



Topping, Sirri (2016) *Exploring how and why women's rugby players 'do' gender over a ten year period* [MRes.]

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Abstract

The study of women's rugby offers insight into female participation in a sport once solely confined to men and constructed as one of the last bastions of male preserve (Chase, 2006; Chandler & Nauright, 1999). Despite this attraction, the sport has achieved little scholarly attention. My study attempts to explore doing gender amongst women's rugby players, by asking in what ways they do gender and why. In an attempt to revitalise the dwindling attention paid to feminist studies of women in sport, I apply inclusive masculinity theory and hegemonic masculinity, going beyond the theorisation of men and masculinity to consider female masculinity. I use personal network recruitment to recruit participants within my own team, Scottish University Women's Rugby Club. Furthermore, opportunity sampling was applied during the wedding weekend of a past player, facilitating participant observation of current and past players from over a ten year period. Participant observation was succeeded by semi-structured, one-on-one interviews involving six participants representing various stages in the past ten years of the club's history, allowing for reflection on doing gender over time. Using thematic analysis five key themes were identified; constructing identity in a masculine domain; sexuality in constructing masculinity; maintaining masculinity through excluding feminine players; policing emotional displays; and refuting the embrace of feminised artefacts by rugby men. Each theme illustrates how older and younger players do gender in differing ways and for differing reasons.

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1. Introduction

This study explores 'doing gender' among fifteen women's rugby players belonging to various stages in a ten year period at Scottish University Women's Rugby Club. Specifically, the study explores in what ways they do gender and why, with an emphasis on 'doing gender' and 'identity work'. Focussing on how gender is produced in women's rugby will allow reflection on the interactional aspects of identity configuration in the masculine terrain of competitive team sports. As illustrated in the literature review, the dearth of research available on women's rugby within sociology is not coincidental; a contemporary shift towards masculinity studies in sport has left women's sport studies somewhat redundant. Nonetheless, contributions such as 'hegemonic masculinity' and 'inclusive masculinity theory' can no longer be isolated to men and masculinity and as I contend, are useful in their application to masculine women in order to explore gender in its entirety.

As outlined in my methodology, I used personal network recruitment within my own club and use opportunity sampling to facilitate the participant observation of those invited to a pre-arranged event, the wedding weekend of a past player. The event facilitated the observation of 'doing gender' among a range of players from over a ten year period in one location, an Airbnb in Ayr. After data from participant observation was partially analysed using thematic analysis, follow-up semi-structured interviews were used to explore 'why' doing gender was done in this way. The six interviewees were representative of three time categories of years they spent at the club, and the initial themes identified from participant observation. Revisiting thematic analysis and taking all data into consideration, five key themes were identified; constructing identity in a masculine domain; sexuality in constructing masculinity; maintaining masculinity through excluding feminine players; policing emotional displays; and refuting the embrace of feminised

artefacts by rugby men. Each theme explores a shift in the doing of gender away from hegemonic masculinity and towards a greater inclusion of femininity, not necessarily accountable to inclusive masculinity theory.

My role as both researcher and rugby player was complex. Although university rugby is divided into 'men's' and 'women's' clubs, the older players adopted many of the same traditions as the men's team and shared similar masculine interaction with each other. This is not to say that both the men's and women's teams socialised together, in fact the women's team tended to be subject to abuse from the men's team. Presently, there has been a shift away from some of the more overtly masculine traditions such as the singing of misogynistic songs, towards a greater inclusivity of feminine interaction. It was upon this prior knowledge that my curiosity towards this project developed and the acquired knowledge from this project was built.

2. Literature Review

The institution of sport offers a valuable setting for the study of gender, indeed Anderson (2009b) suggests that 'there is no other institution in which gender is more naturalised than sport'. Where claims citing female physical inferiority would no longer hold in non-sporting contexts such as employment, they persist as a rationale for the formal regulation of female sporting activity (Lenskyj, 1990). Not only does sport contribute to the gender order (Messner, 1992, 2002), it reproduces a 'conservative and stabilising form of masculinity that renders considerable costs for both sexes' (Anderson, 2008; 258). Within academia the focus on the reproduction of this masculinity has been largely located in men's sport (Dashper, 2012; Anderson, 2008; Hickey, 2008). This study will attempt to unravel the chains that bind masculinity to men in the hope of exploring gender in its entirety within a group of women's rugby players. As such, contrary to the majority of studies in sports sociology, this literature review features contemporary issues of both men and women's sport in an attempt to reflect on aspects of masculinity not yet applied to the study of women in sport.

2.1 Sport Sociology

Although sport has played a central role in British cultural life for well over a century (Hargreaves, 2002), it remained a neglected area of sociological analysis until the 1960s. The 1960s brought a largely positivist analysis of sport, assuming sport as a feature of common cultural heritage (Lenskyj, 2003). During the 1970s and 1980s, with greater politicisation and commercialisation, sports attained value as a social phenomenon, capturing the attention of sociologists with a more critical orientation (Brohm, 1978). The sociology of sport has developed consistently ever

since and now represents a sophisticated field of social analysis (Sartore and Cunningham, 2009).

Given the surge in commercialisation of sport, a Marxist approach to sports sociology enjoyed considerable popularity in the 1970's. Structuralist Marxism, focussing on theories of reproduction has received particular attention (Tomlinson, 2004; White and Wilson, 1999). Despite focussing on class relations, Bourdieu (1978) makes generalisations about differences between men and women, crucially exemplifying sport as 'physical capital', which is valued highly for men and boys and estimated low for women. The difficulty with theories of reproduction is the presumption of a somewhat homogeneous culture for each class, disregarding the theorisation of complexities, conflicts and contradictions common in interaction within contemporary sport (Hargreaves, 2002).

Moving beyond the systemic level, Goffman (1967) deemed social interaction at the everyday level as imperative to the production and reproduction of the modern social order. Despite its microsociological focus, Goffman's sociology can be considered as anchored within core Durkheimian themes including 'ritualism in social life' and 'social order' (Goffman, 1967; 47). Goffman's work has been applied in a number of sport sociology studies, such as 'impression management' in studying the interaction between different supporters groups and the policing of football fans in the UK (O'Neill, 2005). Birrell (1981) presents 'ritual contests' through which athletes can seek heroic status, through showing 'character' in 'courage, gameness, integrity and composure' (p.365-72). 'Character' constitutes the Goffmanesque capacity to 'keep one's entire competitive self in order and under complete control at all times' (Birrell, 1981; 372). Hochschild (1983) further develops this, highlighting the social significance of emotional management,

although primarily in regard to service sector employment, sport offers a highly charged emotional environment in which to consider this.

Hargreaves (2002) presented three distinct approaches to the sociological study of sport. Primarily, those which examine 'male sports from which generalisations are made about the experiences of all humans' (p.7) (Dunning 1971); Secondly, an essentially male orientated account of female sports, normally failing to distinguish between sex and gender (Jarvie 1991; Coakley 1992); Finally, a specifically feminist and minority perspective, a sociology exclusively of female sports (Boutilier and San Giovanni 1983; Lenskyj 1986). Despite the presentation of these categories over ten years ago, organisation of academic work in the field of sport sociology still tends to reproduce ideas about sexual difference, in spite of often critiquing biological determinism. The feminist approach to the study of female sport places women at the centre of analysis, providing an important challenge to the way in which male standards have become generalised standards in sports theory. However in order to move forward I argue a feminist approach to sport sociology should no longer be limited by the boundaries of sex category and gender, but should expose itself to findings from masculinity studies in order to integrate gender relations into a thorough analyses of women in sport.

The construction of masculinity in men's sport has taken centre stage in contemporary research, much to the detriment of feminist studies of women in sport, which have lost some momentum since the liberal feminist sports studies of the 1970s (Sage and Loudermilk, 1979; Snyder et al., 1975) and the radical feminist sports studies of the 1980s (Koss et al., 1987; Kidd, 1983; Sanday, 1981). The liberal feminist approach focussed on sex role stereotypes and 'role conflict' involved in being both 'woman' and 'athlete'. Concerned primarily with catching up with men, liberal feminist pursued equal representation in sport. The principal issue here was that in reducing the political advancement of women in sport to equality,

there were little grounds on which to challenge underlying masculine sports cultures. Furthermore, authors such as Novak (1993) have suggested how a liberal feminist approach may force women to 'engage with men on male grounds and thus join male sporting rituals, in which they will continue to seem out of place' (p.221). This reflection bolstered the popularity of a radical feminist approach in the 1980s and a shift of focus from equality to difference. Radical feminism highlighted the importance of compulsory heterosexuality and patriarchy in sport, and strove to create a 'self-realisation' for women, through a separatist approach to sport participation (Hargreaves, 2002). Yet by theorising gender in terms of innate norms and inclinations radical feminism often slipped into essentialism at the cost of analysing socialisation and cultural difference (Giulianotti, 2015).

Despite a movement away from the study of women in sport, recent developments within men's sport studies have highlighted gender inequality within sport and society at large (Burstyn, 1999; Messner, 1992). Indeed by focusing on masculinity, many studies have come to problematise sport as a highly segregated, sexist and homophobic gender regime (Forbes et al., 2006; Benedict, 1997). Of particular significance here has been 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 1995) and the rising popularity of 'inclusive masculinity theory' (Anderson, 2009a). These theoretical advances cannot be isolated to problematising men and masculinity, this research aims to connect developments made within the study of men in sport to women in sport, bridging the gap between masculinity studies and the study of women's sport.

2.2 Policing gender in sport

The role of sport as a mechanism for masculinisation is agreed upon by academics from a range of academic disciplines (Whannel, 2005; Vertinsky, 1994; Rigauer,

1981), but sport can only work as an uncontested proof of masculine domination if women are formally, and gay men are culturally, excluded from participation (Bourdieu, 2001), thus it is necessary to police gender within sport. Empirical study within inclusive masculinity theory, hegemonic masculinity and sport sociology as a whole, has unveiled the policing of gender within sport. Anderson's (2011) study of collegiate athletes 'coming out' to their sports teams found that athletes who emulate the institutional creed of orthodox masculinity tend to be selected over players who break from its tenets, thus in transgressing from heterosexuality the athlete's masculinity is called into question as is their athleticism. Here we see the outcome of a society which conflates gender and sexuality.

With a likeness to men's sport, homophobia also plays a role in policing gender in women's (Caudwell, 2011; Griffin, 1992). The concept of homophobia is a contested one (Herek, 2004), where Anderson inclines towards homophobia as a 'deliberate denigration of homosexuality through speech acts' (Pascoe, 2005; 334), MacInnes's (1998) suggests that exclusively overt homophobia ignores the importance of social structures which force people to act in ways they may not otherwise choose. This study applies this wider approach, accounting for unquestioned symbolic practice (Coles, 2009; Pascoe, 2005).

Historically, the homophobic fear of being perceived lesbian has had numerous impacts on the gendered behaviour of women (Worthen, 2014). Femininity became viewed in the 18thc as the 'property of white middle-class women who could prove their 'respectability' through conduct and appearance' (Allan, 2009; 141). Upon Freud's 'discovery' of female sexuality in the early 20thc, social taboos restricting female athleticism evolved and close female friendships became suspect of lesbianism. Further evidence of the conflation between gender and sexuality can be conceived when considering how the character traits necessary for sport are so incongruent with white, middle class femininity that sportswomen

Comment [m1]: Barry Adam's essay *Theorizing Homophobia in Sexualities* journal, I think 1998, is best on this.

have had to counter numerous attacks on their sexual identity (Kidd, 1983). The 'butch lesbian taboo feeds an assumption that lesbians are not "real" women' (Griffin, 1998: 62), and thus given a binary perspective, works to protect rugby as a man's domain. For these reasons, academic focus on the policing of gender in women's sport follows a different logic to that of men's sport.

The application of inclusive masculinity theory to women offers an alternative to the largely negative experiences highlighted in reference to the 'butch lesbian taboo', especially significant given the somewhat waning levels of cultural homophobia prevalent in this study. Currently Worthen (2014) is the only academic to publicly endorse the use of inclusive masculinity theory among women. Although inclusive masculinity theory itself will be discussed in greater detail later, Worthen argues that an emerging culture of decreased homophobia in the West and the reimagining of masculinity it has brought, contributes to more diverse gendered experiences for heterosexual women. This claim rests on characteristics including the 'social inclusion of lesbian and bisexual women peers' and 'the embrace of once-masculinised artefacts' (p.142).

A quantity of contemporary research indicates that more heterosexual women are developing and cultivating meaningful friendships with lesbian and bisexual women peers (Galupo 2007; Weinstock and Bond 2002; Galupo and St. John, 2001). Positive findings of inclusivity given the large body of research on 'defensive othering', which illustrates how the labelling of competitive women's sport as 'lesbian' has resulted in the use of homophobia by partaking athletes so as to distance themselves from being perceived lesbian (McDonagh and Pappano, 2008; Lenskyj, 2003; Veri, 1999), reinforcing the legitimacy of a devalued identity in the process (Caudwell, 1999).

Worthen (2014) argues that gender boundaries are no longer as clearly defined, with many more heterosexual women participating in stereotypically masculine sporting activities. Despite the attraction of studying women's participation in a highly masculinised sport, there are very few studies on women's rugby. The majority of studies are characterised by discourse analysis (Chase 2006, Shockley, 2005; Wright and Clarke, 1999), for example Chase (2006) offers a Foucaultian analysis into the competing discourses and disciplinary processes at play in women's rugby. Chase found women fully invested in competitive athletics, embracing muscularity which traditionalist gender mores connect to 'masculinisation' (Elling and Janssens, 2009), this superseded their need to adopt the essentialist feminine body. Thus, there is evidence that women can embrace masculine social artefacts and incorporate them into their own gender diverse experiences.

Useful in this discussion is Rich's (1980) concept of 'compulsory heterosexuality', which can be seen as a forerunner to heteronormativity. Jackson (2006) calls for the maintenance of a 'neglected legacy of the former concept: that institutionalised, normative heterosexuality regulates those kept within its boundaries as well as marginalising and sanctioning those outside them' (p.105). Wright and Clarke's (1999) case study used compulsory heterosexuality to focus on media representation of women's rugby in Australia, unravelling how the media engage in a process of normalisation to constitute women's players playing 'a man's game' in relation to hegemonic versions of heterosexual femininity. Meanwhile, Caudwell's (1999) research into the regulation of female sexuality in women's football showed the "butch lesbian" identity to be a concern for players, and that hyper-femininity was often done in order to minimise perceived gender deviance. Compulsory heterosexuality and gender deviance are important theoretical considerations given that an overwhelming amount of research points to the use of hyper-

femininity in women's sport, a mechanism by which heterosexual women emphasise their femininity to consolidate their heterosexual identities or avoid prejudice and discrimination (Felshin, 1974). Here we see how compulsory heterosexuality produces boundaries for identities; meanwhile Worthen's application of inclusive masculinity theory to women questions the contemporary relevance of this concept in a climate of lower homophobia, presenting an important area of investigation.

Although Worthen makes some progress in applying inclusive masculinity theory to women, this is not with the objective of studying masculinity within women's sport, but analysing the effect of lower homophobia on gendered behaviour of women. Furthermore the direct links Worthen draws between lower homophobia and changes in gendered performance are deprived of any empirical analysis. These points leave space for empirical exploration.

2.3 Theorising gender and sexuality:

Echoing earlier conceptions of heterosexuality as a compulsory, institutionalised system that supports gender inequality (Rich 1980), Catherine MacKinnon (1982, 533) argued that "sexuality is the linchpin of gender inequality." Despite these important contributions, theorising heterosexuality remained on the peripheral of feminist theory, whilst queer theory indicated how the 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1989) preserves inequality between the sexes. A shift of focus from the subordinate to the dominant facilitated the theorisation of 'heteronormativity', popularised by Warner (1991), whereby cultural, legal, and institutional practices sustain 'normative assumptions that there exists two and only two genders, that gender reflects biological sex, and that only sexual attraction between these "opposite" genders is natural or acceptable' (Kitzinger, 2005; 490).

Through a focus on cis-gendered reaction to transgender people, Schilt and Westbrook's (2009) empirical study shows that 'doing gender in a way that does not reflect biological sex can be perceived as a threat to heterosexuality', with cis-gendered people deploying normative gendered tactics that manifest gender and sexual difference. As such, they unveil the everyday workings of heteronormativity through illustrating responses to those challenging the 'sex/gender/sexuality system' (Seidman, 1995; 118). These findings are particularly salient given that the sex/gender/sexuality system is dependent on the assumption that gender behaviour, sexual identity, and social roles naturally correspond to biological sex, producing attraction between two opposites. As opposite sex-genders-bodies cannot be expected to fulfil the same social roles, they cannot receive the same resources; preserving gender inequality.

As Ingraham (1994) explains these sex/gender/sexuality assumptions are embedded in social institutions, 'guaranteeing that some people will have more class status, power, and privilege than others' (p.212) given the gender order. The same system places a higher value on men, masculinity and heterosexuality and thus rest on the cultural devaluation of women, femininity and homosexuality. Franklin (2000) reflects on their research into violence propagated by men against feminine gay men, to conclude that there are inextricable ties between 'doing gender' (West and Zimmerman, 1987) and the maintenance of heteronormativity.

2.4 Theorising Gender

As gender is both a contested area of sociological study and principal to this research, it is key to establish my adopted approach. The emergence of gender as a concept is noted by Robert Stoller (1968 in Millet, 1977) as 'behaviour, feelings, thoughts and fantasies that are related to the sexes and yet do not have primarily

biological connotations'. Stoller breaks the inextricable bond between sex and gender, emphasising that they 'may go into quite independent ways' (p.29). This unfixing of sex and gender considered in Kate Millet's (1977) contribution to the second wave feminism, made strides in highlighting the political aspects of 'sex', highlighting the role of patriarchy. Patriarchy is prevalent in sport, given that sport is institutionalised to help maintain male cultural hegemony through systematically denying women opportunities to develop physical competence, perpetuating women's lack of control over their bodies (Bennett et al, 1987).

This study is influenced by West and Zimmerman's (1985) concept of 'doing gender', whereby the interactional process of shaping gender identities are presumed to naturally derive from biology. Therefore in the 'natural flow' of things biological sex, according to chromosomes and/or genitals, is made recognisable to co-interactants through one's sex category, 'the socially regulated external insignia of sex' (West and Zimmerman, 2009; 113). Gender is being accountable to 'current cultural conceptions of conduct becoming to-or compatible with the "essential natures"' (West and Zimmerman, 2009; 114) of the sex category you are perceived to belong to. Messerschmidt's (2009) critique of doing gender has added an interesting point of development, facilitating the study of incongruence between 'sex category' and 'gender'. By highlighting that sex category is an 'explicit facet of doing gender' (2009; 86), Messerschmidt points out the meaning assigned to one's gender behaviour by co-present interactants is dependent primarily on the co-present's sex-category reading of their body as 'male' or 'female'. This emphasises the importance of 'male' or 'female' in the value awarded to 'masculine' or 'feminine' behaviour.

According to West and Zimmerman (1985; 126) 'an understanding of how gender is produced in social situations will afford clarification of the interactional

scaffolding of social structure and the social control processes that sustain it'. This is particularly prevalent with Blumer's (1986) symbolic interactionist approach given that meaning arises in the 'give and take of interaction, and through the interpretive and flexible response of the participants' (Layder, 2006; 202). Symbolic interactionism, allows this study to derive meaning from interaction among women's rugby players, going beyond a player's initial attitude to something. Focussing on how gender is produced in women's rugby will allow reflection on the interactional aspects of identity configuration in the masculine terrain of competitive team sports.

According to West and Zimmerman (1987), gender, alongside race and class are the social arrangements from which we derive our core identities, moreover they are interlocking systems of oppression, suggesting investigations into identity can contribute to an understanding of how inequality is reproduced through gender. In contrast to the narrow functionalist focus on 'reproduction' evident in works such as Parson's (1960) 'pattern variables', symbolic interactionism suggests that individuals as 'primarily conscious and rational beings' (76) are chiefly in control of their social performances, facilitating focus on social 'production'. Where other theorists of gender such as Lorber (1994) insinuate that gender is something we cannot break free of, West and Zimmerman's theory shows greater flexibility, whereby if gender is a product of interaction produced in a particular context, then it can be changed if we change our performances.

Human agency over and resistance to gender will be further investigated through identity work, where identities are the "meanings one attributes to oneself as an object" (Burke and Tully 1977: 883), identity work is "anything people do, individually or collectively, to give meaning to themselves or others" (Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock, 1996; 115). In contrast to structural theories at the time, Goffman's (1961) 'role distance' was central in accounting for a level of human

agency, whereby a person's self-identity is a central component of the behaviour they display. Moving beyond this, fitting with symbolic interactionism and 'doing gender', identity work insinuates that identities are signs used by groups or individuals to evoke meanings in the form of responses from others, thus they are signifiers of the self, not meanings in and of themselves (Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock, 1996). This is important in emphasising that identities are not fixed, but mutable consequences of reflection and interaction (Blumer 1969; Strauss 1959).

Judith Butler extends theorisation beyond 'doing gender', rejecting the theorisation of dichotomous sex categorisation. Originally grounded in the humanities, Butler's work has been strongly philosophical with a somewhat multi-disciplinary applicability. Butler presents gender as performative, refuting the existence of identity behind the acts that West and Zimmerman (2009) suggest express gender, crucially, these acts constitute rather than express the illusion of the stable gender identity. Despite this difference, authors such as Dunn (1997) and Green (2007) criticise performativity for 'reinventing' pre-existing symbolic interactionist and ethnomethodological gender analysis. Green (2007) expands on this suggesting that West and Zimmerman's concept of doing gender already accounts for 'moments of attribution and iteration in a continual social process of doing gender in the performative interval' (p77). Nonetheless Butler's focus on 'queer theory' facilitates a critique of the binary system of sex and gender, useful when considering Halberstam's 'female masculinity'.

2.5 Masculinity

Masculinity is commonly considered to be the 'social, cultural and political expression of maleness' (Beynon, 2001). However as argued by Halberstam (1998; 1) 'masculinity cannot and should not be reduced down to the male body and its effects'. The exploration of female masculinity has been largely overlooked

in academia as a whole; the most noteworthy contribution comes from Judith Halberstam (1998), grounded in the interdisciplinary field of cultural studies. Potential evasion of female masculinity lies in Smith's (1996; 9) comment; 'It's true that many female subjects lay claim to masculinity as their property. Yet in terms of cultural and political power, it still makes a difference when masculinity coincides with biological maleness'. Here we see an illustration of how maleness, masculinity and the oppression of women are profoundly difficult to pry apart (West and Zimmerman, 1985). Smith is pointing towards the study of hegemonic forms of masculinity to deconstruct masculinity, a reflection on how other subordinate masculinities have also been ignored (Godshaw, 2016; Anthony, 2013). Yet according to Sedgwick (1995; 12) masculinity 'engages, inflects and shapes everyone'. Suppressing female masculinities allows for male masculinity to stand unopposed as the bearer of gender stability and deviance (Halberstam, 1998). Women's rugby players doing masculinity may have the ability to 'produce radically reconfigured notions of proper gender' (Halberstam, 1998; 30).

Despite Halberstam's (1998) claim that masculinity studies main concern is with detailing the pains of manhood and the fear of female empowerment, rather than 'picking apart patriarchal bonds of white maleness and privilege' (357), both hegemonic masculinity and inclusive masculinity theory attempt the latter, recognising the plurality of masculinity and its role in problematising hegemonic/orthodox masculinity.

Hegemonic masculinity is a concept popularised by Connell (1995), derived from Gramsci, which observes that relationships between men and women result in a hegemonic form of masculinity enabled by embedded influences in all aspects of social and political life. Connell (1995) notes three other masculinities; 'complicit', 'marginalised' and 'subordinate' (p.76). Despite their conception among men, marginalised masculinity may offer resonance with women's rugby players.

Marginalised masculinity is in reference to those who cannot fit hegemonic masculinity due to specific characteristics, in this case sex category, nonetheless they subscribe to norms of hegemonic masculinity like physical strength and aggression.

Critiques of hegemonic masculinity maintain that it represents an oppressive form of gender relations and merely focuses on the dominant group (Ferriter, 2011). Nonetheless, after its reformulation (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005) a focus on gender hierarchy brought a more relational emphasis, emphasising that hegemony can still be accomplished through the incorporation of such masculinities into functioning gender order. For example marginalised masculinities still construct hegemonic as the ideal and thus do not endanger hegemony. This reconfiguration also brought an emphasis on a relational approach to women, however solely focusing on the interplay of femininities and masculinities, in that women play a roles such as 'wives', 'mothers' and 'colleagues' in constructing men's masculinity. The maintenance of women outside the realm of masculinity analysis is one I seek to disrupt.

Anderson's inclusive masculinity theory emerged from a critique that Connell's concept cannot accurately theorise masculinity in historical moments characterised by decreased cultural homophobia. Anderson contends that as homophobia decreases, men no longer need to position themselves as overtly masculine in order to be supposed heterosexual (2009). Similarly to hegemonic masculinity, there are consistencies with 'doing gender' (West and Zimmerman, 1987) as a 'managed property of conduct that is contrived with respect to the fact that others will judge and respond to us in particular ways' (140). Although empirical studies document young, heterosexual men exhibiting a range of once-stigmatised behaviours, Gill (2003) suggests that such studies comprise of vigilant selections, exclusions and 'ontological gerrymandering' (Woolgar and Pawluch, 1985).

Notwithstanding this, inclusive masculinity has gone some way in capturing important shifts in masculine appropriate behaviour. Nonetheless, claims that inclusive masculinity theory's popularity may stem more from the positive changing patterns of masculinity which point to a more egalitarian society, rather than robust theorisation (de Boise, 2015) make it all the more important to investigate its ethnographic validity.

Hyper-heterosexuality and hyper-masculinity are the terms McCormack and Anderson (2014) coined to reflect men performing above and beyond normative expectations of heterosexuality and masculinity in order to distance themselves from homosexuality, sharing many traits of hegemonic dominance where sexism, misogyny and homophobia are used by men to distance themselves from association with femininity (Pronger, 1990). Ethnographic studies such as that of Schacht (1996) have shown how the aggressiveness of rugby has reproduced hyper-masculinity and misogyny among male rugby players. This remains unexplored among women, leaving an empirical gap. Instead, the term hyper-femininity is used to characterise overtly feminine gender expressions by women. This consideration aside, inclusive masculinity theory argues that in periods and locations of low cultural homophobia hyper-heterosexuality, hyper-masculinity and hyper-femininity are less common. Therefore, inclusive masculinity theory may account for changes in hyper-masculinity, hyper-femininity and hyper-heterosexuality over a ten year time frame within SUWRC.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Questions

How and why do women's rugby players 'do' gender over a ten year period?

-In what ways do women's rugby players do gender?

-Why do players do gender in this way?

Under ethics approval obtained from the School of Social and Political Science ethics committee, this ethnographic research explores how and why women's rugby players 'do' gender over a ten year period, through posing two sub-questions; 'In what ways do women's rugby players do gender?' and 'Why do players do gender in this way?'. The first sub-question requires descriptive answers on the changes of gender in interaction within a group of women's rugby players from Scottish University Women's Rugby Club. This data was mostly collected through participant observation during a weekend where members from differing stages in the past ten years of SUWRC's history came together, an environment which was both natural, and conducive to reminiscent story telling. As such, the majority of data collected during participant observation were narratives from over a 10 year period so that comparisons could be drawn to show changes of gender in interaction. Although the purpose of semi-structured, one-to-one follow-up interviews were primarily to answer the 'why' question, data collected from the interviews also contributed to description on the ways in which gender was done, as well as presenting a source of triangulation on which to verify themes. Chiefly, interviews aided the collection of data which helped understand why gender was done in particular ways. Given the concept of identity work and the agency somewhat involved in this, semi-structured interviews offered a method

through which gender in interaction from various points in the past 10 years could be understood.

3.2 Research Strategy

Interpretivism will play a central role in 'capturing understandings, interpretations and ideas' (Holland and Ramazanoglu, 2002; 152), through a qualitative approach to producing evidence of participant's meanings. Furthermore, where positivist studies must be conducted in ways which are value free, I argue that this is an unrealistic position for most sociologists. Analysis requires my interpretations of athletes' interpretations, which will then be interpreted into the literature previously discussed. Considering this triple interpretation it is improbable that results remain value free, given the difficulty of disassociating personal beliefs, prejudices and opinions. This is particularly salient given my position in the research as a pre-existing insider and friend to participants. This would be construed negatively from a positivist perspective as the researcher is no longer an objective, neutral observer (Browne, 2005). Interpretivism accounts for this in that a researcher can choose to work in a paradigm with normative starting points. Nonetheless a declaration of values and important influences are important in achieving transparent and somewhat replicable results.

Constructionism 'asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors' (Bryman, 2016; 29). With this in mind constructionism is fitting with my application of 'doing gender' (West and Zimmerman, 1987), where gender and identity are constituted during social interaction. Constructionism accounts for social phenomena being in a constant state of revision and challenges suggestions that they are external realities that social actors have no role in influencing. This is important in my application of

'identity work', where identities can be reformulated through changing gender performances. Where constructionism presents culture as an emergent reality, culture must also be realised as something which 'persists and antedates the participation of particular people' in the same way as the male-female sex dichotomy persists and influences gender. This distinction facilitates a discussion surrounding power and offers a point of reference, albeit one which is being revised at its less pervasive levels.

3.3 Research Design

Hill (2009) calls for a greater adoption of ethnography in women's sport, in an attempt to understand sport and gender from the perspective of the athletes involved. This has particular resonance in rugby, allowing for the exploration of components which have contributed to a distinct subculture (Donnelly and Young, 1988). As Dilorio (1989; 58) explains, 'by attempting to comprehend the meanings human actors give to their own social practice and experience, ethnography is best suited to analysing the relationship between hegemonic process and the social realities created by human actors in sport'. In fitting with my epistemology and ontology, ethnography takes into account the immediate behaviours in which people are engaged which will answer my 'what' sub-question, as well as the contextual and experiential understandings of those behaviours that render the event or action meaningful, which will answer my 'why' sub-question.

Ethnomethodological theories of gender offer the opportunity to expose the mechanisms that maintain the gender system through an emphasis on social interactions which can 'reflect and reiterate the gender inequality characteristic of society more generally' (Fenstermaker, West and Zimmerman 2002, 28). As an ethnomethodological theory, doing gender aids in answering how and why players

do gender in a way which can point towards the working of inequality through interaction. The study of interaction by players belonging to a variety of stages in the clubs history will add a perspective of analysis from which changes in how gender is done can be reflected upon. For example the incongruence between 'sex category' and 'gender' highlighted in Masserschmidt's (2009) ethnomethodological work, leaves space for the study of 'social value' placed on the athletes participation in a masculine sport, and the effects of a change in playing style, which may indicate why older and younger players do gender differently.

Furthermore, identity work allows for the exploration of human agency over and resistance to gender. A social interactionist approach is central to this study given the attention placed on meaning. Identity work offers a reflexive approach through which players can reflect on their accountability to being both 'woman' and 'rugby player', given the former's association with femininity and the latter's with masculinity, identity work offers an approach to understanding why players do gender in the way that they do.

3.4 Research Methods

3.4.1 Sampling and Recruitment

I have been a fully participating member of Scottish University Women's Rugby Club between the years 2010-2014 and involved in some matches but to a lesser extent socially during this academic year 2015-16. Where issues of access have often made it difficult to penetrate the closed community of women's rugby (Chase, 2006), my position in the club facilitated a rare ethnographic opportunity to study players in a natural context. Rather than an outside researcher having to "pass" as a player, I had already achieved social legitimacy, granting access to interactional data that would be typically unavailable to most other researchers.

Similarly to Browne (2005) my research involved pre-existing friends from the outset, reflexivity is important given the implications this has on my research. My familiarity with the team facilitated access to discussion regarding gender and sexuality, often considered 'outside the 'public' realm of research' (Browne, 2005; 48). As a friend, I believe participants comfortably imparted information to me that they would not have as easily opened up about to a stranger, as a result I received different accounts than what a 'detached researcher' (Skeggs, 1999) would have obtained. Although this effects the replicability of results, Rose (1995) argues that 'the messiness of research and our interpersonal relations are never fully knowable and therefore we can never have 'transparent reflexivity'" (762).

Bearing in mind the choice of ethnography and participant observation, the time consuming, heavily descriptive and exploratory consequences mean only a small sample size can be used. Despite requiring fewer participants, the inconvenience, time consuming nature and invasion of privacy associated with participant observation can make recruitment difficult (Liamputtong, 2006). As such, my participant observation took place at a pre-arranged event, the wedding weekend of a past player. The location for the participant observation was an Airbnb in Ayr where I shared accommodation with the participants. Although there are limitations on the reliability of this participant observation given that the time period of four days was significantly shorter than most participant observation studies, it offered a valuable opportunity to observe a mixture of players from varying stages in the club's history in a conducive environment for storytelling.

Due to the advantages presented by the wedding weekend, all participants were SUWRC players invited to the wedding, thus opportunity sampling was used. Despite this, the fifteen participants were largely representative of women's rugby in Scotland, being White British and 19-28 years old (Kelly, 2008). This highlights the exclusionary aspects of conducting research within women's rugby, given that

there is little opportunity for intersectional analysis on issues such as race and disability. The tertiary education of the participants was not necessarily representative of wider rugby demographics; as such the analysis of class is somewhat limited (Bryman, 2016). Six of the participants were current club members and the remaining nine had graduated at differing stages over the past five years. The oldest member (28) began playing in 2006, as such the research tapped into narratives from within a 10 year period. All former players bar two were still playing rugby competitively.

Given that personal network recruitment method and opportunity sampling are not random techniques (Faugier and Sargeant, 1997), they are often criticised for a lack of representativeness. I believe that using this method gave me access to players who would not normally respond to advertisements and who, all things considered, would have had to be asked individually. As a result, I was able to include a mixture of players whose voices were frequently left unheard. This is not to say that at any point participants were coerced into participation, in contrary all participants were enthusiastic about the project and excited about contributing.

After initial participant observation analysis, certain themes were explored through semi-structured follow-up interviews. In order to achieve some comparability, and thus explore the differences behind doing gender over the ten year period. The interviewees were selected by firstly dividing all participants into three categories based on the years they were present at the club: 2016-2012; 2012-2009; 2009-2006, placed in the group which they spent the most time. The number of participant in each group were six, five, four respectively. With two interview participants required from each category, given my prior knowledge of the participants it was important not to simply select those I favoured or guessed would supply particular pieces information. Thus, the second criterion was based on the participant's contributions during participant observation. Based on initial

themes identified, within each group participants were ranked based on the quantity of observations made involving them, the top two from each group being invited to an interview. This allowed the selection of participants who could aid most in the reflexive answering of why they do gender in the way they do.

Although there was potential to interview depending on sexual identity, I did not endeavour to be exhaustive in selecting 'proportionally from all groups or types' (Baxter and Eyles, 1997; 513). Given the small number of overall participants it would have been necessary to categorise the population into criteria such as 'lesbian', whilst assuming homogeneity within categories by assuming people can speak for a sector of the population. Through selecting participants on age allowing comparability and on previous input to thematic analysis, I avoided tokenism and re-inscribing categories of difference (Browne, 2005).

3.4.2 Participant Observation

Given that ethnography requires heavy description and the immersion of the researcher in a particular culture or practices of a social group, participant observation presented an attractive research method, providing the time and opportunity in which to collect this data. Participant observation offers a method to 'collect data in a naturalistic setting by ethnographers who observe and/or take part in the common and uncommon activities of the people being studied' (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2010; 2). As such, participant observation is a credible tool to observe human interaction (Tedlock, 1991). This is particularly salient when there could be 'disparities between what people say they do and what they actually do' (van der Riet, 2008; 44), facilitating the collection of descriptive data for "In what ways do women's rugby players do gender?". Furthermore, beyond the researcher's presence, participant observation offers a method of studying a natural setting, and

thus the exploration into identity produced by interaction in a group of women's rugby players is facilitated. Although there are often personal safety issues involved in participant observation these problems were somewhat eliminated through my familiarity with the participants and the research environment. Nonetheless I had made provisions for these unlikely occurrences, for example by sending messages to a friend every four hours to confirm my safety.

Since a major issue effecting participant observation is the differing degree of participation and/or observation, illustrating the ambiguous identity of the ethnographer as 'stranger or friend' (Bolin and Granskog, 2003), my position within the club is an important consideration. Although my primary role was as a researcher, I also maintained my insider status in order to avoid distressing participants and alter the dynamics of the group. As such my research method was equally participation and observation. Upon reflection this was the correct choice of approach. Despite being tiresome and stressful, contributing as I normally would to conversation facilitated a comfortable environment for the participants in which my role as researcher seemed quickly forgotten. The most challenging part of maintaining both roles was regarding the consumption of alcohol, which plays a role in club culture. Although I did receive some criticisms for not drinking, these were largely on occasions where participants forgot I was undergoing research. I was also nervous surrounding overconsumption on behalf of the participants, however as many of the participants mentioned 'saving themselves' for the wedding through which I didn't collect data, this was somewhat nullified.

A further implication on the participant observation process is the adoption of a covert or overt approach. Although my membership would have allowed access to the substantial benefits of covert observation, I felt substantial discomfort in not disclosing my research. As such, I achieved legitimate access to participants. The plain language statement offered a clear explanation into my position, the purpose

of the study and what was expected of them, ensuring the participants were treated with honesty and respect. Nonetheless, in an attempt to keep the setting as natural as possible and gain legitimate data I maintained my insider status throughout the observation process (Maxwell, 2004). There was careful consideration made in this balance, yet the comfort and safety of the participant was of primary concern. For example through recording on my phone I minimised intrusion, reducing the participants feeling of discomfort over being recorded and allowing for the collection of free flowing interaction. This approach to participant observation has been validated by Adams et al. (2010) where observation as an insider in the actual setting, served as an important way to contextualise the gendered and sexualised deployment in a semi-professional men's football team.

3.4.3 Semi-structured Interviews

Imperative to this research design was my personal safety as well as that of my interviewees. Safety was maximised by holding interviews during daylight hours in order to maximise travel safety to and from the interview. The interviews took place in a populated yet relatively quiet cafe within the confines of the Scottish University campus, a location where the interviewees could feel confident that they were not being overheard, yet in which I could voice record without interference. As all participants have attended Scottish University, the interviews took place in a setting in which they were familiar. Considerations such as these created an 'intimate and familial environment' (Sexton, 1970; 23) often emphasised by a feminist interviewing approach to facilitate free interaction and maximise discovery (Hesse-Biber, 2012). However this did not come without its ethical implications, in order to present a comfortable environment I referred to the interviewees' real names throughout the interview. Thus, as in participant observation, recordings

from the interviews contained identifiers, posing a security issue. These recordings were kept secure and destroyed once transcribed.

Although I was familiar with my interviewees, given the interviews were one-on-one, certain safety implications needed to be considered. In order to maximise my safety I insured a friend knew of my intended whereabouts and estimated timeline, as well as contacting them before and after the interview. I was also prepared for the emergence of sensitive issues and had an array of support material available from a variety of organisations for example, Police Scotland. Fortunately such circumstances did not occur.

Considering the ethical implications of exploring topics such as gender and sexuality, both methods chosen attempted to ensure the comfort of the participant as they were able to engage 'under conditions of their own choosing' (Brennan, 2013; 5.1). The semi structured nature of the interview allowed the interviewees a substantial amount of control over the topics discussed while balancing this with the collection of relevant data. Although allowing for some comparability, the primary questions were flexible, open and did not explicitly focus on sensitive topics which were likely to distress the participant (see Appendix C). Beyond ensuring my own personal safety, the face-to-face nature of interviews allowed me to identify topics or themes the interviewee was not comfortable with. Nonetheless, discomfort with themes was not detected; I contribute this largely to my role as 'insider' as at stages I was able to reflect on my previous knowledge of the participants and the club culture to construct the follow-up questions I asked. For example, although sexuality and gender are talked about frequently in group interactions, I knew that some of the interviewees featured more in these discussions than others, in these cases follow-up questions could be more explicitly directed towards these topics. Whilst with others, follow up questions were more subtle in the hope that they would initiate a discussion on these issues.

Although this had implications on the data collected, the implications would be much greater had all participants not recognised the invitation to discuss these issues and partaken in them freely.

Throughout the interview I focussed carefully on answers, selecting particular pieces of interest which related to the themes developed from the analysis of participant observation data. In identifying these points of interests I used follow up questions (Appendix B) to draw further information on these points without leading. This was one of the most challenging parts of the research project as I was attempting to both maintain an informal approach in order to offer a naturalistic friendly conversation, whilst also asking questions which often sounded slightly robotic. To counter this I kept a friendly demeanour throughout the interview. The two way communication also permitted me to be responsive to unanticipated meanings and opportunities generated from the interview questions (Lee, 1993), adding reliability to the data collected.

3.5 Data Collection

The data collected from participant observation aimed to reflect doing gender in interaction over ten years in the club. I focussed on the collection of conversation, given that language provides a vital vehicle for the expression of meaning, and for the interpretation and understanding of the meanings of others (Denzin, 2008). Supplementary data included note taking of interaction between participants, offering a backdrop to the voice recording of specific conversations (Appendix C). To this extent I had a certain amount of agency over the data collected, however I focussed primarily on recording gendered live interactions and stories from over the past ten years. Considering this, the data I attempted to collect could have been limited by such conversations failing to emerge. Given the sensitivity around

issues such as gender and sexuality, such topics could cause distress, however from my experience with these individuals I knew these topics were often discussed and were not considered to be sensitive. So as to balance the potential for distress with the need to capture interaction reflecting on gender and sexuality, I was prepared to broach conversations outside the group, during individual interactions. Despite this, reminiscent story telling emerged freely as I predicted it would, given the presence of members from a ten year period who do not get to socialise together as often as they used to. Furthermore, the wedding as a highly gendered event, facilitated a range of gendered interactions, for example interactions over hair and make-up were much freer flowing between younger players, whilst older players made comments such as 'look at us, rugby players trying to be girls!'.

Whilst conversations involving past interactions, such as reminiscent story telling offered important data, these have limitations that may affect objectivity in presentation, such as over-exaggeration. Notwithstanding this, lying is somewhat regulated given that the stories presented were common to more than one participant present. Furthermore, most longitudinal studies occur over a prolonged time frame, although there are weaknesses in not adopting this approach, 'memory work' has substantial value in adding validity to the longitudinal aspect of this research. The concept of 'memory-work' is central to the rationale behind including reminiscent stories. Kippax et al. (1992; 37) explain, "The underlying theory is that subjectively significant events, events which are remembered, and the way they are subsequently constructed, play an important part in the construction of self" (p. 37). Thus the self is being socially constructed through reflection. This has important implications on identity, as Haug (1987; 50) argued, "Everything remembered constitutes a relevant trace—precisely because it is remembered for the formation of identity". As such stories do not only offer a vital insight into past

interactions, they offer an analysis of identity work. Stories allow individuals to reflect and reconstruct their personal, historical, and cultural experiences (Gill, 2001) and are thus important in exploring aspects of identity work and 'doing' gender from the past ten years.

My role as 'friend' and the subtle way in which I voice recorded, meant that participants did not distinguish the participant observation from other social interactions we have had. Carrie mentioned that because she was relaxed with her friends in a social setting, she forgot that the research was occurring. Primarily, it concerned me that participants may have unintentionally provided information because of our pre-existing relationship, however participants reflected on a naturalistic setting as a positive aspect. The participants appeared comfortable discussing their 'private' lives with each other in a manner that would probably not have been possible with strangers; however the consistency of the group during interaction implicated the data collected. Relationships between the participants both enabled and constrained participants' investment in conversations, semi-structured interviews offered a way of exploring this aspect of interaction.

Semi-structured interviews offered 'generated data' in addition to the previous 'observational evidence' (Ritchie et al, 2013). This generated data came in response from questions posed in Appendix C. A supporting environment was initiated through beginning with closed questions and continuing on to open ended questions, helping the interviewee feel comfortable and in control (Bryman, 2016). The closed question 'Over what years did you play for SUWRC?' reconfirms recruitment criteria 1. Despite the need for comparison the interview questions were wide, allowing for a plethora of possible answers, this put added importance on follow up questions, where the themes evolved from participant observation were largely investigated and compared. This made interviewing challenging however table 1 Appendix C, aided me in this pursuit.

Worth mentioning was that my role as 'teammate' or 'rugby player' appeared to make greater implications on participant's answers than 'interviewer' or 'researcher'. I believe this was largely down to a feminist approach to interviewing where the comfort of my interviewee was primary concern. During the interviews I adopted the criteria of Kvale (2008) ensuring I listened, was flexible and non-judgemental, avoiding agreement or disagreement as this may have distorted succeeding answers. My previous relationship with the interviewees and my knowledge of club culture made these criteria all the more important, given that their answers may already have been distorted in order for them to live up to an identity fitting with their perceived view of my ideal rugby player. These distortions were largely evident by comparing the interviewee's answers with the data collected on them during participant observation. For example one participant, Sinead (2010-13), was much more concerned with maintaining a masculine identity in interaction with the older players present during participant observation than during her interview with me. As such, it was important to treat the interview situation as another form of interaction whereby interviewee's aimed to appropriate their behaviour according to my expectations. Furthermore, these differences in 'doing gender' actually facilitated another perspective of analysis given it was an interaction through which the interviewee was doing gender as well as reflecting on their identity.

3.6 Data Analysis:

In terms of data analysis, my previous knowledge and understanding of club culture has both its strengths and weaknesses. For example I am cognisant of the local uses and meanings of 'shop talk', giving me a reference from which to judge conversational interaction (Cushion and Jones, 2006). In contrast, Platt (1981)

suggests that the inside researcher can be too 'native' to the research setting and thus be incapable of achieving authenticity in the research. Given that shared interactional practices are under investigation, these claims have serious groundings within this study. Although pre-existing knowledge of the communities involved and their members awarded me with a 'shared identity, language, and experience base' (Asselin, 2003; 100) on which to interpret meaning, I needed to balance this carefully through using a robust method of data analysis, making it easier to remain open to data which did not reflect well on the club or conflicted with my personal perspectives.

Researching peers can raise important ethical consideration surrounding disparities in power (Trowler, 2011). Although both the researcher and participant hold power through the seeking and holding of knowledge (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009), the researcher has control over the interpretation of participants' statements (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2005). Furthermore I present the final outcomes of the research, omitting and including data along the way. Although issues of power are evident in all qualitative research (Wagermann, 2014), when presenting my findings, these considerations could have implications that may damage my relationships with participants. As contested by Parahoo (2014; 135), 'adhering to the ethical principle of justice ensures the fair and equitable treatment of all people', I took this on-board throughout my research project; the participants were treated fairly, and the power dynamic were seldom in my favour. However, through a representative method of data analysis I will make the final decision about what information is disclosed and I am accountable to that.

'Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in detail. However, it also often goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic' (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 6). Nonetheless, it is important that we account for

our active role played in identifying patterns/themes, selecting which are of interest, and reporting them (Taylor & Ussher, 2001). In its flexibility, thematic analysis offered a method whereby it was possible to code the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame. In this case the themes identified are strongly linked to the data in an inductive approach. Although grounded theory also offers an inductive approach to data analysis, it also comes with implicit theoretical commitments (Holloway and Todres, 2003) which would have theoretically bounded my analysis.

Data coding progressed in line with Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis. After 'familiarisation and transcription', 'generating initial codes' involved coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code. During this stage approximately 200 codes such as 'butch identity' and 'defensive othering' materialised. Throughout stage four, 'searching for themes', codes were collated into potential themes and data relevant to each potential theme was gathered. The 'review' phase involved refining the themes and deleting themes which did not have enough data extracts to support them. The themes generated from these five stages presented the basis for data gathering during the interview stage, although these themes offered guidelines for possible follow-up questions it was important not to restrict my data collection to solely these themes, as such data analysis began again from stage one finishing with the 'defining and naming' phase, where the essence of that theme was decided upon.

4. Main Findings

4.1 Constructing identity in a masculine domain:

Harriet (2006-09): On my first night out with the team, the men's first rugby social was also happening at the same nightclub. They [the men's rugby team] made their freshers wear dresses that they'd wrapped rotten fish with, then they told them to go grind on us [on the dancefloor], I overheard an older guy say 'don't worry that they're ugly, they're all dykes so they won't want to fuck you anyway!'. Anyway, one of the girls lost it because this guy kept rubbing himself against her, so she threw him up against the wall and punched his face in. [interview]

Silvia (2007-10): It angers me that the men's team seem to have this entitlement over rugby, they've always been very... they never liked us playing and I think that has caused a lot of tensions between the clubs. Personally I have a lot of hate for them, but I think this isn't as common among the younger players because they haven't received the same hostility. [interview]

Harriet: I think for a lot of us it was like we had a point to prove, like aww we can be lads as much as you can. [interview]

In response to the interview question 'Have you ever faced any hostility for playing rugby?', the older players' report many more incidents of homophobia, given the reported use of words such as 'dyke' which were frequently precluded by 'fucking' adding emphasis to their derogatory essence (Peel, 2005); sexism, given continuous reporting of outsiders' referrals to rugby as a 'mans' sport, outside the parameters of female appropriate activity (Cowie, 1993); and misogyny, given the men's rugby players' objectification of the women (Gilmore, 2010), whilst the younger players report no experience of hostility.

Whilst my primary objective was to remain open to all themes and extracts, grounded in data my insider status occasionally aided me in validating codes and themes. For example, during participant observation at no point is the experience of homophobia, sexism or misogyny mentioned by the participants. My insider status allowed me to reflect upon this lack of discussion as something which is non-evident in social interaction beyond the wedding weekend, generating an unanticipated insight into group interaction. With this consideration in mind, when

codes and themes were reviewed in relation to the entire data set, codes, themes and this reflective consideration began to have considerable bearing on one another. For example, across the entire data set a highly masculine collective team identity was emerging as central to 'doing gender' amongst older players. Considering this, when reviewing codes such as 'angry response to hostility' categorised in theme 'homophobia, sexism and misogyny in a masculine domain', the lack of group discussion around topics of homophobia, sexism and misogyny, revealed how the collective masculine group identity constructed by the rugby players is antithetical to the role of 'victim', something which can be further validated by the way in which players highlight their violent or angered responses to hostility and distance themselves from weakness.

During interviews older players showed a reflexive awareness of their participation being a threat to male privilege and its consequences, for example Silvia suggests that the men's entitlement over rugby led to their distaste of the women's team. Player's reflect on the hostility from the men's team as a way of letting them know that they had crossed the gender boundary. Considering the attacks on gender and sexuality faced by the rugby players, evidence of hyperfemininity, a mechanism through which women emphasise their femininity to consolidate their heterosexual identities, is absent amongst players. In contrast, a more collective masculine team identity was constructed out of opposition to the men's rugby team. This construction of this identity was a recurring in interaction throughout both the observational and interview data collected, and one of which is apparent in each of the themes to be presented. Thus the homophobia, sexism and misogyny aimed at the older women's players worked to maintain rugby as a masculine domain but not necessarily a man's one.

[On what makes a good rugby player:]

Janice (2009-12): You have to have a specific mentality to play rugby, perhaps some mental instability more than anything [laughs]. Cos it's not like other sports, you've got to remember that men and women play by the same rules. You need to take a hit and hit back twice as hard. It's violent and you need to be aggressive to make an impact on the pitch. You get injured, you bleed, you suck it up. [interview]

Niamh (2014-16): It's important to be fast and make quick decisions under pressure. You need to know where people are behind you so spatial awareness is critical, and of course communication, you gotta know where everyone is.

Interviewer: Is aggression necessary?

Niamh: No, some of our best players are the least aggressive. We come in all different sizes, whereas the men are all big and bulky and more aggressive, it's not as necessary for the women's game, it's more important to be fast. [interview]

In this case, initial codes from the literature review such as 'defensive othering' and 'liberal feminist equal play strategy', as well as emergent codes such as 'pressure to perform', 'superior athleticism' and 'valorising masculine sporting qualities', were connected with Janice's statement. Meanwhile codes such as 'non-gendered attributes', 'radical feminist women orientated strategy', 'rejecting masculine sporting qualities' and 'inclusive of body sizes' were attributed to Niamh's. When data extracts had been collated under these codes some initial codes such as 'pressure to perform' were rejected due to having no other extracts of support. Whilst all other codes received support, there was a clear demarcation between the participants behind the extracts, with all older players' extracts supporting similar codes to Janice's and all younger players' supporting the codes from Niamh's. Given the oppositional element of codes such as 'valorising masculine sporting qualities' and 'rejecting masculine sporting qualities', a theme emerged whereby focussing on the sport itself could expose major differences in the way players do gender in the way that they do. At this stage of the analysis this theme was reviewed both in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set, which was pointing to considerable differences in the way players were doing gender. After this, there was on-going analysis to refine the specifics of each theme in

relation to each other. The extract examples above were selected on their representation of other extracts as well as the theme itself and the codes on which the theme relies.

Throughout analysis I remained open to a variety of social thought, including debates over postmodern and late modern society. The theory of reflexive sociology often left considerably more space for examining the implications of new relational forms, moving beyond modernist and postmodernist argument about sexuality being bound up with power and the reproduction of social order. However the continual distancing and defensive othering would have been left unrepresented by my analysis and theorisation of difference would have been left unexamined as would elements of inequality.

Introducing the theme itself; this theme is largely illustrative of a sporting shift in women's rugby. A liberal feminist perspective can be used to represent the team 5-10 years ago, where focus was on being 'equal' with the men's team. Now, the focus on speed, spatial awareness and communication, is cultivating the game in women-defined areas. The present day team is more representative of a radical feminist perspective where rugby has come to be reconstituted to explore alternative sporting values and attributes. Where some consider the latter empowering, separatism comes with the danger of slipping into essentialism when 'theorising gender in terms of innate norms and inclinations, rather than socialisation and cultural difference'.

According to Messner (2002) when male athletes and men's style of play are the standard in sports played by both men and women, good play and good athletes are defined by the men's game. The emphasis of male playing style, allows older players to form an identity on which they believe they can achieve respect as athletes but also distance themselves from other female athletes and non-athletes

in a process of defensive othering, suggesting an air of athletic superiority. For the older players 'toughness' was a major aspect of their identity, as one of the few sports where distinctions do not exist between the men's and women's rules, rugby supported this claim. Messner's (2002) research found that the most valued sports, measured in media coverage and funding, are normally ordered through rules, strategies, and norms that privilege men's bodies. Thus, what is valued in sport reflects the emphasis placed on size, strength, and masculine behaviour by the older players, as such they reproduce rugby as a masculine domain. However where the older players naturalised aggression to justify their claim to the 'rugby player' identity, the younger players were less invested in a 'tough' identity, denying the necessity of aggression in the game.

In contrast, by distancing their playing style from that of the men's game, younger players question the assumption that the same rules should lead to the same game. Through rejecting the male standard of 'aggression' and 'big bulky strong men', they are more inclusive of a range of skills and body types. This change in style questions women's rugby as a derivative of men's rugby and thus second class. The move away from men's rugby allows for the construction of women's rugby as a separate entity, with value placed on attributes indifferent to a masculine identity, as such the younger players are less invested in constructing one.

Given these findings, the version of rugby older players were acquainted with holds greater association with aggression and violence, and thus as a masculine behaviour, is devalued as it is not performed in and through a male perceived body (Messerschmidt, 2009). The developed game played by younger players requires attributes deemed 'less masculine' than their forerunners, whilst this allows their participation greater value as it is deemed more fitting with a female body, this calls into question the extent to which the boundaries of gender appropriate

behaviour are expanding (Worthen, 2014), given that this value was created through a change in the game and situating women's rugby as a separate entity. As West and Zimmerman (2009) note however, it's structural changes such as these that may or may not result in changes in the 'inferences and consequences' of difference between male and female bodies and shifts in gender accountability which can weaken its use as a ground for men's hegemony. As such, this development in women's rugby offers an important structural adjustment considering Fenstermaker and West (2002; 218--19) call for an 'advancement in our understanding of how historical and structural circumstances bear on the creation and reproduction of social structure in interaction, and how shifts in the former result in changes in the latter'.

4.2 Sexuality in constructing masculinity:

Silvia (2007-10): 'I literally left Jane at the bar buying the drinks, took him home, pumped him, came back and Jayne was still waiting at the bar to be served [laughter]. That was the same night I brought the swim captain back, he was so surprised when I kicked him out after, 'na pal, I don't snuggle''. [observation]

Julie (2012-16): I think for the senior players when I first joined it was like we're supposed to be right opposite to men's rugby, they're [men's players] supposed to be lads, shag all the girls. Well they adapted this as if they're supposed to shag all the boys and that's how they portray themselves.[interview]

Janice (2009-12): No, I honestly don't [think that anyone was trying to prove themselves as heterosexual], there have always been lesbians on the team, it's to be expected in such a masculine environment. It's always been a safe place to come out in. It was Harriet that encouraged me to come out and she's the biggest heterosexual I know [laughter]. [interview]

Niamh (2014-16): From what I can tell, as a club we've always had lesbians. It doesn't matter though, it's literally such a small part of who you are that we don't bother to ask. [interview]

On face value potential disagreement can be drawn between the comments of Julie and Janice on two grounds. However where Julie reflects upon the older players as proving their 'laddish-ness' by engaging in hyper-heterosexuality, rather

than debating this existence Janice points out a different argument in that no-one was trying to prove their heterosexuality in order to distance themselves from homosexuality. Secondly, whilst players may well be under pressure to conform to a 'laddish' identity by engaging in hyper-heterosexuality, the process of thematic analysis has proven that although often considered as binary to heterosexuality, the existence of lesbianism does not threaten the players construction of a masculine identity and thus is acceptable.

Exploring this in greater detail, the hyper-heterosexuality evidenced by the older players is of interest given the 'butch lesbian taboo' and its role in reinforcing compulsory heterosexuality. Considering the 'dyke' stereotype illustrated earlier, where such comments did little to encourage a more feminine identity, however there is evidence of greater hyper-heterosexuality amongst older players. That cultural homophobia worked in order to distance some players from a gay identity through over-doing heterosexuality would offer a conclusion fitting with inclusive masculinity theory, however a number of factors contradict this assumption.

As Worthen (2014) argues in her article promoting the use of inclusive masculinity theory among women, lower levels of homophobia have led to a greater inclusion of non-heterosexual women among their heterosexual peers. However rugby may not provide an environment in which inclusive masculinity theory can be applied. Due to rugby's prominence as a masculine domain which players had worked to maintain for those willing to break from the normative gender expectation of femininity, rugby is argued to have *consistently* provide a safe space for non-heterosexuals, irrespective of cultural levels of homophobia. Rugby is presented as an environment in which lesbianism has come to be expected given the collaborative team identity as masculine, through the conflation of gender and sexuality, the masculine team identity was not at threat from lesbian existence. Lesbianism among players was not a source of 'discomfort...anxiety [and] loathing'

(Caudwell, 1999: 396) contrary to many contemporary studies (Lock, 2003; Sartore and Cunningham, 2009; Clarke, 2002) but was often framed by heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals alike as useful for advertising the game among masculine women.

Bearing in mind inclusive masculinity theory has been developed with greater reference to men and masculinity studies, rather than theorising female masculinity, Worthen's attempt to apply the theory to women is further refuted when considering that higher levels of reported homophobia aimed at older players did not lead to homophobia. There appears to be little fear among players of the butch stereotype or lesbian existence threatening their heterosexual identities. As illustrated in the extracts above, Harriet, described as 'the biggest heterosexual' by Janice in her interview and who played an active role in participant observation interaction when discussions involved hyper-heterosexual expeditions, was encouraging of Janice's 'coming out'. This is at odds with research on the 'glass closet', where lesbians in competitive team sports are 'closeted' by the fear of giving all women rugby players 'a bad name' (Caudwell, 2002; 397). The role of a collective masculine team identity is central in rendering the glass closet superfluous, given that 'the glass closet relies on an unmarked sexual identity and the overt appropriation of masculinity shatters any notions of invisibility' (Caudwell, 1999: 400). Harriet's solidarity with Janice, is representative of the older club as an entirety, whereby strong non-heterosexual and heterosexual identities co-exist, but foremost a masculine identity is maintained.

Considering the move away from a collective masculine identity toward a feminine inclusive one, the role of lesbian visibility in promoting a collective masculine identity is somewhat nullified. However the years of non-heterosexual inclusion have had a normalising effect and non-heterosexual participation is standard. Opening some space for inclusive masculinity theory, considering less cultural

homophobia, one's sexual identity is seen to be waning in importance. Here we can see a development from both stages of modernity where 'homosexuals were demarcated to be silenced; and postmodernity where 'they are invited to speak, but from the very position of difference that constituted them in the first place' (Bunzl, 2000; 332). Where lesbian inclusion was once useful for the construction of a masculine team identity, it is now considered to be a limited part of one's identity and thus the 'butch lesbian taboo' instead of being embraced as a source of unity and pride, is deemed redundant.

Although hyper-heterosexuality may be taken as an 'apologetic' through which heterosexual players compensate for the 'damage' to their heterosexual identity (Messner 2002; Broad 2001; Griffin 1992, 1998), the use of 'sex talk' by older players during observed social interaction emphasises how hyper-heterosexuality is more important for the construction of a masculine identity than a heterosexual one.

Historically spanning from the gay male culture to become part of a wider LGBT culture as the scene became more diverse during the 1990s (Holleran, 1988), in mainstream culture 'sex talk' is considered to belong within a masculine domain. Analysis of sex talk in LGBT culture has shown how sex talk can be used to sense of community through the 'sharing of intimate information, meaningful experiences, and profoundly personal knowledge' by people in the interaction (Bolton, 1995; 149). Whereas in mainstream culture a large body of research has indicated how 'sex talk' functions as a method through which men perform masculinity, assert power over women, and reinforce sex talk as their domain (Knight et al. 2012; Nylund 2007; Pascoe 2007). The crude emphasis placed on sex talk used by the older players is somewhat more fitting with analysis under the latter. The way in which several of the older players have come to question men's entitlement over particular domains, also appears to have spread to their ownership of 'sex talk' in

an attempt to build a masculine identity worthy of rugby participation. The data collected from participant observation and interviews alike, tends to demonstrate their dominant position in heterosexual sexual encounters. This shows how in particular environments the positions may be switched when considering studies emphasising how sex talk reinforces women's status as objects to be used for men's benefit (Knight et al, 2012).

This offers evidence of players fitting a 'marginalised masculinity', whereby sex talk presents an interaction through which they can demonstrate hegemonic masculinity. As Connell (1995) suggests hegemonic masculinity calls for sexual subjectivity, according to Montemurro (2014) this requires 'acting as a subject rather than an object in sexual encounters, confidence in sexual decision making, feeling deserving of desire, and seeking sexual satisfaction' (p.140). With this in mind, the self-assured manner through which player's use terminology to mark their power and privileged status in sexual encounters is fitting with a hegemonic form of masculinity.

Although both men and women have been shown to judge women who talk about sex graphically or crudely negatively (Murnen, 2000), these interactions which tend to violate expectations associated with the feminine gender role, were normalised within the club, demonstrating the dominance of internal interactional validation over external. Furthermore 'sex talk' allows older players to further distance themselves from associations with femininity. This offers a potential point of analysis for the lack of 'sex talk' amongst younger players, given that players are less concerned with both distancing themselves from femininity and constructing a masculine identity. Furthermore the lack of importance placed on sexual identity by younger players suggests that there are few resources to be gained through talking about sexual escapades.

4.3 Maintaining masculinity through excluding feminine players:

Janice (2009-12): I can be myself with the rugby girls and talk about whatever crops up, no filter needed. [interview]

Harriet (2006-09): I'd say there were people who joined who I never talked to because they just weren't my kind of person, you know, girly girls, I mean firstly why they'd want to put their fragile little bodies on the line is beyond me and secondly there's plenty of other sports open to girls like that so when they drifted off I wasn't really surprised. [interview]

Silvia (2007-10): [conversations about make-up] are the sorts of conversations I would expect more from my friends outside rugby. I don't know anyone I played with who could be bothered chatting about crap like that. [interview]

Women's rugby is regularly portrayed by all members as an environment in which players are not held to societal expectations of gender, having its own interactional structure in which gender appropriation does not take place. However by forcing overly feminine players out of the club, older members maintain rugby as a space in which they could deviate from gendered expectations and conversations, partaking in interaction such as 'sex talk' without fear of judgement. There is a clear gendering of different sports whereby rugby is considered a 'prejudice-free space' (Hargreaves, 2000: 154) for masculine women, whereas other sports are deemed as less welcoming. Beyond questioning whether girly girls have the qualities necessary to compete, Harriet assumes that 'girly girls' who live up to societal expectations of femininity can have their pick of feminine sports, and as such do not need rugby to break from this expectation. Among older players the creation of a masculine interactional environment and collective team identity is deemed more important than the inclusion of diverse genders and thus, despite being perceived as an open environment, it was only open to players willing to deviate from societal expectations of femininity.

Supporting research by Heywood and Dworkin (2003), the historical associations between white, middle class women and physical weakness and passivity allow the players to interpret their participation as an act of resistance. Despite this belief by all players, the older players in distancing themselves from femininity and 'other

women' suggest that only they, and not all women, were tough and aggressive. Thus, their perception of resistance is one of collective team identity and not necessarily a feminist struggle.

Julie (2012-16): There are more girly girls this year. That's who you are. You can be a rugby player who wears makeup, mascara won't stop you from scoring a try. If that's what makes you feel comfortable we're not going to take that off you. [interview]

Niamh (2014-16): We're very separate [from other sports teams]. I see the hockey team and they all seem to be the same personality, like clones. [interview]

The pride taken by younger players in the openness of women's rugby is more fitting with a feminist cause. There is a greater openness and inclusivity of diverse genders and personalities as opposed to solely masculinity. The inclusivity of players considered more feminine, is considered of little implication to rugby performance, as such players work to decouple 'femininity' from 'weakness' in an empowering turn from the female fragility mentioned by the older players. Similarly, the younger players engage in defensive othering from other sports teams, but instead of distancing away from other women and towards men's players, they distance themselves from sports which work to gender appropriate the behaviour of their members, rather than femininity.

Ilsa (2010-12): She wouldn't drink her pints because of God, and we couldn't sing that song, 'Jesus can't chin pints because his arms are out like this', [turning to the younger players] the only reason you don't know it is because Rose joined.' [observation]

Where for younger players a freedom from gender appropriation brought the inclusivity of diverse identities, for older members this freedom meant a safe space to do masculinity, even if these masculine interactions were offensive to outsiders. Evident in interaction during participant observation, this difference has led to slight tension between older and younger members given that inclusivity has been accused of slackening the 'club traditions', perceived by many as the more masculine aspects of women's rugby as a subculture. In a movement to include a

diversity of players, many of the club songs considered to be the more overtly offensive and misogynistic interactions were somewhat silenced in order to offer a less intimidating environment to new players. As such, for older players, their fear of losing SUWRC as a 'prejudice-free space' (Hargreaves, 2000) in which to do masculinity through the inclusion of femininity, is being realised to an extent.

Comment [m2]: Specify – be concrete from data

4.4 Policing emotional displays:

Harriet (2006-09): Remember the time you cried after the match against Stirling, Silvia [laughing]?

Sinead (2010-13): To be fair that was her last match, it's understandable.

Silvia (2007-2010): No, it was just because it was such a tough match and I was happy that we won.

Harriet: Still though...[observation]

Inexpression is a stereotype of hegemonic masculinity prevalent in Western cultures for decades (Wong & Rochlen, 2008) and featured in Mahalik et al.'s (2003) eleven norms that define dominant masculinity. During an interview Harriet gives emotional reserve as an example of her toughness and presents this in direct opposition to femininity. Harriet's perspective on emotional display is in line with Fischer et al's (2004) research whereby the dominant masculine message is one of emotional control given that open expression is a sign of femininity, thus inferiority and weakened masculinity. Tears are counterintuitive to the identity necessary for rugby, given the association of competitive team sports with hegemonic masculinity in the UK. This has a prescriptive as well as descriptive function as we witness Harriet's mocking of Silvia's tears, coinciding with Messerschmidt (2009) research showing how 'youth practices are evaluated by co-present interactants in relation to normative conceptions of gender within each setting'. Older players police gender, discouraging acts associated with femininity or contributing to a feminine identity. This policing of gender is deemed necessary by Harriet in order for players to live up to an identity mimicking men's rugby and

worthy of rugby participation. Adams et al's (2010) research into the construction and regulation of masculinity in organised sport found masculinity challenging discourse to be prominent within a semi-professional men's football team. These heuristic tools can give some reflection on the construction of a masculine identity among the rugby players. In the same way as coaches regulated players when they failed to live up to masculine standards, so Harriet regulates Silvia. This policing of gender is not prevalent among younger players, in the absence of older players there was often discussion around wedding outfits, hair and makeup, yet in the presence of older members their fear of gendered reprimand was clear and such topics were not broached.

Policing gender aside, the interaction above is representative of three differing perspectives on the appropriation of emotional display. The younger players are more open to displays of emotion, yet to differing extents. In accordance with doing gender, individuals are attentive to gendered expectations for how to behave in particular ways at particular times. For Silvia and Sinead crying for the 'right' reason allows emotional expression to be deemed appropriately masculine (Timmers et al, 1998). Sinead's reasoning behind Silvia's emotional display, her last game, presents a situation of loss over which Silvia does not have control. This is also congruent with research by MacArthur and Shields (2015) which finds that people cry as a result of feelings that affect components of their core identity, in this case Silvia's identity as 'rugby player' is being seriously implicated by it being her last match. Given Messner's (1992) suggestion that identities relating to sport and masculinity are highly interwoven, Silvia's loss of the rugby team may also represent a loss of masculine identity, at least according to Sinead.

However, in a twist of events illustrative of impression management (Goffman, 1967), Sinead's reasoning is still not perceived by Silvia as 'unfeminine' enough to warrant her emotional display as fitting with Harriet's ideal rugby identity. As such

she explains that the display was a result of a win from a tough game, this brings the construction of rugby as an aggressive, physical, and masculine domain back into focus. In Silvia's attempt to distance herself from weakness, she reminds her audience that she fought through tribulations and setbacks on the pitch to achieve masculine success, a win. As Nelson (1994; 5) explains, competitive team sports 'become symbolic struggles, passion plays re-enacted daily to define, affirm, and celebrate masculinity'.

4.5 Refuting the embrace of feminised artefacts by rugby men:

Carrie (2009-2012): [When discussing a local men's rugby team] It's funny because the sponsor across their bum on their shorts is like 'Pam's Hair and Beauty' and they're all really orange so you're like hmm I wonder where they get their spray tan. They don't look like they should be on a rugby pitch, like Barbies really... [raises eyebrows and uses a surprised tone] they are quite good though... [observation]

Throughout analysis it was important to reflect on the authenticity of my participants. The comment above presents a potential for over exaggeration in order to appear funny. Important here is Goffman's (1959) concept of impression management, where participants take roles as members of teams of actors who perform to seek to mystify and thus manage the impressions that others in the 'audience' held of them (Peterson, 2005). 'Banter' has traditionally played a role in rugby culture. Nicholls, 2016 ethnography of a men's club in Northern England found players implemented 'banter' to aid in both the construction and de-construction of sexist ideas within the rugby space, engaging and challenging everyday sexism. Although the potential role performances 'banter' creates in rugby culture would facilitate Carrie's comment above, during her interview, Carrie mentions 'skinny legged boys' who often give rugby a try but are more suited to sports like football. Carrie's 'Barbie' comment is representative of the data

collected on her, as such her critique goes beyond the purpose of impression management within the group.

This theme coupled with the last somewhat complicates Masserschmidt's (2009; 86) finding that 'sex category serves as a resource for the interpretation of situated social conduct'. Although internally, the women's rugby team offers a setting through which sex category is not salient in the interpretation of gender as masculine or feminine, they expect all 'rugby players' to behave in gender appropriate ways, those being masculine. I dispute that the policing of rugby men's gender has greater prominence with a rugby identity than their sex categorisation as men in this setting.

During the interview stages it became clear that the objective of Harriet's policing of her teammates gender was not to stratify the club internally but in order to construct a more masculine identity among all members and prove themselves as women, to be fitting and capable of rugby participation. One way in which older players emphasised their masculinity and their right to participate was through the de-masculinisation of rugby men. Revisiting Adams et al (2010), in a similar way to the coaches feminising the opposing team in order to build a masculine identity among their players, the rugby players point towards the use of fake tan by a men's rugby team in order to construct their own identity as more masculine and more worthy of rugby participation given rugby's construction as a masculine domain. The older players tend to position themselves within a 'marginalised form' of masculinity whereby they do not have a characteristic necessary for hegemonic masculinity, maleness, yet strive to subscribe to its norms.

Queer theory offers a point of analysis given a potential subversion of common discourses of gender by the men's rugby team. Facilitating queer theory within analysis allows consideration of how new elements are being coded into

masculinity. Although the study of how rugby players have come to embrace certain elements of effeminacy are beyond the reaches of this empirical analysis, Momin Rahman's (2004) study of Beckham suggests that newer dissonant properties of masculinity are contextualised within ideological codes of heterosexuality, fitting with research by Alexander (2003) suggesting that men often contextualise beauty procedures such as moisturising within an ability to sleep with more girls. Although queer theory presents a useful backdrop here, current changes in the representation of masculinity may be understood more as expansions of the 'sign' of masculinity operating as a commodity form. All things considered the women's rugby players echo an idealised form of hegemonic masculinity, failing to incorporate this into their gender appropriation of the men's players and regard these changes as belonging outside rugby.

Inclusive masculinity theory studies have evidenced the embrace of artefacts once coded as feminine, contributing this to lower homophobia and homophobia. Despite their distaste, players do not draw any inferences between the use of fake tan and homosexuality, rather the attack on their masculinity has greater resonance as a masculinity building interaction among the players. In refuting the femininity shown by the men, the older players also work to maintain rugby as a masculine domain, potentially a method of maintaining rugby as a safe interactional space in which to do masculinity. Nonetheless Carrie's surprise that despite this femininity they are still good at rugby, illustrates an assumption that alongside femininity comes a poorer sporting ability, damaging due to the maintenance of competitive team sport as a man's domain.

Niamh (2014-16): Playing a sport that has historically been considered a man's sport comes with its difficulties. But we've proved that rugby is not a masculine sport, anyone can play it. It doesn't make you more or less masculine to play a sport that is masculine, it's a sport. [interview]

Where older players deem masculinity necessary for rugby participation and thus are critical of femininity among men's players, the younger players tend to question the hegemonic masculinity awarded to male players in the first place, given that their own involvement in the sport has not led to the construction of a masculine identity. Despite changes to the sport in itself, the players' involvement in a sport they believe is considered to be masculine by society, to them, has proven that being a man is not a requirement for the sport and thus neither is being masculine.

5. Conclusion

To summarise, through the data collected from participant observation and semi-structured interviews, I identified five main themes: Constructing identity in a masculine domain, sexuality in constructing masculinity, maintaining masculinity through excluding feminine players, policing emotional displays, and refuting the embrace of feminised artefacts by rugby men. Each theme illustrates how older and younger players do gender in differing ways and for differing reasons.

Although current players report no incidents of hostility, the older players regarded them as a method through which rugby men attempted to maintain rugby a man's domain, emphasising aggression in order to distance themselves from weakness associated with the victim. The older players worked to construct a collective masculine identity through which they could challenge the sex-gender conflation and prove themselves worthy of participation, rather than engage in 'apologetics', questioning the place of compulsory heterosexuality within women's rugby. The main differences between older and younger players centred around the construction of women's rugby as a sport, a valuable structural change through which to explore the shifting social structure of interaction.

The older players' perception of sport is one where value is placed on size, strength and masculine style of play. These players constructed a 'tough' identity and engaged in a process of defensive othering away from other female athletes in order to emphasise their superiority. A masculine style of play was thought to achieve respect as athletes and justify their claim to the 'rugby player' identity, whilst younger players question the assumption that men's playing style should be valued above all else. Instead there is a focus on cultivating the game in women-defined areas. Considering that the attributes deemed necessary for athletic

success are less conflated with a masculine identity, younger players are less invested in constructing one.

The hyper-heterosexuality evident among the older players is disproven as a strategy consistent with homophobia, rather the heterosexual 'sex talk' used by players presents interaction through which they can demonstrate hegemonic masculinity as opposed to heterosexuality. Through emphasising their power and privileged position in sexual encounters player's position themselves within marginalised masculinity, where they do not have the characteristics of 'maleness' necessary for hegemonic masculinity, yet they subscribe to its norms. The lack of sex talk by younger players can be understood through their lack of concern over striving for hegemonic masculinity and distancing themselves from femininity.

Worthen's application of inclusive masculinity theory in order to highlight the role of lower cultural homophobia in greater inclusion of non-heterosexual women, is somewhat inconsistent with my findings. Given that rugby was considered a safe space in which to do masculinity, non-heterosexuality came to be expected, irrespective of cultural levels of homophobia. Indeed, a visible lesbian existence worked to maintain a collective masculine team identity, which was deemed of greater importance by heterosexual players than the maintenance of their individual heterosexual identities. Although non-heterosexuals no longer play the same role, their existence has been maintained through the normalisation of non-heterosexual inclusion combined with a lack of importance placed on sexual identity, the latter of which leaves some space for exploration through use of inclusive masculinity theory.

The maintenance of a collective masculine team identity may have been inclusive of non-heterosexuals, however the active exclusion of feminine players or 'girly girls' emphasised the older team's petition for masculine players as well as their

conflation of gender and sexuality. Behind their exclusion of feminine players was the older players' desire to maintain rugby as a prejudice-free space in which to do masculinity without fear of gendered reprimand. Older players undergo defensive othering to distance themselves from feminine women and their association with 'weakness', to suggest that only they, and not women as a class are capable of toughness and aggression. As such, their perception of resistance is one of collective team identity and not necessarily a feminist struggle. In contrast, younger players highlight an inclusion of diverse genders, including femininity, and pride themselves on a lack of gender appropriation, othering away from sport clubs which work to reinforce restrictive gender norms. The current players decouple femininity from weakness in highlighting how femininity has little implication on team performance, a positive move away from the so-called fragility of feminine players. This inclusion has led to tensions between older and younger players, given that younger players have dismissed some of the more offensive masculine traditions in order to pose a more welcoming environment, threatening the older players' sense of rugby as a prejudice-free space.

One way in which older members work to police gender among their members is to regulate displays of emotion. Emotional display is deemed by the oldest players as contradictory to a 'tough;' rugby identity, given rugby's hegemonic status in the UK. Younger players do not proscribe tears altogether; rather, awarding credence to research by Shields (2002, 2005) crying must be done in the "right," masculine way. Specifically, emotion is not to be expressed in ways that are stereotypically associated with girls, women, or femininity.

The regulation of gender by older players is done in order to maintain a collective masculine identity to prove themselves capable of rugby participation, rather than to stratify the club internally. However stratification did offer a way through which older players could emphasise their collective masculinity, in particular by de-

masculinising men's rugby teams and positioning themselves as more worthy of participation. Conflating the use of once feminised artefacts by men with effeminacy rather than homosexuality, the attack on their masculinity has greater resonance as a masculinity building interaction among the women's rugby players themselves. In contrast, where older players work to reproduce rugby as a masculine domain, younger players question the hegemonic masculinity awarded to men's rugby players in the first place, challenging its maintenance as a masculine domain.

The changes in the sport of women's rugby have altered the larger interactional setting, whereby the construction of a masculine identity in interaction is no longer as important given the greater athletic value being awarded to women's players. Where masculinity was once central to attaining athletic value, interaction is no longer appropriated under masculine ideals. Where women's rugby players have shown that the sex categorisation of male or female is not salient in the interpretation of behaviour as masculine or feminine, they offer an important ethnographic setting for future research. Given similarities found between findings and those of Masserschmidt (2000, 2004), there is space for the exploration of 'the body' as a source of both doing and negating gender. In relation to the hostility faced from outsiders, links may be drawn between the differing versions of women's rugby and levels of hostility, research focusing on outsiders' would clarify this further. A larger scale project would be pertinent in exploring the extent to which changes in the game of women's rugby have implicated the existence of rugby as a prejudice-free space.

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7.1 Appendix A: Ethics application outcome

7.2 Appendix B: Participant Observation Proforma

This Participant Observation Proforma details how observations will be conducted. The observations will take place from the morning of 08/07/16 until the evening of 10/07/16. These dates mark the period of time in which I will be residing alongside past and present members of Scottish University Women's Rugby Club. Although the reason for this reunion is for the wedding of a past player, no observations will take place during the wedding as a mark of respect to the bride and groom, for this reason observations made on Saturday 09/07/16 will be significantly fewer.

Out with the wedding this reunion offers valuable interactional data within a setting I have not manufactured for the purpose of this research. The observations will largely take place in an Airbnb in Ayr, a location which I am familiar with. Bar the wedding, the activities for the weekend are not set in stone, however activity suggestions so far, such as games nights, point to staying within the Airbnb in order to save money. This is favourable to voice recording discussions, as I will only do this within the Airbnb, refraining from recording information from those outside the study who have not given their consent. Whilst I will use my phone to voice record inside the Airbnb in order to keep the setting as natural as possible, outside the Airbnb I will use my phone to take primary notes then annotations will be recorded in table 1 as quickly, and in as much detail as possible, after the event.

Six of the participants are current club members and the other nine have graduated at differing stages over the past five years. The oldest member (28) began playing in 2006, as such there is potential to tap into data from over a 10 year period and therefore how interaction and identity has changed. As this project is inductive, I will balance the need to be liberal over the conversations I voice record and behaviour I note so as not to omit relevant data, with an ethical approach to participant's privacy. Primarily, I will voice record on occasions where there are narratives, for example whilst reminiscing, as well as any discussions over or with reference to gender, sexuality and identity. Beyond voice recording I will note non-audio data detailing who was involved in the discussions, who was present and any notable points of interest such as body language (See Table 1).

7.3 Appendix C: Interview Schedule

Following a semi-structured approach, these questions are flexible to the needs of the interview and the interviewee.

All Interviewees:

Over what years did you play for SUWRC?

Please tell me about when your interest in rugby first began?

Did you encounter any problems when first beginning rugby?

Did these problems persist?

What motivated you to keep playing?

How has rugby influenced you?

Table 1

Follow up questions	Probing questions	Specifying questions	Interpretive Questions
<i>What do you mean by....</i>	<i>Could you say more about that?</i>	<i>What did you do then?</i>	<i>'Do you mean that X?'</i>
<i>Yeess?</i>	<i>You said earlier that X, could you specify why that is?</i>	<i>How did X react when X happened?</i>	<i>'Are you saying that X?'</i>
Repeat significant word	<i>In what ways do you find X effects your participation in rugby?</i>	<i>What effects did X have on you?</i>	<i>'When you say X do you mean that...?'</i>

Adapted from Bryman (2016)