the interviews unfolded the stories of women I listened to began to naturally coalesce around dimensions of ethnicity. Hence the analysis drew together the experiences of women from the same region or religion. This outcome has provided an alternative analysis frame that could be investigated in further research on women and sports.

Although the research problem has been reconceptualised the importance of increasing sports participation with its associated health and well-being benefits, has not been discounted. Instead, the research has provided the groundwork needed to facilitate a process of change, namely, the creation of a better understanding of the current situation. This has been achieved by the interpretations offered on the dynamic relationship of women and sports by women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The contribution of sports to social organisation within gendered and culturally constructed social realities have been articulated so that equity in sports participation opportunities can be realised. An interpretation of how individual experiences in sports can extend current knowledge about social relations and cultural institutions is the contribution of this thesis to the field of sports studies.

8.2 Conclusions about the Research Problem

As previously noted, national survey data revealed that the level of sports participation of culturally and linguistically diverse women was below normative rates for women. Using this as a starting point it was proposed that many women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Australia have been marginalised and even systematically excluded from sports participation. The research also sought to establish if discourses of sports promulgated negative cultural stereotypes; if women's lack of involvement in sports could be attributed to culturally or religiously specific requirements; and if the underlying philosophy of sports organisations were based on historically constructed principles of assimilation or acculturation or the more recent tenets of cultural diversity. The research aimed to answer these questions from the perspectives and experiences of women and girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. These 'other knowledges' explored the role of sports organisations and discourses in circumscribing lived experiences and narratives fundamental to social and cultural marginality.

The study objectives were realised through an empirical exploration of factors influencing sports participation and non-participation by investigating the nature of sports involvement and, most importantly, by providing the opportunity for women to speak about their experiences of sports organisations and discourses. A broad interpretation of 'sports' was employed whereby the sports experiences discussed in the interviews included both formal and informal physical activities. A critical socio-historical perspective was used to interrogate the social construction of sports organisation to reveal marginalisation, exploitation or inequities that might have been otherwise been buried within the sports discourses and practices as defined by dominant groups. The research statement was:

> ***What impact have the discourses and organisation of sports had on women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Australia?***

The analyses were embedded with the understanding that social context is centrally located in the examination of gender and ethnicity (Bottomley, de Lepervanche and

Martin, 1991). The emanating propositions about women and sports delineated the research and were subsequently empirically investigated. The data was collected by surveys, interviews and document searches. The questionnaire surveys were used to identify issues and aspects to be investigated in greater depth in the interviews. As such these data were secondary to the interview material. The stories and interpretations offered by women from diverse cultural backgrounds were the real focus of the research. The outcomes of the investigations will be discussed in the following sections.

8.2.1 Sports organisation and discourse

The empirical investigations explored the issue of gender and cultural inclusiveness of sports organisations and discourses. Many of the women interviewed said they anticipated ethnic discrimination and embarrassment in their sports participation and these aspects acted as significant deterrents. This meant they avoided situations where they might feel unwelcome or stand out as 'different'. Not surprisingly, the women enjoyed environments where they felt comfortable and could participate with others who spoke the same language or had a similar cultural or religious background. This was particularly poignant for women from Asian and Muslim backgrounds who felt that their physical appearance and attire often served to accentuate their 'differentness'. These women participated on the margins of sports often forming their own social networks to play sports informally in environments that provided safety, security and acceptance. In this sense the categories of race and religion were evidence of symbolic markers of unabsorbed cultural difference; the observable heterogenous cultural differences that cannot be assimilated or integrated. This finding reinforced Bhabha's (1990) notion of impossible unity of national identity.

While the policies and practices of sporting organisations may not have intentionally been established to effect exclusion in practice a significant proportion of women from ethnic minority groups perceived that they have faced more restrictions to participation than other women. While each limitation to participation was not in itself judged as exclusionary the cumulative nature of restrictions served to mitigate participation in sports from early childhood to old age. Throughout the interviews women told stories about perceived discrimination. These practices often started in school physical

education classes, were reinforced during adolescence and were ultimately perpetuated in adult experiences of sports. There was a strong feeling that the constant failure by schools and sports organisations to value and support cultural difference served to effectively diminish their level of motivation to engage in formal sporting activities. It was found that levels of perceived exclusion were influenced by the length of time the woman had been in the country, her age, race, proficiency in English and the extent to which her expectations differed from the cultural mainstream. Older women were more likely to have had experiences of exclusion and discrimination ranging over a number of years. Asian and Muslim women were most likely to have been confronted with negative stereotypes about their ability and desire to participate in sports.

While most women believed that their situation had improved over the last few decades there was little evidence to suggest that contemporary sports organisations were beginning to value cultural diversity within their organisations. In the case study sport of netball the administrators interviewed did not feel that there was any need to instigate a change in policy or practice to accommodate players from other cultural backgrounds. This ethnocentric perspective was reflective of the complexities of Australian social relations and policy found in other research on ethnic women (Bottomley, de Lepervanche and Martin, 1991). Encapsulated in the establishment and organisation of sports in this country is over 100 years of white history concentrated in the hands of the dominant cultural hegemony. Due to the country's colonial heritage many sports such as cricket, tennis and golf were introduced or developed by Anglo-Australians. Several other sports were introduced from North America, for example softball, trotting, surf-based riding and so forth. While initially not welcoming individuals from ethnic groups with non-English speaking backgrounds sports organisations have subsequently evolved to assimilate other cultural groups into their mainstream operations. However, few sports have actually taken the next step of valuing cultural diversity in their organisations.

Programs that have attempted to meet the specific requirements of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds appeared to be few and far between. Sports programs that have been organised to consider diverse language, religious and other such requirements were, in the most part, initiated and implemented by women's groups or multicultural community support networks. Cultural diversity initiatives were

generally not instigated by sports organisations. In the case of netball both the state and national administrators interviewed suggested that it was too costly for the sport to implement cultural diversity strategies. In the interviews the netball representatives were clearly referring to direct financial costs. However, the organisation's hesitation to develop diversity strategies might also be interpreted as wariness about the associated social and psychological costs, which accompany change. As part of this study, four other sports with large participant bases, hockey, soccer, swimming, and tennis were contacted and asked if they had policies or programs promoting cultural diversity. The response was negative in all cases. Organisational reluctance to embrace cultural diversity may be in part explained by sport's administrators concerns about retaining the current mainstream participant base if cultural diversity is simultaneously targeted. The fear of the unknown is often linked with lack of organisational change (Clegg and Hardy, 1999).

Many of the women interviewed believed that sports organisations were not trying to create meaningful change in the 'culture' of sports delivery and were not proactive in meeting their participation requirements. In the experience of the women interviewed for this study most programs that have targeted culturally diverse participation have been little more than token gestures and these efforts were seen as ad hoc and not sustainable. One-off attempts to cater for a particular ethnic group rarely penetrate an organisation's mindset beyond levels of symbolism and rhetoric. At best the practices employed by most sport organisations can be labelled as 'non-discriminatory'.

Why are many sports organisations seemingly unconcerned with the low participation rates of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds? The experiences of the women interviewed have suggested that the prevalent attitude within sports organisations is 'institutional inertia' with regard to cultural diversity issues. There is little awareness of a problem. Where sports have attracted relatively large numbers of other participants there is no perceived need to try and make that sport more inclusive of women and girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This in turn has meant that these organisations have ignored issues that affect the participation opportunities for this group of women and girls while at the same time convincing themselves that they are being responsive to community needs. Continuing with existing practices has reinforced and reaffirmed inequitable sports

delivery systems and kept existing sports culture in a vicious cycle of inequity and discrimination. This is not a situation that is unique to Australian sports. As outlined in Chapter 2 numerous other studies from a range of western countries have also concluded that low participation rates are often blamed on women's attitudes rather than organisational constraint.

These organisational constraints have led many women to play sports outside of the formal system. Many of the women interviewed participated in sports with community, religious and women's groups or friends and family. These environments were able to offer support, safety and were not perceived as culturally alienating.

8.2.2 In summary

Low levels of formal sports participation of women and girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have served to demonstrate that inclusionary cultural practices are employed by few sports organisations. Women with a strong sense of self and a willingness to assimilate into the Anglo-Australian dominated world of sports have found a place in formally organised sports but other women have been marginalised in their participation opportunities. Inclusionary sports practices were not prevalent but were found in a few isolated cases. However, in general sports practices reflected a cultural bias. Clearly cultural diversity is not yet an integral component of the structure and culture of most Australian sports organisations.

Currently and historically the social construction of sports has acted to maintain existing inequities of opportunity whereby systemic social injustice has been perpetuated by dominant ideology, norms and values. The way most sports are practised has promoted conformity to the dominant cultural consensus and reinforced the continuation of marginalisation of non-dominant groups. Paraschak's (1996) proposition of the two groups of 'others' provided the frame for this dimension of the analysis. Using her terms it is suggested that the first group of 'others' have maintained their power in sports organisations, power that is based on a continued system of differences as defined by a privileged ethnocentric masculine discourse. The power relations have legitimised a system of exclusion or non-inclusion for the second group of 'others', namely women from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Reflective analysis of how the ideologies, values and practices of sports impact on social justice issues needs to be encouraged so that these current inequities do not continue to be perpetuated. Reconfiguring sports organisation and delivery is not a transformation that can occur in isolation of the rest of society. Using Connell's (1990) frames of power it is suggested that the present study has demonstrated that the social relations of sports are embedded in an Australian culture that is dominated by a masculine Anglo-Australian ethnocentric perspective. While societal change has occurred and generally become more inclusive of women and ethnic minority groups, sports organisations have lagged behind. To provide sports environments that are inclusive of cultural diversity for women, as well as men, substantial changes in sports organisation and delivery are required. The first step in this process is creating a better understanding about sports. This was the aim of this thesis and follows Hall's (1996) suggestion that understanding sports as sites of cultural struggles can allow women to better negotiate their own place within these sites. The answers to the present study's research questions will hopefully improve this understanding.

8.3 Conclusions about the Research Questions

The research investigated a number of subsidiary questions. It sought to identify the factors which influenced the involvement of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in sports; assess the role sports have played in the formation and maintenance of gender and ethnic identities and in the reproduction of gender and ethnic specific forms of marginality; and determine how sports organisations have considered issues of access, equity and cultural diversity within their current practices. In other words, the research sought to establish if sports have served to perpetuate gender and culturally constituted power relationships in sports.

8.3.1 Influencing factors

Several factors were identified as having influenced the involvement of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in sports. Dominant sports discourses have had a significant influence on the formation and maintenance of gender and ethnic identities. Furthermore, the actions of sports organisations have facilitated the reproduction of gender and ethnic specific forms of marginality. The

social construction of femininity has been predicated by white, ethnocentric standards and as such occupies a position of privilege in Australian society.

8.3.2 Stereotypes

Several of the women interviewed stated that they have routinely found themselves on the margins of Australian sports. These women were confronted by negative stereotypes about their desire to participate in sports and the conditions under which they would do so. Many of these stereotyped ethnic images have served to limit women's formal sporting opportunities, however, this was not universal in the findings. For several Muslim women, misunderstanding about their religious requirements facilitated exclusionary attitudes and acted as a form of tacit discrimination. On the other hand, women from countries with strong sporting traditions said that community expectations and stereotypes facilitated their sports participation. This finding underscored the relationship between mainstream community perceptions about a particular cultural or religious group and the group member's subsequent equitable access to sports. Stereotypes ranged from positive to negative, from images which facilitated sports participation to those that constrained it.

While sports organisations and discourses were found to have perpetuated stereotypes about ethnic minority women they were not alone in this respect. General cultural and society-mediated norms have shaped women's gendered behaviours across a range of domains of social relations; the process is not limited to sports. The significance attached to the expectations and perceptions of 'others' shapes behaviour. Stereotyping was found to be a major factor in explaining the sporting opportunities available to women from particular ethnic backgrounds. It has reinforced the power of one group over another and has either opened up or closed off opportunities for sports participation.

8.3.3 Cultural Expectations

Cultural background was found to influence how sports were perceived. Women from cultural backgrounds that valued and celebrated feminine qualities spoke about how they felt uncomfortable in many male dominated sporting environments. These comments were made in relation to a range of sports that were perceived by the women

as the domain of Anglo-Australian males. Women who had entered into these sports territories said they felt powerless and unable to negotiate the terms and conditions upon which they engaged in these sports. In many instances this was accompanied a desire to somehow maintain a sense of femininity in sports participation. However, the women who were from countries with strong sporting traditions in female sports participation said that did not feel any alienation or cultural conflict when playing sports in Australia. It is important to note that almost all of the women interviewed had been active in sport before migrating. This finding challenges the cultural deficient approach that is often offered by the dominant 'others'.

Participating in sports environments, which were conducive to the promotion of family cohesion, was identified as a priority for the majority of the women with children. These women stressed the importance of family cohesiveness. When their participation in sports could co-exist with, or assist in, the maintenance of this family value sports were perceived as more attractive. Most of the women interviewed, when faced with a choice between activities they could engage in with their significant others or on their own, chose activities that allowed them the freedom to move between these two criteria. Family responsibilities have been frequently classified as contributors to the oppression for women in other research. However, in the present research many of the women spoke about family issues with pride and a sense of purpose. For these women family-based activities provided them with a supportive environment for sports participation. Additionally, when sports were undertaken within ethnic and religious communities a feeling of collective identity was achieved. In most cases this participation involved informal sports activities such as volleyball played in the park or soccer in the street; activities undertaken outside formal sports organisations and competitions. To this end sports activities have provided these women with an avenue for expressing a communal sense of self that allowed for expression of a gendered and cultural identity and acted to resist racism and inappropriate stereotypes.

8.3.4 Assimilation or cultural diversity?

Official government policy in Australia has moved from promoting assimilation and integration to cultural pluralism. Soccer was one sport that has embraced cultural diversity and allowed ethnic identities to be maintained and even celebrated (Hughson, 1998). However, the findings of the present research project have

suggested that sports have not afforded women from diverse ethnic backgrounds this same avenue of cultural or gendered expression. There was no equivalent 'ethnic' sport such as soccer for women. No particular status or authenticity has been given to women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Australian sports.

While it has been argued in other studies that cultural assimilation of ethnic minority groups into Australian society has been aided by sporting participation (Mosely, 1994), the research conducted for this thesis found limited examples of women using sports to socially, economically or politically integrate into the dominant culture either currently or historically. While sports may have been important in the integration of male migrants into Australian culture via sports such as soccer the same statement could not be made for their female counterparts. For women sports delivery systems have embodied the persistence of a pervasive neo-colonialism.

Sports participation, and in particular netball participation, is located within the shifting parameters of societal and cultural expectations about the types of experiences which are appropriate for any given group of people. At best sports participation has served as a minor contributor to what Shaull and Gramann (1998) have termed selective-acculturation. This is where activities that occur in the context of family and friendship groups with few social limitations serve to provide a supportive environment for the expression and transmission of sub-cultural identity. That is, the retention of certain core cultural traits. The constructions of, and struggles with, ethnic identities in complex, changing social contexts of sports have provided women with ambiguous and sometimes contradictory messages.

8.3.5 The case of netball

The case study of netball told the story of a 'female' sport and its successful use of a 'compliant feminine' image to develop a large market share amongst women. Netball organisers worked hard to establish and maintain its place as a sport for women, run by women and acceptable for women to play. Netball was one of a select few sports that was available for girls to play in schools since its inception. Netball was able to exploit the contention that women are the 'weaker sex' and constructed a sport that neatly complied with social expectations of women in sports. Its popularity has demonstrated

the inherent power dimensions and struggles of sports participation that have served to keep women out of sports that were traditionally seen as male domains (Dunning, 1995). Netball was not perceived as a threat to male domination of sports and was therefore allowed to grow at its own pace. Other sports that were viewed as 'male' did not provide the same ease of entry for women. Netball organisers created and maintained a public perception of netball as a feminine sport over many decades. Whether this was a well-planned tactic or it simply evolved, is open to debate, but the outcome has been to position netball as the number one team sport for women in the country.

Dewar's (1993) suggestion that facts about women in sports are selected to fit into existing frameworks that do not challenge hegemonic representations is eminently applicable to netball. Netball emphasised its feminine side in the style of its uniforms, its rules of non-contact and other such dimensions of the game. This image has been carefully maintained and perpetuated and, in consequence, netball continues to have widespread appeal to female players. It was not subject to derogatory media or public comments about the appropriateness of the sport for women. The female body in netball has represented a chaste and feminine ideal, a carefully maintained heterosexual image, not subversive or masculine, and therefore not challenging or destabilising for men (Davis, 1996). Perceived social norms of femininity have been played out through ongoing constructions of femininity within netball. The use of mediated images, rules and regulations have been woven into those constructions and served in various ways to maintain these feminine identities as well as to secure their relationships to the broader social world. Themes of femininity were located in the interview narratives in multiple ways but certain practices occurred frequently and repeatedly enough to constitute clearly discernible modalities of mass mediated feminine expression. While these arguments may seem to suggest that netball has not aided in the emancipation of women, it might be asked whether many sport have been able to do this. In studies of women's involvement in 'male' sports it has been similarly concluded that despite female involvement in these sports the discourses of power and control remain in the hands of men. The studies have included bodybuilding (Lowe, 1998; Obel, 1996; St Martin and Gavey, 1996), women's rugby (Wright and Clarke, 1999) and soccer (Scraton *et al*, 1999), each concluding that female involvement has not lead to any substantive changes to conceptualisations of femininity.

The case study of netball has offered specific insights into issues of access and equity with respect of gender and cultural diversity. While netball has not excluded women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, it has not proactively incorporated the needs of these women into its delivery. The case that has been developed supports the argument that netball epitomises the organisation of mainstream sport that aims to first and foremost satisfy the needs of the cultural mainstream. The needs of the dominant 'others' have taken precedence. The organisational culture of netball is reflective of an ethos of assimilation rather than cultural diversity and females from ethnic minority backgrounds are under-represented in its constituency.

8.4 Cultural Diversity in Sports Organisations

The research has indicated the many sports organisations do not overtly value gender and cultural diversity. Inaction on issues of cultural diversity can be related to five key commonly held assumptions. Firstly, sports organisations seem to believe that directing resources into the recruitment of players from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds would conversely mean taking resources away from the core player base and therefore not be equitable. Secondly, they assume that any added resources, polices and efforts would not translate into sufficient player numbers to justify the expenditure. Third, is the belief that the recruitment of players from specific ethnic backgrounds would have the potential to alienate mainstream support. Fourthly, it is assumed that many females from particular cultural and religious backgrounds are 'not allowed' to play sports or do not want to play netball due to its historic antecedents as a colonial game. And finally, there is firm conviction that eventually all girls and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds will culturally assimilate into the mainstream offerings.

Netball appeared to be typical of most Australian sports. Few initiatives have been taken to make it culturally inclusive. The historical antecedents for this situation have been firmly located in the country's colonial past and its policies of migration and settlement. The organisation of netball pays homage to its colonial roots and therefore it is not altogether surprising that the sport is relatively mono-cultural. Netball 'grew up' during the years when Australia's settlement policies promoted cultural integration

and assimilation. During these the years the sport developed its organisational structures and player recruitment bases, all of which worked to place netball at the top of women's team sports in terms of number of participants. As the sport was successful in attracting large numbers of women and girls netball did not face the imperative to change.

The sports that have developed initiatives to become more culturally inclusive have typically been sports that were faced with declining numbers. Mosely (1997b) identified individual associations such as NSW Cricket Association, Carlton AFL Club, and Canterbury-Bankstown Rugby League. The reasons that these clubs targeted ethnic communities was related to their geographical position in areas with high concentrations of people from non-English speaking backgrounds, decreased player and spectator numbers, loss of talent to alternative sports such as basketball and attempts to broaden their overall market appeal.

The major Australian sports have not developed culturally inclusive policies in reply to changing government policy on assimilation and integration. The reasons for this lack of change are a thesis topic on their own, but in terms of the present research five possible arguments for facilitating change are offered. The first argument is founded on moral and equity considerations. The development of inclusive policies and practices within sports organisations, together with more inclusive sport discourses, will ultimately translate into fewer cultural and gender constraints to sports participation. The right of an individual to choose to participate in sports and the attendant quality of life issues are central to this argument. Sports participation can provide people with the opportunity to be part of their communities and develop social relationships. The present reality of inadequate gender and cultural inclusion and the historical rationales for perpetuating assimilation practices in sports needs to be transformed. This requires an ideological shift and accompanying attitude change. Unless such change can be fully justified it is unlikely to happen. So in addition to the moral and equity arguments I suggest that there are practical and even financial reasons for changing sports practice.

Recent government initiatives stress the importance of developing strategies that include attracting larger numbers of the Australian community to sports. The recent Commonwealth report on sport and recreation (Commonwealth of Australia, 1999)

recommended a major change in government priorities to achieve further economic, health and social benefits for specific groups. Further funding is to be linked to the ability of sports to increase physical activity levels and demonstrate that they are providing for all sectors of the population. In effect, sport organisations will need to demonstrate that they are inclusive of women and ethnicity for future funding. In addition the new funding schemes stress increased sports self-funding. By expanding their participant base sports organisations will increase their potential to attract sponsorship and donor monies from non-government sources.

The third argument relates to pure and simple survival into the new millennium. The increased choice from a wide array of sports has meant a dispersion of traditional player, volunteer and spectator bases. As the competition for patrons intensifies the ability of sports to target, attract and retain females and males from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds will be of increasing importance. The provision of a culturally supportive sports environment would give the sport an advantage in this regard.

Fourthly, it has been demonstrated that individual sports clubs such as the Canterbury and Carlton football organisations have successfully pursued talent from outside the mainstream. The player base of these clubs has expanded and a number of elite level players have emerged from this process. Additionally, community support has increased across several dimensions from school sport to spectators and ethnic business sponsorships. Finally, the contention that gender and ethnic inclusion will be a large expense is not always tenable. What is primarily required is an attitudinal shift, a change in the way sports are spoken about and conceptualised. To foster a better understanding and awareness about the needs and requirements of women and cultural diversity is not expensive. The implementation of polices to encourage participation across all cultural groups might incur some initial additional costs but these issues would soon evolve into current practice. For example, using an image of a Muslim women playing tennis in a marketing campaign would be the same cost as using the image of an Anglo-Australian male.

The findings of the present study have shown there are still many cultural limitations to female sports participation. The findings of the present research have suggested that participating in formally organised sports have remained generally the preserve of those

women who are willing to adhere to the cultural mainstream's practices and expectations. Very few women have challenged the notions of cultural restriction within sports organisations or used sports to construct a positive identity of difference. However, many women have gone outside the sports system and engaged in physical activities with friends, family and within other supportive networks. Deconstructing discourses surrounding the broad grouping of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds can provide the basis from which to challenge inequitable treatment within organised sports. While women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are individually unique, there were many similarities of experience amongst individuals in this group that could be used to develop culturally inclusive practices. The conceptual grouping of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds has been used here to analyse differential access to resources and opportunities as well as the interactions with structural and cultural constraints within the Australian sporting scene.

8.5 Implications for Theory – changing sports discourses

The present research has explored the intersection of women, ethnicity and sports. This section will draw empirically informed conclusions about the research imperatives.

8.5.1 Identity

The interview narratives provided the basis from which to conclude that ethnic identity is constructed by individual group members, by the ethnic group itself and also by those outside this membership. Women from the same ethnic backgrounds described their different identities, and in some case multiple identities, and explained how these identities influenced their involvement in sports. The maintenance of a distinctive ethnic identity was found to be very important for some women but not as important for others. Not surprisingly, first generation women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were more likely to engage in activities within their ethnic communities and were more conscious of ethnic group values, identities and norms than second generation women. However, there was substantial variation even amongst newly arrived migrant women and the dynamic nature of ethnic identity was strikingly apparent.

Given the fluidity and diversity within ethnic groups it was not unexpected that the research revealed that attitudes to sports and participation patterns varied enormously between members of the same ethnic group. Despite this high level of variation within ethnic groupings it was discovered that women from particular ethnic groups were continually exposed to stereotypical expectations about their behaviour. That is to say women's individual identities were incessantly subsumed into their broader ethnic group classification and as such they were ascribed with stereotyped attributes. Group homogeneity and inter-group difference were commonly accentuated and individual differences subjugated. Myths of cultural homogeneity were identified as of particular importance in shaping the sports experiences of ethnic minority women and limiting their equitable access to sports opportunities. In the main these cultural and religious stereotypes were a limiting factor for sports participation, although in a small proportion of instances the stereotype enhanced involvement in sports.

Research on men in sports in Australia has suggested that a collective experience of sports has contributed to the formation of an ethnic identity and culture (Gerorgakis, 1999; Hughson, 1993 and 2000). However, as argued earlier, the same conclusions about female sports were not evident in the present research. Sports organisations have done little to facilitate the content and meaning of women's ethnic identity and few sports contexts value cultural diversity. Amongst the women who participated in this research sports involvement was not overtly used to enhance, contradict, or perpetuate an individual woman's or a collective ethnic identity. Unlike some of their male counterparts the women who have been involved in sports have not openly challenged the premise of the limiting stereotypes. Nor have women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds participated in large enough numbers in any one sport or moved to claim it as part of their ethnic identity as has been in the case of men's soccer within Australia.

Over the last half-century women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have seemingly accepted their third tier status in the sporting world behind men and behind Anglo-Australian women. Sports have not provided many opportunities for growth, change and identity formation to any substantive degree. Given the diversity of symbolic manifestations of sports involvement the ensuing potential interpretations are indeed expansive. Identity is dynamic and it is formed

through repeated interactions between individuals and within the community. This is a two-way interaction and sports discourses, organisations and participants can change as a result of this exchange. A better understanding of the process of construction of ethnicity and sports may enable the development of alternative models of sports provision which are not only more inclusive but also offer the opportunity for self-expression of diverse cultural attributes.

8.5.2 Inclusion

In tracing the historical development of women's sports, and in particular netball, a shifting contour of gender and ethnic relations has emerged. The indices of this shift are evident in increasing, though still stigmatised, social inclusion of women in sports and subsequent transformational reconstruction of sporting practices. While women have attained an increasing presence in sports the present research revealed that this increased access has not been universally attained. There are significant differences between women and within groups of women. Exploring, interpreting and understanding these different historical specificities and relations of power have been important aspects in the discussions of this thesis. The political currency of females from non-English-speaking backgrounds is embedded within a system of exclusion that is self-justifying. There is an inextricable link between the power of stereotyped views of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds being uninterested in sports and the way sports have continued to ignore the needs of these women. Changing such existing paradigms is no easy task. Just as within the broader society within which it is located, sports organisations appear to have removed explicit racism and bias, however, more subtle forms of discrimination have remained. This cultural bias is inherently ingrained in both the language and actions associated with all dimensions of sports from playing to spectating. How sports can provide a more gender and culturally inclusive environment?

The present research has revealed that contemporary social environments have regulated expressions of gender and ethnicity. Conceptualisations of normative ethnic femininity have not provided the opportunity for most sports to be fully inclusive of female involvement. The women interviewed in this research continually referred to issues of ignorance, fear of the unknown, resistance to change and general apathy as

potent emotions that underpinned the way in which sport providers constructed and delivered services. Unless there is a change in present thinking about issues of ethnicity and culture together with recognition of institutionalised networks of power that constrain and limit autonomy this situation may remain unchanged.

In proposing a framework for better understanding this situation it is argued that sports organisations should become more equitable in the delivery of their services and the way in which they conceptualise sports involvement needs to more culturally inclusive. This moral argument is presupposed on the basic human rights principle that every person, regardless of sex, race, religion, sexuality or age should have equitable access to sports opportunities. The current reification of separateness, when applied to differences in access to sports programs, resources, constraints and requirements has reinforced the deficit perspective and inevitably placed blame with the particular ethnic group for low rates of sports participation. The moral imperative, which is ingrained in government policy on sports provision, together with the previously discussed financial and survival imperatives, provide compelling reasons for sports to adopt gender and culturally inclusive policies and practices.

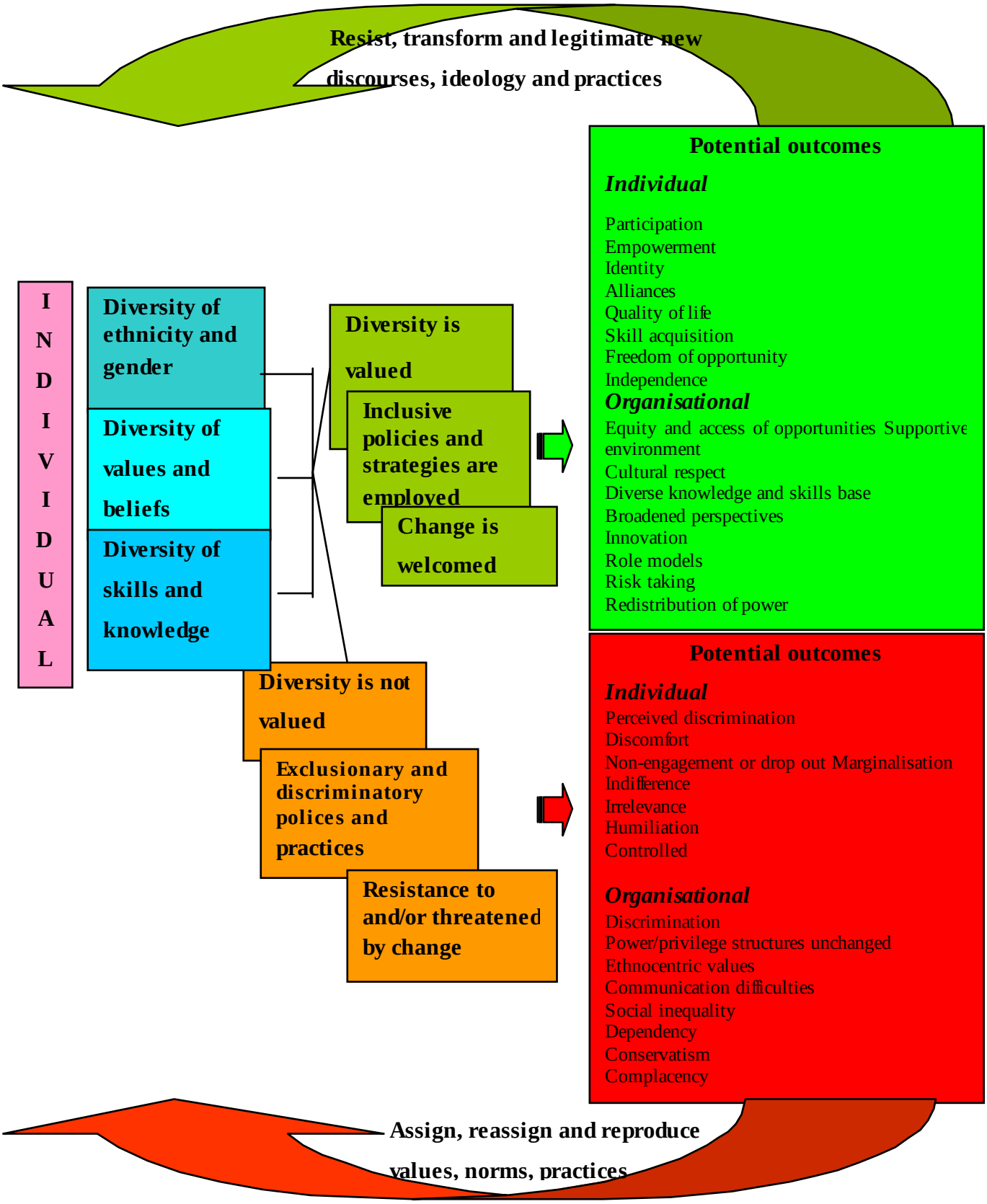
While the organisation and delivery of sports may seem peripheral to broader societal issues of social injustice and exploitation the argument of this thesis has been that currently sports act to legitimise and affirm existing power structures and inequities. The control, production and distribution of cultural power presently disadvantage women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Sports are a microcosm for the creation of social structures via the renegotiation of dominant and oppositional ideological positions. It has been found that the dominant codes of femininity and ethnicity were constantly reinforced by stereotypical expectations of acceptable forms of behaviour in sports provision and discourses. The current power structures within Australian sports have proven to be highly resistant to changing these stereotypes. As a consequence, it appeared that few women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have identified sport as an avenue for expressions of emancipation, improvement of social conditions or cultural resistance. This is set against overseas examples of sport being used as a vehicle for creation of social value, instigation of social change and maintenance of cultural identities.

Understanding, respecting and acknowledging the tenets of cultural diversity are essential considerations in developing an inclusive sports environment (Australian Sports Commission, 2000). Theoretically, creating a better understanding of all cultures and environments would facilitate a situation where the contribution of members of cultural groups was valued positively. 'How we perceive other people affects how we behave towards them and how they, in turn behave towards us' (Robinson, 1988:49). The development of a hybrid sporting culture that breaks down constraints to participation and promotes inclusivity is an opportunity to challenge existing ethnocentric and patriarchal systems that have been proven to be exclusionary and deterministic. The discourse of Australian sport has the potential to create a symbolic space in which ethnic and cultural difference can be accepted and valued. Due to the complexities of interaction between women, sport and ethnicity researchers have been hesitant in proposing ways to theorise about these dimensions (Gill, 1994).

8.5.3 A framework for managing gender and cultural diversity

The framework of sport engagement presented in Figure 8.1 is offered as an outcome of the conceptual inquiry engaged in for this research. In the methodology chapter it was suggested that one form of theory that might emerge from this research was formal theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This graphic representation of sports inclusion identifies levels of inclusion and is the product of inductively driven comparative analysis of the research data collected. The contestation of meaning associated with involvement or non-involvement in sports is not specifically included in this representation as it is assumed that different individuals in varied situations will negotiate their own meanings. Sports participation offers the potential to enable an individual to transcend the controlling projections of the dominant culture and challenge stereotypes by transgression and resistance.

Figure 8.1 A framework for managing gender and cultural diversity



The intention of this framework is to indicate how the practices of sports organisations act to value or systematically devalue people from different cultural, ethnic, or religious groups. Understanding these processes may provide for a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of power and privilege in sports organisations and, ultimately, increase the possibilities for organisational learning, change and renewal. An introspective examination of an organisation can identify the dominant practices and assumptions that sustain male or ethnic privilege. For example, in netball it was discovered that implicit assumptions about its player base virtually ensured that those who did not fit the dominant image felt like outsiders. This prevailing attitude deprived the sport of a substantial untapped market of women and girls from other cultural groups.

The proposition outlined in the framework is that sports organisations reactions to gender and ethnicity can range from valuing difference to valuing sameness. It suggests that varied aspects of identity, such as religion or ethnicity, can shape some women's experiences in sports. In illustration, the present research found that stereotypes about Muslim women have meant that Muslim women have been provided with few opportunities to engage in sports in environments that meet their religious requirements. In consequence their levels of formal sports participation tend to be low. This situation then further reinforces the perception of these women as less interested in sports and less athletic.

By suggesting that there are multiple aspects of identity this approach facilitates a more inclusive change process. The interaction between gender and ethnicity takes on different forms and evokes multiple experiences and stories depending on which aspect of identity is central. These actions are grounded in historically produced social differences that impact on gender and ethnicity. Sports discourses have developed different ways of understanding and speaking about societal groups, which have set the parameters for how people talk about their experiences in sports and the extent to which they can imagine alternatives. Examining the discourses and organisation of sports through a wide-angle lens can broaden the parameters, deepen inquiry and enhance learning about sports and society.

8.6 Implications for Practice – changing sports organisations

As outlined in the previous section shifting the way in which sports are currently constituted requires both a change in attitude and a change in practice. Changes to the way sports organisations practically respond to cultural diversity will involve a substantial paradigm shift for traditional sports organisations. Long-standing traditions, customs and common practice have resisted against such changes.

8.6.1 Sports delivery issues

The findings of the present research suggest that contemporary sports provision has perpetuated discourses of ethnic negativity. Women and girls are constrained by narratives in the sporting community about what females are capable of or suited to and are therefore restricted in their opportunities to participate in sports. The women interviewed for this research have provided a long list of reasons why women from culturally diverse backgrounds have found sports participation alienating. Diversity issues have not been viewed as important in relation to other budget priorities. There has been much organisational resistance to change and the decision makers who are mainly males from English-speaking backgrounds (although this applies to many females as well) simply do not acknowledge that systemic diversity problems are a part of their organisation. An additional factor has been the lack of advocates to champion the cause of this marginalised group of women within sports. Strong leadership on diversity issues is absent from most sports in this country. Leaders are crucial in embedding behavioural changes, as sports culture cannot be manipulated into change. Transformation occurs through collective willpower, which needs to be defined by the organisation's leaders. All of these factors have combined to retain the status quo.

If change is to occur, sports organisations need to firstly critically evaluate their polices, strategies and practices to identify inequitable and exclusionary aspects as they apply to women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The male and predominantly monocultural structure of sports in Australia has led to the production and maintenance of a generic set of norms, values and cultural preferences that have not

easily accommodated gender and cultural diversity. Cultural difference is tolerated but it is not celebrated nor is it integrated into sports organisation and discourse. Every sports organisation is guided by certain beliefs or values that communicate what is important, whether the values are explicit or implicit, they constitute the essence of the organisation's culture. These shared values can be adapted to a culturally changing environment while still maintaining the integrity of each sports own identity. Unless there is a shared vision and a sense of commitment created to embrace cultural diversity change will not occur.

Change needs to occur at all levels of sports involvement not just with administrators or policy developers. Sporting organisations invidiously reflect the dominant paradigms of their host society in the selection of coaches, administrators and managers can result in reinforcing the preponderance of Anglo-Australian males. As with many organisations, 'the social order is largely constructed by those who dominate it … Accepting women and minorities into senior management positions is not compatible with the social identity of what is primarily a white, male bastion' (Elmes and Connelley, 1997:154). Currently the informal and exclusionary rules of entry are so entrenched that those who have been socialised into sport fail to recognise how their practices, policies and procedures continue to promote inequity, insensitivity and/or access. Internalised institutional responses both implicitly and explicitly maintain the inherent inequities of opportunity and have been highly resistant to attempts to ameliorate inequity. Unless the redistribution of power structures that constrain participation are changed inequities will continue to operate. It is not about asking women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to join mainstream sporting activities to conform but sports need to provide them with opportunities through which to resist such conformity and facilitate the change of dominant structural and environmental institutions. Sports provision in the twenty-first century faces a number of challenges on this front and the level of commitment about gender and cultural diversity should be determined and short and long-term strategies developed to substantively address these aspects and transform the current power dynamic.

Currently sports practices and discourses are relatively closed to cultural and gender diversity. Diversity appears to be seen more as a threat to the status quo and as a potential drain on resources. This thinking needs to change and positively embrace diversity in gender and ethnicity and to see inclusion of all people as an opportunity and to value difference. The promotion of diversity in organisational processes and policies has the potential to enhance organisational competitiveness, provide the basis for valuing diversity and incorporating different perspectives in knowledge creation and decision-making. The continued internationalisation of sport, combined with projected high levels of migration into Australia, sets an imperative for organisations to embrace cultural diversity on both the sport pitch and within the organisation. Inequalities in power and opportunity are more likely to be minimised if sports organisations move to achieve cultural integration and foster affiliation and reciprocity. The challenge to sports organisations is to create new ways of structuring services and work environments to enhance the experiences of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

8.6.2 Proactivity

It has been argued throughout this thesis that unless gender and cultural inclusivity is actively pursued it is unlikely to simply 'happen'. The evidence has proven that the adoption of generic approaches to provision of sports services and programs for ethnic minorities have not offered effective solutions. The practice of ignoring difference and catering for women within generically constructed services has neglected the specific needs of many ethnic women and perpetuated structural discrimination. A truly multicultural society should exhibit communal allegiances rather than the current nationalism that serves to mask social inequalities. Cultural practices that are not in accord with the traditions of the dominant Anglo-Australian way of life have been resisted and cultural diversity only tolerated when the cultural difference has been ideologically acceptable to the mainstream powerbrokers. On the other hand, basing service delivery on ethnicity dimensions has the potential to segregate and marginalise mainstream participants. In attempts to avoid the inevitable conflict that arises from divergent cultures trying to co-exist sports provision has focussed on retaining sameness rather than re-negotiating these sporting spaces. This 'head in the sand' approach is not an effective method for dealing with a changing community with

diverse needs and requirements for sports participation. Assessment of each situation individually and adoption of practices that are appropriate in the given case would be the best approach to these concerns.

As Australia becomes more multi-ethnic, cultural diversity considerations in policymaking and service delivery will become more prominent and the pressure to organise sports to meet the needs of different ethnic groups will intensify. Changes that occur have the potential be framed in approaches that embrace and understand gender and cultural diversity and not merely represent espoused adherence which can patronise difference and obfuscate underlying issues rooted in ethnocentrism, identify conflict and power maintenance.

8.6.3 Sports practices

The practical implications that emerged from studying the data collected for this research, or 'substantive theory' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) in this instance are the suggestions for sports participants and providers. These basic considerations are listed as prerequisites for individuals and organisations alike and serve to highlight some of the key aspects of equity and inclusion in sports for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The suggestions are in reply to calls for sports organisations to better address the different priorities of women from diverse cultures (Bhandari, 1991; Lovell, 1991). They include building a commitment to the change process in organisational practice and discourse through the development of an organisational awareness of diversity issues and how these impact sports organisation and delivery; staff and participant acknowledgment of cultural considerations including customs, values, and mores; introduction of strategies that will remove gender and cultural barriers to participation; challenging organisational and community stereotypes that may limit participation; provision of access to cultural diversity training and development for staff and volunteers of sports organisations; adopting recruitment and selection practices for new staff and volunteers which are culturally inclusive; identification of language and communication barriers in program design, promotion, delivery and evaluation; and the development of mentoring schemes for players, coaches, referees, administrators and volunteers.

Changing current sporting practices and attitudes requires women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to proactively embrace inclusion. Just as the acquisition of attitudes to sports participation occurs within cultural communities it is also the place where rejection of limiting norms can be voiced. While mainstream society has more power to create limiting factors, including negative stereotypes, minority groups are not without some responsibility in facilitating change and challenging practices that are negative or exclusionary. Questions of power, gender, race, and class require individual as well as societal responses to best deal with the complexity of issues that surround gender and cultural diversity inclusion.

The present research has engaged in critical reflection about assumptions and experiences of sports. It has applied critical awareness to how the meanings of sports are constructed and examined the effect of those meanings on policies, practices, and power relationships. It has attempted to move beyond gendered stereotypes and sensitively examine cultural and religious differences that are limiting and oppressive. Sports involvement has the potential to enhance the quality of life of women and girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and facilitate pride in achievement. They should be provided with equitable access to these opportunities. The understandings provided in this thesis could be used assist sports to provide the 'level playing field' where all Australians cheer each other on to reach their full potential.

8.7 Reflections on the Research

The XXVII Olympiad held in Sydney, Australia provided the basis for some final reflections about women, ethnicity and sports. The Opening Ceremony for the 2000 Games featured a relay of Australian female athletes passing the Olympic Torch to each other and culminated in the final athlete, Cathy Freeman, lighting the cauldron. Freeman went on to win a gold medal in the 400m in front of over 100,000 cheering spectators and became a symbol for Aboriginal reconciliation. Women won 44 per cent of Australian gold medals and women's teams got gold in beach volleyball, field hockey and water polo, silver in basketball and bronze in softball. While the names of the Australian Olympic team reflected a mainly Anglo-Australian dominance, there were several examples of migrant women such as Tatiana Grigorieva, a relatively

recent arrival from Russia, who grabbed media headlines and a silver medal in the pole vault. Daniela Costian (discus), Lauren Poetschka (athletics), Debbie Sosimenko (hammer throw), Lisa-Marie Vizaniari (discus) also added to the cultural diversity of the squad. The Australian table tennis team was dominated by women from non-English-speaking countries with Jian Lay, Miao Miao, Shirley Zhou and Stella Zhou. However, the cultural diversity of the nation was far more evident in the men's list with athletes such as Sisay Bezabeh (athletics), Michael Diamond (shooting), Micheal Klim (swimming), Mizan Mehari (athletics), Mark Philippoussis; dominating men's weightlifting Mehmet Yagci, Yurik Sarkisian, Sego Chakhoyan, Kiril Kounev and Alex Karapetyn and in wrestling, Reinhold Ozoline, Mushtaq Abdullah, Laszlo Kovacs, Musa Ilhan, Igor Praporshchikov and Arek Olczak. Recent arrivals to Australia Micheal Khmel, Harald Jahrling Efim Shuravetsky, and Gennadi Touretskito, to name just a few, were brought in for their coaching expertise.

The focus on female athletes and the inclusion of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in these Olympic Games is encouraging for increased access and equity for women in sports. However, we should not be overly self-congratulatory about this involvement as was witnessed in much of the media coverage which contended that Australian women, 'enjoy opportunities vastly superior to women in many other countries. In much of Africa, women are socially persecuted if they play sport when they should be at home having babies.' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 October 2000, p20). This assumption of superiority suggested that women in Australia have traditionally been encouraged and supported in sports. This is clearly not true. Such comments also assert that the lack of female African involvement is culturally motivated. However, one of the athletes at the Games spoke out to say that participation was not just about cultural values but rather monetary concerns were paramount, the *Daily Telegraph* (UK) reported that Algeria's Nouria Merah-Benida's comment following her on her surprise 1500 metres victory was, 'This was a victory for Arab women. Europeans have sponsorship and facilities but we have courage and heart.' (2 October 2000).

It is statements such as that voiced by Merah-Benida which suggest that we should consider the position of privilege that is occupied by women in countries such as Australia. In giving providing a forum for some women from this country to speak

about their sporting experiences I have by implication silenced many other voices. The scholarly voice cannot represent all women. The crisis of representation and the problematisation of subject and researcher locates my moral responsibility and the representational force that I have brought out in this research. I hope that who speaks for whom will not become a central issue of this research. Instead the focus should be on the fact that somebody has spoken up. The voices heard here might not represent everyone but they have broken the silence. The dimension of a marginalised ethnicity is too often addressed simplistically as a negative label attached to an individual or sub-group; just another variable to be analysed on a questionnaire. In this research I have sought to engage in a more comprehensive approach and to provide a detailed analysis of the social construction of ethnicity. For too long women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have been excluded from historical and contemporary sports research. As their voices have not been heard, their experiences of sports organisation and discourse have been ignored. The research undertaken for this thesis has attempted to capture these voices, emotions and meanings to better understand the perspectives that they represent.

8.8 Further Research

In reviewing studies of the past decade the contemporary rhetoric of ensuring cultural inclusivity in research appears to have been applied selectively, if at all. Floyd (1998:18) lamented that the potential of research in diversity has not matched the reality, 'the opportunity to harness this potential and bring its synergistic effects to bear on race/ethnicity issues is unprecedented. Despite this opportunity, the paucity of active researchers addressing such concerns may limit this potential.' The purpose of this thesis has been to move forward in this area and to acknowledge and legitimise the sports experiences of women from diverse backgrounds. Hopefully other researchers from a wide range of disciplines and backgrounds will also rise to this challenge and capture the opportunity to contribute to the development of the field. In particular, the sporting experiences of women from indigenous backgrounds are overdue for further investigation. As Lawrence (1997) suggested, we need to open the black box and take a look inside.

The very future of sports in this new millennium depends on the ability of sports to embrace increasingly diverse communities and become more global. This will require the substantive development of strategies and mechanisms that seek to understand diversity and create meaningful change. The way in which sport has traditionally been delivered in Australia must be fundamentally transformed; it is the subtle and often pervasive constraints to meaningful inclusion that must be addressed. Sports must value diversity not just put on additional programs or translate a few documents in other languages, these actions only patronise difference. Continued research in this domain is essential.

Sports organisations need to consider ways by which to understand the endemic constraints they often inadvertently create for participants, volunteers, spectators and employees within their sport. This study validates the need to further research gender and cultural diversity from an organisational perspective. While interviews were undertaken with coaches and administrators of netball a more expansive investigation of how a sports organisation responds to gender and cultural diversity would provide a more explicit organisational analysis.

The importance of non-formal sports participation was highlighted in this study. The role of community support and women's groups, churches and ethnic networks were of utmost significance in providing women with supportive sports opportunities and environments. Engaging in physical activities with family and friends was also an important consideration for women. These findings should be viewed in context of the present sports system and freedom of choice. The low rates of participation should not be used by sports organisations as a way out of dealing with diversity issues. Many more women might chose to participate in formal sports if sports organisations were more inclusive of gender and cultural diversity.

There is little doubt that although women have increasingly gained a presence in most sports they continue to remain marginal to the discourse of sports in Australia. In the same vein while women from minority ethnic backgrounds are becoming more actively involved in sports, they largely remain marginal to the feminist discourse of sports. Even within a female dominated sport such as netball the current discourse is not inclusive of cultural diversity. The problem at hand is not diversity itself but the

prejudices, ignorance and negative stereotypes and discrimination that these women have experienced. The true future of sports must be one where the current sports environment is questioned, redefined and radically transformed. Transformed into an environment that is positively positioned on diversity issues, one that is inclusive rather than exclusive and sees difference as an opportunity not a threat. Ultimately sports should be able to claim that they provide the long discussed but rarely attained vision of the 'level playing field'.

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Other documents sourced

AAWBBA minutes

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All Australia Netball Association Minutes

Various materials found in the archival boxes at Netball Australia headquarters

Interview with Judy Dunbar in Sydney, March 1997

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:

Schoolgirl Sport Participation Questionnaire Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire, your contribution is important to us.

Please tick the appropriate boxes.

1. Have you participated in any sports in the past two weeks?

Yes ❑1
No ❑2

If no, when was the last time you participated in sport?

Within the past month ❑1
1 month - 3 months ago ❑2
Between 3- 6 months ago ❑3
Over 6 months ago ❑4
Never ❑5

2. In the last year how often have you participated in the following?

	1. More than once a week	2. Weekly	3. Monthly	4. A few times a year	5. Never
Netball					
Golf					
Athletics					
Gymnastics					
Other Team Sports					
Swimming					
Racquet Sports					
Martial Arts					
Cycling					
Other: (list)					

2. If you do participate in sport, what do you enjoy about it?
Tick as many as appropriate.

It's fun ❑1
For physical/health benefits ❑1
Social aspects ❑1
Competition ❑1
Looking healthy/fit ❑1
Weight considerations ❑1
Skill development ❑1
Doing something for myself ❑1
Other: (please specify)

_____
_____
_____

If you participate in netball, what do you enjoy about it?
Tick as many as appropriate.

It's fun ❑1
For physical/health benefits ❑1
Social aspects ❑1
Competition ❑1
Looking healthy/fit ❑1
Weight considerations ❑1
Skill development ❑1
Doing something for myself ❑1
Other: (please specify)

_____
_____
_____

4. Do you belong to a sporting organisation?

Yes ❑1
No ❑2 If no, please go to question 6

5. If yes, is it an:

local sporting club ❑1
ethnic sporting club ❑2

6. Do you think that females should be given the opportunity to participate in all sports?

yes ❑1
no ❑2

Please explain.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

7. (i) The following is a list of common reasons why females do not participate in sport. Could you please indicate whether these items have influenced your participation in the past year. **Scale= 1. always, 2.frequently, 3.sometimes, 4. seldom, 5.never**

The following has impacted on my …	Sports in general	Netball
Time constraints	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Language barriers	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Religious requirements	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Co-ed environment	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Cultural differences	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Parental restriction	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Lack of skills	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Lack of information	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Family responsibilities	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Nobody to go with	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Don't enjoy sport	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Fear injury	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Can't afford to	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Not sporty	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
No appropriate programs	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
No appropriate facilities	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Encountered racist attitudes	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Poor health	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Other: (list)		

(ii) Are there any other comments you would like to about limitations to your sporting participation or limitations about netball?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

8. How would you describe your level of fitness?

Excellent ❑1
Good ❑2
Fair ❑3
Poor ❑4

9. How would you rate your general level of health?

Excellent	❑1
Good	❑2
Fair	❑3
Poor	❑4

10. Were you born in Australia?

Yes	❑1
No	❑2

If no, where were you born?

Vietnam	❑1
Greece	❑2
Croatia	❑3
Serbia	❑4
Italy	❑5
China	❑6
Lebanon	❑7
Other English-speaking country	❑8
Other non-English speaking country	❑9

11. Where were your parents born?

	Mother	Father
Vietnam	❑1	❑1
Greece	❑2	❑2
Croatia	❑3	❑3
Serbia	❑4	❑4
Italy	❑5	❑5
China	❑6	❑6
Lebanon	❑7	❑7
Australia	❑8	❑8
Other English-speaking country	❑9	❑9
Other non-English-speaking country	❑10	❑10

12. How would you rate your ability to use English?

WRITTEN		SPOKEN	
Excellent	❑1	Excellent	❑1
Good	❑2	Good	❑2
Average	❑3	Average	❑3
Poor	❑4	Poor	❑4
Very poor	❑5	Very poor	❑5

14. Please list any other comments you would like to make on the topic of sport participation for females from non-English speaking backgrounds.

.....

.....

.....

15.. Please list any comments that you would like to make about netball.

.....

.....

Thank you for your participation in this study.

APPENDIX 2 :

Netball Participation Questionnaire Survey

QNO

_____

Tracy Taylor
School of Leisure and Tourism Studies
PO Box 222 Lindfield NSW 2070
PH 02 9514 5112 FAX 02 9514 5195

The following questionnaire is one component of a larger research project on women, ethnicity and sport. The research aims to: identify formal and informal barriers and motivations for sport participation; explore the meaning of sport for females from culturally diverse backgrounds; and identify examples of best practice. Your response to this questionnaire will assist in these data collections. All responses are anonymous and data collected will be kept in the strictest confidence. Any questions or comments can be directed to Tracy Taylor on the numbers above. *Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire, your contribution is important to the success of this research.*

Please tick the appropriate response.

1. How long have you been playing netball?

_____ year(s)

3. How did you first become interested in playing netball?

Through school	❑1
Friends	❑1
Sports club	❑1
Parents	❑1
Media	❑1
All the above	❑1
Other _____	❑1

3. What do you enjoy most about netball? Tick all appropriate responses.

It's fun	❑1
Physical/health benefits	❑1
Social aspects	❑1
Competition	❑1
Skill development	❑1
Other:	❑1

(please specify)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4. Did your mother play netball?

Yes ❑1
No ❑2

5a. Could you please indicate if any of these items have affected/limited your participation in netball.

Has limited my participation ..	**1. Always**	**2. Frequently**	**3. Sometimes**	**4. Seldom**	**5. Never**
Time constraints					
Language barriers					
Religious requirements					
Cultural differences					
Family support					
Lack of skills					
Lack of information					
Family responsibilities					
Nobody to go with					
Fear of injury					
Financial costs					
Access to appropriate facilities					
Encountered racist attitudes					
Other: (list)					

5. Are there any other comments you would like to make in relation to constraints to your netball participation? (Please list)

_____

_____

6. Do you feel that netball is welcoming to females from non-English speaking backgrounds?

Yes ❑1
No ❑2

Comments :

.....

.....

7. Were you born in Australia?

Yes ❑1
No ❑2

If **no**, where were you born?

Britain or Ireland ❑1
Other English-speaking country ❑2
List country _____
Europe ❑3
List country _____
Asia/Middle East ❑4
List country _____
South America ❑5
List country _____
Other non-English speaking country ❑6
List country _____

8. Where were your parents born?

Mother

Australia ❑0
Britain or Ireland ❑1
Other English-speaking country ❑2
List country _____
Europe ❑3
List country _____
Asia/Middle East ❑4
List country _____
South America ❑5
List country _____
Other non-English speaking country ❑6
List country _____

Father

Australia ❑0
Britain or Ireland ❑1
Other English-speaking country ❑2
List country _____
Europe ❑3
List country _____
Asia/Middle East ❑4
List country _____
South America ❑5
List country _____
Other non-English speaking country ❑6
List country _____

9. What language spoken in your home?

English only ❑1
Other language(s) ❑2
Please list _____

10. Which age group do you fit into?

under 18 years ❑1 18-24 years ❑2
25-34 years ❑3 35-44 years ❑4
45-54 years ❑5
55-64 years ❑6
65 years and over ❑7

Please list any other comments you would like to make on the topic of sport participation for females from non-English speaking backgrounds.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your participation in this study.

OPTIONAL INTERVIEW

As part of this study I am hoping to interview women from non-English speaking backgrounds about their participation in sport. If you fall into this category and are willing to participate in an interview could you please list your name and contact telephone number. I am also interested in interviewing women who played in the 1930s - 1980s - if you know anyone from a non-English speaking background who fits this category I would be grateful if you could ask them if they would like to participate in this study.

Name:_____

Address:_____

_____

Telephone Number:_____(h)

_____ (w)

Best time to contact you:_____

APPENDIX 3:
INTERVIEW CHECKLIST -
WOMEN AND NETBALL PARTICIPATION

Personal Details

Country of Birth _____ Yrs in Australia? _____
Occupation _____
Qualifications _____
Age _____
Marital Status _____
No of children _____

Participation

How did you get involved in sport?

Who encouraged you? Discouraged you?

Why do you participate?

Types of sport engaged in

What attached you to Netball

What (if any) benefits have you received from your involvement in sport?

Ever experienced any negative aspects related to your cultural background (in sport)?

If you play sport with a club is it mainstream/ethnic?

Has participation varied over time?

Constraints to participation? Are any of these related to cultural background?

Does netball encourage NESB involvement? Does it inhibit it?

What is your view of sport participation of females?

Other females in the family - their level of involvement? -attitude to sport participation.

General comments on female involvement of your ethnic group in sport.

Practices in 'home' country vrs Australia.

APPENDIX 4: NETBALL ADMINSTRATOR INTERVIEW GUIDE

Personal Details

Position _____
Years of netball involvement _____
Voluntary/ paid _____

Participation

How did you get involved in netball?

What you do like/dislike about netball?

What do you think are the underlaying philosophies of netball administration.

Changes you have seen to the sport over time?

What do you think are the constraints to netball participation?

Do you think that any of these related to a person's cultural background?

Does netball encourage NESB involvement? If yes how?

Does it inhibit it? If yes, how?

Do you know of any formal policies/practices/ programs that netball organisations or teams have implemented to encourage cultural diversity?

Explore the 'why' to the above question.

What has been your involvement with girls or women from NESB backgrounds in netball?

APPENDIX 5: COVER LETTER

Background to the research

I am currently undertaking a PhD at the University of New South Wales. As part of the research for my work on ethnicity, women and sport I would like to survey members of Netball NSW. The questionnaire would be short and could be implemented on site at competitions or by mail. The questionnaire would aim to find out the country of birth of the respondent, how long they have played the sport, what motivated them to begin playing and any constraints that they have faced in playing eg. Family or study commitments. All responses would be anonymous and confidential.

I would also like to interview women from non-English speaking backgrounds who currently play or have played netball. All interviewees would be on a volunteer basis.

The main aims of the study are to find out:

1. What factors influence the involvement of women from non-English speaking backgrounds in sport (including perceived constraints)?

2. What can be done to minimise constraints to sport participation and increase levels of participation of women from non-English speaking backgrounds?

These questions will be addressed by:

- Exploration of the role and place of sport for first and second generation women of non-English speaking backgrounds within Australia through individual interviews with women who have or currently play sport.

- Through the use of interviews, identify factors which encourage or discourage women to play sport.

- Developing strategies to ameliorate the constraints to sport participation for this group ensuring access, opportunity, and equity whilst being sensitive to culturally constructed attitudes to sport.

I would be grateful if this information could be passed on the District Associations of Illawarra, Dubbo, Fairfield and Blacktown to see if they would agree to participate in the study. I would then personally contact the associations to work out the details of implementation. I will conduct all the surveys and interviews, there will be no extra work for the associations or clubs.

Yours faithfully

Tracy Taylor