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A Qualitative Analysis of Latinas in Collegiate Softball

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Doctoral degree in Kinesiology

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Major professor

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A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF LATINAS IN COLLEGIATE SOFTBALL

By

Katherine Marie Jamieson

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Kinesiology

1999

ABSTRACT

A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF LATINAS IN COLLEGIATE SOFTBALL

By

Katherine Marie Jamieson

Relying on the framework of multiracial feminism (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1994) and Gerson's (1985) developmental analysis, this research explores how a select group of Latinas made decisions about sport involvement. More specifically, the collegiate athletic paths of a select group of Latinas are analyzed as a product of their experiences within larger structural and cultural conditions. The application of these frameworks is especially relevant for studying the experiences of women in Latino families who face varied constraining and enabling conditions along what are often unconventional paths toward collegiate softball.

Among the findings in the present research were a) women in Latino/a families do receive familial support for sport involvement, b) women in Latino/a families face varied forms of structural disadvantage that influence decisions about involvement in sport, c) school personnel may hold beliefs about Latina educational and career advancement that influence the guidance Latinas receive for transitioning from high school to college, and d) collegiate softball is a social structure organized around inequalities of race, class and sexuality.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are so many people and organizations that have contributed to the completion of this project. I only hope that if I have left any one entity from this formal page that I have somehow communicated my genuine appreciation for their support in a more personal way during the years that this project has been a significant part of my life. That said, I begin this task of giving thanks first by acknowledging the 27 women who gave me access to their experiences, memories, feelings and stories. I am a different person for having met each of you. Make no mistake about it, you taught me volumes about living life as a woman, a Latina, a lesbian and a member of a vastly diverse Latino/a community. The sharing of your experiences with me has added new dimensions to my thinking and understanding about collegiate athletics and women's lives.

I am also indebted to many people at Michigan State University, not the least of which are my committee members, Yevonne R. Smith, Maxine Baca Zinn, Martha Ewing and Doug Campbell. I am especially thankful for the intellectually challenging guidance that I received from my two chairpersons, Yevonne R. Smith and Maxine Baca Zinn. Their combined intellectual guidance and high expectations have greatly enhanced this manuscript and my analytic competencies. It has been an incredible privilege to receive care, guidance and intellectual leadership in a real-life multiracial feminist context. I am convinced that you are the dynamic duo of the new millenium.

I am also thankful to Deborah Feltz for her consistent interest in my professional development, her modeling of effective leadership, and her commitment to addressing the

racial imbalance in our department and discipline. My ability to participate in a variety of educational experiences in the department of Kinesiology was also greatly enhanced by the women who hold that department together, Verna Lyon, Jan Davenport, JoAnn Janes and Mariane Oren – thanks for keeping me on track.

I truly could not have imagined completing this project if I had not received financial, moral and intellectual support from the following organizations. Sincere thanks go to the College of Education and the Graduate School at Michigan State University, Western Society for the Physical Education of College Women, and the Michigan Educational Opportunity Fund.

I of course owe a debt of gratitude to my family, whose interest and support of my academic goals have been constant. Clearly, I would not be doing this work if it were not for the encouragement, support and love that I have received from my immediate family along the way. I am also so very thankful for my extended “familia”. It is the Martinez family heritage that drives my personal commitments and informs my personal understanding of life at the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality.

Finally, I am eternally thankful for the life that I have enjoyed with Amy Stringer throughout, and at times, in spite of this degree process. You have brought peace, joy, family, friends, and fun to my life. I am grateful for your support and unconditional love throughout this emotionally and intellectually challenging experience.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Women's decisions about sport involvement, education, career and family life are made in the midst of varied and shifting social conditions, conditions that situate women in disparate positions of power (Aptheker, 1989; Cuadraz, 1992; Gerson, 1985). Relying on the framework of multiracial feminism (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1994; 1996) and Gerson's (1985) developmental approach to examining how women make choices about their adult lives, this research explores how a select group of Latinas made their individual ways to collegiate softball. More specifically, the collegiate athletic paths of a select group of Latinas are analyzed as a product of their experiences within particular social conditions, especially as they experience these conditions as particularly racialized, classed and sexualized subjects. The application of these frameworks is especially relevant for studying the experiences of women in Latino families who face varied constraining and enabling conditions along what are often unconventional paths toward collegiate softball. Unlike, Gerson's (1985) participants, the women I interviewed each had paths that lead to the same location – collegiate softball, but their paths were divergent. It is how these paths diverge that illustrates the significance of social conditions in shaping women's options for creating adult lives.

In the balance of this chapter, I provide an introduction of this research including discussions about the rationale, background, purpose and questions that guide this inquiry. The significance and scope of the present research are also outlined in this chapter followed by a comprehensive list of terms and their operational definitions. I now turn to the rationale for the current research.

Rationale

Women are of diverse racial and ethnic heritages, fluid and varied sexualities, and differential class backgrounds. These divergent social locations shape opportunities for sports involvement at all levels, but are most empirically visible at the collegiate level (Acosta & Carpenter, 1988; 1994; NCAA, 1994; 1997). Recent NCAA data reveal that women of color are consistently unequal beneficiaries in the project of gender equity (Boutilier & San Giovanni, 1994; Jamieson & Baca Zinn, 1998; NCAA, 1994; 1997). For example, despite an increase in women's participation in collegiate sports since the passage of Title IX, most women of color on NCAA campuses remain underrepresented in women's athletics as athletes, coaches, and administrators (Abney & Richey, 1992; Smith, 1995). At the same time, White women make up a disproportionately high percentage of female student athletes on these campuses. Perhaps most importantly, distributive data such as these lay a foundation for asking *why* current social arrangements exist, and *how* they came to be as they are.

These data clearly reveal that *all* women navigate what is really a race-gender system in United States society (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1994; 1996; Collins, 1990), education, and sport. For some this navigation is filled with detours and dangerous curves, while for others it is a smooth voyage to their destination of choice. The experiences of Latinas in the race-gender system in women's sports are especially significant given the present climate of anti-affirmative action, anti-immigration, major economic shifts, a dramatically changing racial-ethnic make-up, and the widening gap in the distribution of wealth in the United States (Eitzen, 1996a, p. 250). Collegiate sport is not unaffected by these significant social trends (Eitzen, 1996a). In fact, despite a growing presence of

women of color in sport, an underlying racial-ethnic structure may continue to operate, situating Latinas and other women of color in subordinate social locations (Abney & Richey, 1992; Eitzen & Furst, 1993; Green, 1993; Smith, 1992).

Softball has been among the fastest growing sports for high school student girls since the passage of Title IX. In 1997, softball ranked fourth among high school female student athletes in terms of numbers of participants, and 13 percent of all high school female athletes participated in softball (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). Abell (1998), a staff writer for the NCAA News suggested that the success of Olympic softball coupled with the need to comply with Title IX resulted in an explosive increase in the number of schools offering collegiate softball. For example, in 1984, 451 NCAA schools sponsored softball, and by 1998 that number had grown to 767 (Abell, 1998). Opportunities for young women to get involved in softball have also expanded throughout the nation (Abell, 1998).

While this new era of increased opportunity for involvement in softball sounds wonderful, it is clearly not accessible to all young girls in all types of neighborhoods around the nation. In fact, in the current collegiate softball structure a hefty 80 percent of all student athletes in division one softball programs in 1997 were recruited exclusively from ASA summer programs (Abell, 1998). It becomes increasingly clear that collegiate softball is a structure of growing, yet disparate opportunities. Given this reality, it is curious how this select group of Latinas made their paths to collegiate softball.

Background of the Study

This research emerges out of lived experiences, previous projects (Jamieson, 1990; 1997), and a genuine desire to understand women's varied interactions in the

institution of sport. The foundation of the present research rests in my own experiences as a working class, Mexican-Scottish woman who grew up under the primary care and nurturance of my Mexican mother and her extended family; a family whose roots stretch across the Southwestern United States and Mexico. My mother grew up on the edge of poverty, the edge of a working class town, the edge of upward mobility, and the edge of the Chicano Movement. Poverty, racial-ethnic discrimination and rigid gender constructions shaped my mother's social world, including her experiences in school based sports. Despite challenges, my mom continued to play and to this day claims sport experiences and resultant friendships as significant influences in her realization that she could create a life of her own choosing, on and off the playing field. Her stories about sport were really stories about coming of age in a barrio in Southern California in the 1950's and 1960's. Not unlike my mother's experience, the informants in the present study suggested that despite compromises and at times social consequences for their commitment to collegiate softball, the educational, social, financial and interpersonal benefits far outweighed the costs.

My own experience as the only Latina on many of my sports teams also prompted me to focus my master's thesis on Mexican heritage women in sports. In fact, as I continued in elite sport settings (e.g., camps, collegiate level) I realized how different I was, not only from the women who were still competing at these levels, but also from the women with whom I had grown up. I began to wonder why I was one of very few Latinas in collegiate athletics. Surely, if I had found my way, others could do the same. Where did all of my hermanas (Latina sisters) go after high school?

Moreover, despite the accuracy of the claim that a disproportionately lower number of Latinas participated in school-based sports, the explanation for the phenomenon seemed inadequate to me. Additionally, the social science depictions of Mexican and other Latina women did not mesh with my own experiences of growing up Mexican. Having completed the thesis research, I was convinced that Mexican family values were not the culprit they had been made out to be, and in fact, they did not exist in the monolithic manner that many had suggested¹. However, while the descriptive and categorical data obtained in the thesis research was useful, it did not reveal the complexity of the situation. Thus, I was motivated and inspired to seek a more detailed telling of Latina's stories about experiences in sport.

The move from a descriptive analysis of sport participation among Latinas to a rich, deep depiction of the experiences among Latinas who had made it to collegiate sport required a pilot study. In the fall of 1996, I set out to conduct one small group interview with Latinas who had participated in at least two years of high school athletics. Among the three women interviewed, one played two years of community college athletics. The purpose of the interview was to learn about the significant meanings of sport involvement for these women, and to begin to understand the power of race, ethnicity, class, sexuality and gender as shapers of sport experiences among these women. The pilot study for the present research revealed that these women would have benefited from additional career and educational counseling in their high schools, that athletics for women was not as

¹ Several scholars in the 60's and 70's relied on various frameworks of cultural determinism and family pathology to explain the social location of Latinos in United States society. In essence their analyses suggested that Mexican families shared common values that made them less able to become productive members of United States society. For scholarly rebukes of these limited analyses see Baca Zinn, 1980; 1982; Melville, 1988.

available as it is today and that they never really knew how talented they were. In effect they had no idea that they were good enough to compete in collegiate athletics, and had no one guiding them down that path. Additionally, two of the three women felt a strong need to become employed immediately after high school. In retrospect, they believe their parents would have supported them in collegiate athletics morally and financially, however at the time having a job seemed more important.

These personal and scholarly experiences illustrate how little is empirically known about Latina experiences in sport, and yet, how rich these experiences may be. Previous research efforts also illustrate the prominence of sport as a social institution organized around inequalities (Abney & Richey, 1992; Acosta, 1999; Birrell, 1990; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Smith, 1992). The present research emerges out of these varied experiences and a deep-rooted desire to hear, re-tell and systematically analyze Latina experiences in sport, especially as they represent varied social locations at the intersection of race, ethnicity, class and sexuality.

Statement of Purpose

An increasingly sophisticated understanding of the experiences of all women in sport may flow from a comprehensive scholarly consideration of the social conditions that Latinas and other women of color experience along the way to collegiate sport. This research will concern itself with a small piece of the significant task of analyzing the experiences of Latinas in collegiate softball. There are two main components to this overarching purpose, a) to examine how paths are constructed and maintained given the social conditions within which these women create their lives, and b) to examine the

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significance of race, class and sexuality in the experiences of Latinas in collegiate softball.

Although distributive data make it abundantly clear that Latinas exhibit disproportionately lower rates of participation in collegiate sport (NCAA, 1997), it is not empirically clear what is at the root of such inequality. Similar to other social institutions, the very foundation of sport is organized around faulty beliefs, stereotypes and false universals about women, especially in terms of race, ethnicity, class and sexuality. Given this potential for inequalities in the structure of sport, it is curious how women actually manage to become involved at elite levels of sport. One aim of this study is to find out precisely how this particular group of Latinas became involved in sport and made it to elite level sport. Along the way, there may have been constraining forces as well as forces that augmented their chances for involvement. This research will examine how is it that these particular Latinas became involved in sport, and how they made their own paths to collegiate softball. This is not an attempt to develop a cohesive set of conditions navigated by all Latinas, rather the goal is to uncover significant conditions within families, sport, and educational settings that shaped the decisions these women made about their lives.

Additionally, this research is aimed at revealing the significant meanings of sports involvement among Latinas in the present study. Involvement in sport may have many consequences for individual and group experiences. It has been suggested that research and scholarship on women of color in sport examine how it is that some women are constructed as alien through experiences in the institution of sport (Birrell, 1990). Accordingly, this research provides analyses of the experiences of these diverse Latinas

as they attempted to navigate the middle class, pervasively white structure of collegiate softball.

Research Questions

Women's lives are complex; deciding on significant questions about women's lives is difficult. Each of the questions listed below represents a thematic area that has emerged somewhere along the line in the experiences that make up the background to this study. Moreover, the use of thematic areas to organize the research questions will aid in the maintenance of particular analytic foci even as the questions continue to evolve throughout the two specific phases of this research.

The overarching questions have been looming in my mind for several years now and I believe still have potential for adding to our understanding of inequalities in sport. They are a) "What are the varied social conditions that influence the construction and maintenance of paths toward collegiate softball?", and b) "To what extent are race, ethnicity, class and sexuality significant in the experiences of Latinas who are collegiate softball athletes?" These are simple questions, but they hold the potential for a variety of complex responses from women in diverse social locations.

Additional substantive questions are set in the following thematic areas.

I. Baseline Orientations

- a) Are there particular social conditions that enable or constrain the development of baseline orientations for sport?
- b) To what extent do inequalities of race, class and sexuality influence the development of baseline orientations for sport?

II. Maintaining Paths toward Collegiate Softball

- a) Are their shifting social conditions that either enable or constrain Latinas in the maintenance of paths toward collegiate softball?
- b) To what extent do inequalities of race, class and sexuality influence the maintenance of paths toward collegiate softball?

III. Navigating Collegiate Softball

- a) Are their particular social conditions that either enable or constrain the ability of Latinas to navigate the structure of collegiate softball?
- b) To what extent do inequalities of race, class and sexuality influence the experiences of Latinas in collegiate softball?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is its focus on social conditions that influence the pathways of a select group of Latinas who competed in collegiate softball. It is well established that Latinas and other women of color are consistently bridging cultural divides in the “dailiness” (Aptheker, 1989) of their lives (Anzaldua, 1987; 1990a; Pesquera & de la Torre, 1993). Stated differently, many Latinas are constantly having to work to maintain ties to their working class backgrounds, ethnic heritage, cultural heritage, and yet to prove their allegiance to social, economic, and educational progress in United States society (Anzaldua, 1987; 1990b; Pesquera & de la Torre, 1993). Thus, analyzing social conditions that influence baseline orientations for sport, ability to make paths toward sport and ability to navigate pervasively white, middle class collegiate sport will enhance understandings of the structure of collegiate sport.

Moreover, sociological studies of inequalities and oppression have long been centered in the perspectives and experiences of dominant group members (Gorelick,

1991; Sabo, 1995). This has resulted in a skewed understanding of social relations in United States society. Much of science begins and ends with a view from above, while many feminist scholars have called for a view from below (Gorelick, 1991). The use of the descriptor 'below' is not intended to represent a less significant view, but an equally significant view that is situated below the dominant view in any hierarchical social order. According to Gorelick (1991) the view from above is incomplete and slanted toward the desired view of those in positions of power in any social structure. Alternatively, the view from below is a less partial view, a less invested view of the power structure in a particular society (Gorelick, 1991). This research offers several examples of a "view from below" (Gorelick, 1991), or a differently critical perspective on the structure of women's collegiate softball.

These analyses also lend themselves to the development of pathways model that illustrates the various social conditions that may impinge upon women as they make decisions about sport involvement. Gerson (1985) suggested that women start out with a baseline orientation for domestic or non-domestic goals, but as they encounter social conditions their paths may diverge and they may continue on a path of origin or they may jump tracks and end up creating a path toward alternative goals. Using Gerson's model as a jumping off point, I will unveil a model that illustrates the various paths that Latinas may take toward their goal of competing in collegiate softball. This model is discussed in more detail in chapters five and six of this manuscript.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

For purposes of this research, the analytic focus is Latina experiences of collegiate softball. While much may be gleaned from experiences and stories shared by these

particular women, their experiences will not necessarily provide an accurate account of sport experiences for all Latinas, or of all athletes in collegiate softball. Moreover, softball athletes may not be reflective of experiences among athletes in other sports. However softball was selected as the site to study Latinas due to its larger representation of Latinas as compared to other collegiate sports. Additionally, the age range of interviewees may have influenced the depth of discussion in some cases, such as discussions about sexuality and relationships with families. It is also salient that a varied, but strong “culture of softball” has shaped the collegiate athletic experiences of this select group of women. This is not so much a limitation as it is an additional piece of the analysis.

This is purposeful, as I believe this approach will offer a differently meaningful application of findings than commonly expected in research. In fact, a significant strength of this research lay in it’s centering of the discourse regarding women’s sport experiences in the lived experiences of Latinas. These findings may strike a chord with the actual lived experiences of all women who find themselves at the margins of society. In so doing it offers the potential for applicability and commonality of experience among women of color, working class women, lesbian women and all women who find their selves interwoven into the analyses of the experiences of this particular group of Latinas.

The original purpose of interviews with former collegiate athletes was to enhance the interview questions that would be used during the interviews with current softball athletes. Thus, in addition to what had been gleaned from the relevant literature, the experiences of 11 Latinas who were former collegiate softball athletes became the foundation for the development of interview questions for phase two of the study. Group

interviews have the potential to produce volumes of data, especially on a specific, shared experience, like collegiate softball, however they are difficult to schedule, require appropriate space to be conducted and may intimidate some participants. For these reasons there were limits to the number of focus group interviews that could be conducted. Surely all Latinas were not represented in this group of 11, yet where possible representation across ethnicity, class status, sexuality and size/type of college attended was attempted.

Phase two of the study included face-to-face interviews with twenty individual current collegiate softball athletes. Much like the situation with focus group interviews, participants were accepted as they volunteered. Participants did represent diverse Latina ethnicities, class backgrounds and experiences in varied collegiate settings (e.g., community college and university). The sixty to ninety-minute interviews with each of these women produced a wealth of data; however, interview data is difficult to verify. There is no reason to believe that participants have shared untruths, yet the details of experiences are always subject to the way people choose to remember them. Thus, the re-telling of one's own stories without collection of verifiable data may appear to limit assertions and analyses. In reality, the way experiences are remembered and re-told will reflect significant meanings held by the informant and offer opportunities for additional analyses.

Finally, by virtue of a firm foundation in multiracial feminist framework (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1994; 1996) and a developmental approach (Gerson, 1985) to examining women's life choices, this research unveils the interconnectedness of various forms of inequality, and explores their salience in the paths of a select group of Latina collegiate

softball athletes. The theoretical scope of this research includes a focus on social conditions especially as they reveal built-in inequalities that cut across race, ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality in the lives of Latinas. In this research I will focus on each of various social conditions, and will analyze them as changeable, shifting influences in the lives of the women I interviewed. This will be accomplished through a critical lens. Together with the analytic focus and methods of data collection mentioned above, the critical feminist theoretical underpinnings appropriately delimit this research.

Terms and Definitions

The following terms and definitions are provided as a guide to the reader in understanding the author's use of theoretical, organizational and categorical constructs. Certainly other definitions may exist for several of the terms located here. This list describes the author's intended use of terms for purposes of these analyses.

Amateur Softball Association: The major governing body for all levels of amateur softball (fast and slow pitch), and the governing body of elite travel ball tournaments which are a primary conduit to collegiate softball.

Baseline Orientation: Refers to baseline orientations as early childhood assumptions about what one wants to do or be in adulthood (Gerson, 1985). These baselines form the point from which adult development proceeds (Gerson, 1985, p. 43).

Class: A historically and socially constructed division of society that is linked not only to economic power, but also to gender, sexuality, race and other systems of inequality (Andermahr, Lovell & Wolkowitz, 1997; Humm, 1995; Kramarae & Treichler, 1985).

Community College: A two year college often used as a head start to a four year university or college, or to obtain an Associates degree or certificate. Community college

campuses are more financially, academically, and geographically accessible than are most four year colleges and universities.

Cultural Condition: I use the term to reflect transient beliefs about appropriate ways of life that shape women's opportunities to make choices about how to construct their own lives.

Culture: Culture consists of the behavior patterns, symbols, institutions, values, and other human-made components of society. It is the unique achievement of a human group that distinguishes it from other groups. Despite similarities among various cultures, a particular culture constitutes a unique whole (Banks, 1997, p. 62). Cultural systems are dynamic and as such are said to be both produced and acquired by their members (Donnelly, 1993; Fine, 1993).

Developmental Analysis: An analytic framework developed by Gerson (1985) for examining the complexity of how women make decisions about their lives. A developmental analysis focuses on variation among women as a group and change over time in the lives of women, and includes biography, history and social structure as significant shapers of women's adult lives (Gerson, 1985, p.38).

Division I Athletics: Member institutions have to sponsor at least seven sports for men and seven for women (or six for men and eight for women) with two team sports for each gender. Each playing season has to be represented by each gender as well (fall, Winter, Spring). Division I schools must meet minimum financial aid awards for their athletics program, and may not exceed maximum financial aid awards for each sport.

Division II Athletics: Member institutions have to sponsor at least four sports for men and four for women, with two team sports for each gender, and each playing season

represented by each gender. There are maximum financial aid awards for each sport that a Division II school must not exceed.

Division III Athletics: Member institutions have to sponsor at least four sports for men and four for women, with two team sports for each gender, and each playing season represented by each gender. Division III does not award financial aid on the basis of athletic ability -- only on the basis of need.

Ethnicity: A condition of being culturally distinct on the basis of race, religion, or national origin (Eitzen & Baca Zinn, 1993: 291; Eitzen, 1996c). An ethnic group has an historic origin that preceded the creation of the nation state or was external to the nation state. It also has shared heritage and tradition, an ancestral tradition, and its members share a sense of peoplehood. Ethnic groups also have some value orientations, behavioral patterns, and interests, often political and economic, which differ from those of other groups within society. Ethnic groups are not monolithic and in fact in modernized democratic societies are highly diverse, complex, and changing entities (Banks, 1997, p. 66).

Educational Opportunity Program: The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) Grant is a state-funded program that offers financial assistance to undergraduate California residents who demonstrate extreme economic and educational disadvantage. Eligible students must be admitted to the educational institution by the Educational Opportunity Program and complete their financial aid application to demonstrate financial need. The maximum award amount for 1997-98 was \$700.

Gender: The social characteristics that a society considers proper for its males and females; masculinity and femininity (Henslin, 1993). A basic principle of social organization in terms of socially constructed differences between women and men.

Generational Status: Refers to the number of generations of one's maternal family that were born in the United States. My maternal grandparents were born in the United States making me third generation born in the United States.

Hispanic: A government-imposed term to describe persons in the United States who are of any Latino/a ethnic heritage. The term Hispanic is politically contested, and its use is regional and historical in nature (Nieves-Squires, 1991). In this report, the term "Hispanic" is used when discussing census data, and the term Latino/a when referring to male or female persons of any Latino/a ethnicity (e.g., Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, South or Central American).

Latina: A Latina is any woman identifying as a person of any Latino/a ethnicity including but not limited to Puerto Rican, Cuban, Mexican, South American, and Central American ethnicities (Nieves-Squires, 1991).

Minority Group: A group that 1) is relatively powerless compared with the majority group, 2) possesses traits that make it different from others, 3) is systematically condemned by negative stereotyped beliefs, and 4) is singled out for differential and unfair treatment (Eitzen, 1996c, p. 285).

Multiracial: signifies the salience of race in gendered identities, but also includes the intersecting effects of class, sexual preference, and other socially constructed systems of inequality (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1994).

Multiracial Feminism: A framework developed by Baca Zinn and Dill (1994; 1996) for analyzing gendered identities as they are mediated by other systems of inequality, especially inequalities of race and ethnicity. Multiracial feminism provides a means of making sense of relational identities of gender and makes room for women of color, women of various social classes, and women of various sexual identities in the discourse about all women's lives.

National Collegiate Athletic Association: The organization through which the nation's colleges and universities speak and act on athletics matters at the national level. It is a voluntary association of more than 1,200 institutions, conferences, organizations and individuals who collaborate in the administration of intercollegiate athletics.

Pathways: Refers to the particular ways that women interact with and navigate social institutions as they create their adult lives (Gerson, 1985). The concept of pathways offers an illustration of the particular social conditions that women encounter as they work toward achieving their original goals (Gerson, 1985).

Pell Grant: The Federal Pell Grant is offered to eligible undergraduate students and serves as the foundation for eligibility in other Federal and State need-based grant and loan programs. The annual award for full-time students ranges from \$400 to \$2,700.

Race: A concept that signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies (Omi & Winant, 1994). Race is a framework of ranked categories segmenting the human population that has its historical roots in the global expansion of Western Europeans which began in the 1400s (Sanjek, 1994). Race is also an ideological construct that situates White men at the top of a socially constructed hierarchy based on false racial categories.

Sexuality: In current terms, sexuality is a field of knowledge constructed by multiple public discourses (e.g., media, medicine, religion, families) through which power gains access to the body (Andermahr, Lovell & Wolkowitz, 1997, p. 201). It is the intersection of erotic desires and practices with political, social, economic and historical contexts (Kramarae & Treichler, 1985; Humm, 1995).

Social Location: “One’s position in society based on family background, race, ethnicity, or sex” (Baca Zinn & Eitzen, 1999, p. 479).

Sport: The term sport refers to a social institution, rather than a particular game or pastime. I adopt Coakley’s (1994) definition of sport as “institutionalized competitive activity that involves vigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by individuals whose participation is motivated by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors” (p. 21).

Structural Condition: Social structures, patterns of relationships (i.e., families, schools, teams) that influence and shape opportunities and experiences of women as they make choices about their lives.

Structural Inequality Perspective: Emerging out of a conflict perspective, structural inequalities suggests that the social structure actually produces and reproduces inequalities based on various socially significant statuses (e.g., race, class, gender, sexual preference) (Eitzen & Baca Zinn, 1992).

Women of Color: Refers to women who share an experience of historical oppression based on race/ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality. The term women of color refers to the connection between Third world women and United States women as individuals struggling for equality on the basis of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

The purpose of chapter two is to provide a review of the meaningful research and scholarly literature that has informed this study of Latinas in collegiate softball. In this chapter I review the literature on women in collegiate softball, Latinas in educational and employment settings, and make connections between these and opportunities for participation in collegiate athletics. I also provide critical reviews of current discourses on race, ethnicity, gender, class and sexuality. All women live at the intersection of each of these categories of analysis, thus my focus will turn to the literature that addresses the way that these categories of analysis intersect and consistently shape the sport experiences of women of color. Finally, I will outline the critical theoretical frameworks upon which these analyses rest, a developmental approach to women's pathways (Gerson, 1985) and multiracial feminism (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1994, 1996).

Women in Collegiate Softball

Softball has been among the fastest growing sports for high school student girls since the passage of Title IX. In 1997, softball ranked fourth among high school female student athletes in terms of numbers of participants, and 13 percent of all high school female athletes participated in softball (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) had more than 1.4 million youth participants on 79,000 teams during their 1996 season (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). During the academic year 1996/97 there were 770 NCAA softball teams, accounting for over 13,000 athletes, and averaging a little over 17 athletes per team (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). In 1996, more than eight percent of the population participated in recreational softball, and seven

percent of women chose softball as a recreational activity (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). Still, little scholarship has focused on women's experiences of collegiate softball. In what follows I will provide a brief review of the scholarship and research on women in softball that I have found useful and relevant to the current research.

A Brief History of Softball

Softball has had an industrial and working class link since the existence of formalized women's leagues was first recognized (Emery, 1994). Softball is thought to have developed out of an indoor version of baseball that was played primarily in the Midwest (Oglesby, 1998), and took on its current name in 1932 (Emery, 1994). The following material is drawn from Emery (1994, pp. 116-117). The year 1933 marked the first Amateur Softball Association championship for women, and by 1938 there were nearly 1,000 women's softball teams in southern California alone. These numbers grew during WWII when more women entered the labor force and created opportunity for additional industrial based teams. The large majority of these teams had industrial backing, some including women of color. While support of women's softball teams, leagues and championship tournaments seems quite progressive for the 1930s, these teams garnered positive publicity, healthier workers, increased productivity and supposedly team unity for their sponsoring employers. Images of the teams and individual athletes emphasized femininity and family first, and athletic ability last.

It has been suggested that Smith College and other women's colleges on the east coast encouraged women's participation in baseball as early as 1866 (Dickson, 1994). The more formalized men's game was under scrutiny around this time as it had become a site for violent play among "carousing, crude men" (Dickson, 1994, p. 51). According to

Dickson (1994), the game that had been played at Smith and at other women's colleges on the east coast was converted to softball around 1940. The national fast-pitch tournaments governed by the Amateur Softball Association (ASA), which began in 1933 and continue today, also served as a precursor to collegiate softball. The first collegiate softball championships were held in 1982. In 1996, softball made its debut as an Olympic medal sport with the USA team winning the gold medal.

The Current Structure of Collegiate Softball

Abell (1998), a staff writer for the NCAA News suggested that the success of Olympic softball coupled with the need to comply with Title IX resulted in an explosive increase in the number of schools offering collegiate softball. For example, in 1984, 451 NCAA schools sponsored softball, and by 1998 that number had grown to 767 (Abell, 1998). Opportunities for young women to get involved in softball have also expanded throughout the nation (Abell, 1998). Cindy Cohen, chair of the division one softball committee told Abell (1998) that compared to her experiences as a young girl, today's opportunities are markedly better. While this new era of increased opportunity for involvement in softball sounds wonderful, it is clearly not accessible to all young girls in all types of neighborhoods around the nation. In fact, what Abell (1988) and her informant failed to discuss is the high cost and high visibility of elite youth softball.

ASA magazine recently printed an article about the profitability of hosting their tournaments (McCall, 1999). Girls fast pitch tournaments were the most numerous and most profitable for host cities. Relying on the numbers reported by ASA, it is estimated that the cost per individual for a two-day tournament was \$250.00. This is a rough estimate that includes travel while in town, two-night stay in town, meals, and sight-

seeing (McCall, 1999). This estimate may rise substantially among athletes on elite teams that often travel across the nation to compete in multiple tournaments throughout the summer months. Connect this prohibitive cost with the fact that 80 percent of the softball student athletes in division one institutions in 1997 were recruited from ASA summer programs (Abell, 1998), and it becomes increasingly clear that collegiate softball is a structure of growing, yet disparate opportunities.

Softball as a Site for Ideological Contests

Sociological research and scholarship suggests that softball has potential as a site for contesting male privilege and hegemonic conceptions of femininity (Lenskyj, 1994; Birrell & Richter, 1994). In their interviews with feminist identified participants in two women's softball leagues, Birrell and Richter (1994) revealed several different forms of feminist principles in softball. The feminist perspectives applied to softball illustrate how "feminist sport" can be transformative, consciousness raising, and liberating for many women. Lenskyj's (1994) case study of the NotsoAmazon women's softball league in Toronto revealed similar findings. Softball was a site for rearticulating sport in a feminist and womanist framework. However, the accounts by Lenskyj (1994) and Birrell and Richter (1994) share two significant limitations in terms of application to the present research. First, neither provided an analysis of how race influenced the experience of liberation in these feminist women's softball leagues. For the most part, gender and sexuality were prioritized, which made for informative analyses, but incomplete analyses. Second, Birrell & Richter (1994) and Lenskyj (1994) did not examine collegiate sport contexts, which are structurally, politically and socially quite distinct from community recreational leagues.

Summary

Women's participation in collegiate softball is a recent social phenomenon, and one that continues to be shaped by a particular structure of collegiate athletics. I have provided a brief discussion of the evolution of modern softball, the primary method of accessing collegiate softball, and the value of recreational softball as a site for political contest. The scholarship and research reviewed above illustrate the rigidity and elitism of collegiate softball, and simultaneously show the political and transformative power of non-collegiate forms of softball. A discussion of the representation of Latinas in collegiate athletics and softball follows in this chapter.

Latinas in Social Institutions

Social demographic data reveal that despite significant growth in numbers among all Latinos, Latinas continue to face lower college attendance and graduation rates, lower than average family annual income, and higher than average rates of poverty (Rumbaut, 1995; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). While it is not the focus of this chapter, social demography and systemic inequalities faced by Latinos/as in the United States are important aspects of the discourse on Latinas in educational settings. Chapter four provides a more detailed examination of the social demography of Latinos/as in the United States. What follows in this section is a review of literature that analyzes the experiences of Latinas in educational and athletic settings.

Latinas in Educational Settings

To date, research and scholarship on educational preparation and retention suggest that many Latinas have expressed a need for assistance in navigating post-secondary educational system (Cardoza, 1991; Nieves-Squires, 1991; Simoniello, 1981). This sense

of dislocation from educational institutions may have a direct effect upon opportunities for participation in collegiate athletics as well. In fact, Latinas are disproportionately underrepresented as students and as student athletes on NCAA campuses (NCAA, 1997). While it is true that most women struggle to navigate these social institutions, the particular experiences of Latinas have yet to inform sociological analyses of gendered identities. Clearly, a complex and fluid connection exists between varied Latino/a cultural traditions and shifting social structural inequalities (Zavella, 1994). As Latina experiences of collegiate softball enter the discourse on women in the social institution of sport, it is imperative that knowledge and insight be gleaned from scholarship by and about Latinas in various social institutions. Thus, it is important to understand how Latinas have fared in educational settings as these experiences may directly influence opportunities, perceived and real, to participate in collegiate sport.

The literature on Latinas in higher education suggests that entry to college is difficult for a number of reasons (Cardoza, 1991; Nieves-Squires, 1991; Ortiz, 1988; Simoniello, 1981). Among the parents of Cardoza's (1991) subjects there was a distinction made between aspirations and expectations for their daughters' educational attainment. While parents may aspire to support their daughters' educational goals, they often may not expect to be able to do this due to financial limitations (Cardoza, 1991). It was also suggested that Latina high schoolers were not encouraged to take college preparatory courses or tests. In effect they were not being prepared or encouraged to pursue a college education. Cardoza also noted that Latinas may often be the first in their families to go to college (Cardoza, 1991), which makes every aspect of this new experience even more challenging.

An investigation of attitudes toward achievement and success in professional United States Mexican women suggested that they perceived discrimination as women and as persons of Mexican heritage, and also perceived a need for a sponsor or mentor to give them the "inside track" (Simoniello, 1981). Without a mentor, these women believed, they would not have been able to navigate their way through the academy. Having a role model was extremely important to Cardoza's (1991) subjects. Additionally, Ortiz (1988) suggested that Hispanic women in higher education are often seen as antithetical to the "Hispanic woman". It is often assumed that Latinas are not interested in attending college. What may seem like disinterest in education may actually be perceived inability to do the work or pay the financial cost.

Many new college students face difficulties in adjusting to the collegiate social scene, as well as meeting the academic requirements. The research cited above suggests that Latinas may face specific challenges as the first in their families to go to college, as one of a small number of Latinos/as on this nation's college campuses and as one who may feel like an outsider (Cardoza, 1991; Ortiz, 1988; Simoniello, 1981). As of 1997, only nine percent of Latinos/as reported having earned a bachelor's degree while 24 percent of non-Hispanic White and 14 percent of non-Hispanic Black persons had attained the same level of education (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). The numbers alone suggest that Latinos/as will be isolated from other Latinos/as often on our nation's campuses. Moreover, the small numbers of Latino/a college students partially explain the small number of student athletes, but does not explain the disproportionately lower representation of Latinas in NCAA athletics.

One reason that Latinas may not be found in NCAA athletics is that they are often enrolled in two-year colleges, which are governed by the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). In 1996, nearly 40 percent of 18 to 19 year old Latinas who were enrolled in school were enrolled below college, twice as many as the national average for all women (Bureau of the Census, 1998). Thirty one percent of the 233,000 Latinas (18 to 19 years old) that were enrolled in school were enrolled in a two-year college and 30 percent were enrolled in a 4-year college, almost a one to one ratio of two-year to four-year college enrollment. The data for women of all races show a one to two ratio for the two-year to four-year college enrollment. Latinas, more than any other group of women are likely to be enrolled in a two-year college.

Many two-year colleges offer excellent career and/or academic curricula, and they clearly provide educational access for many persons who might otherwise not enroll in college at all. Yet, for Latinas, two-year colleges may simply become a holding pattern leading to nowhere in particular. Nora and Rendón (1994) reviewed selected literature about access, retention and transfer rates of Latino students in community colleges. They found that approximately 75% of students who enter a community college do so with the desire to transfer to a four-year institution, yet only about 25% of students execute this transfer successfully. The analysis conducted by Nora and Rendon (1994) suggests that access to community colleges does not necessarily translate into academic achievement for Latinos. It would be useful to compare data on transfer rates by students and student-athletes. Ability to finance an education is a constant mediating factor among Latinas, it may follow that those who compete in athletics at a two-year college may be better situated than others to access various financial aid resources.

Gaining access to higher education is not the only hurdle that Latinas and other educationally dislocated women must clear. Cuadraz and Pierce (1994) used their unique standpoints as working class women of different racial and ethnic origins to critically examine class conflict in educational settings. The term “scholarship student” was used to describe an individual from working-class origins who experience social and economic mobility into the middle classes, largely because of his or her academic excellence and achievements.” (Cuadraz & Pierce, 1994, p. 21). This is an important conceptual definition that lends itself also to examining the role of Latinas who are “scholarship athletes”. Case studies by Cuadraz and Pierce (1994) and Cuadraz (1992) unveiled the complexity of moving out of working class communities and historically underrepresented racial-ethnic groups and into a middle class realm of higher education. Cuadraz (1992) interviewed ten Chicana scholarship students about their experiences in graduate school. At some point, Cuadraz (1992) argued, “The scholarship path was no longer simply a matter of individual achievement, but was a structural opportunity which became accessible to those who achieved but had historically been excluded” (p.31). Relying on Bourdieu’s concept of “cultural capital”, Cuadraz (1992) argued that educational institutions do not reduce inequalities, but accentuate them, especially as socialization into and through higher education may simply be a continuance of the socialization received by youth in their middle and upper class homes (p.32).

From the work of Cuadraz (1992) and Cuadraz & Pierce (1994) I have gleaned the following significant experiences of Latinas in higher education. They are a) receiving mixed messages about academic ability, b) experiencing feelings of separation from peers, c) experiencing of privilege and penalty due to “scholarship” status, d) facing

social constructions of their achievements as institutional hand-outs, and e) defiance of traditional family roles and ideologies. According to Cuadraz and Pierce (1994) the mere presence of Latinas and working class white women unveiled the hierarchical structure of higher education, especially as it had historically excluded them, and continued to marginalized them within its elitist walls. Yet, Cuadraz (1992) argued that although scholarship women were “pushed to the margins, they were really insiders to the very social structure that reproduced such inequalities. In fact, these women were in a unique position to experience the contradictions of being inside in an outside way” (p. 32). Being “inside in an outside way” is another way of expressing what many scholars have suggested is a less-partial and therefore more accurate view of a particular social structure due to one’s marginal location within the social structure (Collins, 1991; Cuadraz, 1992; Gorelick, 1991; Pronger, 1996).

Segura (1993) examined the educational experiences of 20 Chicanas who had not graduated from high school, nor been prepared to enter a job of choice. Her interview participants were adult women involved in an education and employment training program in northern California. Segura (1993) argued that low levels of academic achievement among Chicanas is not explained by targeting individual, institutional or cultural culprits, rather it is necessary to examine how each of these entities interact to create conditions that impede the educational attainment of Chicanas. Among Segura’s (1993) findings about constraints to educational attainment were a) reluctance of family members to “interfere” with the work of educational professionals, b) channeling of Latina students into non-academic programs offering a lower quality of instruction, c) lack of encouragement or preparation from teachers/counselors for college attendance,

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and d) lack of clearly safe, anti-racist learning environments. Segura (1993) also identified the following conditions that enhanced educational attainment of her interview participants; a) consistent encouragement from parents for educational achievement, b) teacher innovation, c) multicultural curriculum, d) teacher “caring” and involvement, and e) formalized expectations for achievement.

Latinas in Athletic Settings

Since the passage of Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972, there have been marked increases in the rates of sport participation among girls and women. In 1997, high school females accounted for 40 percent of all high school athletes (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). The same data are not available by race and ethnicity, thus it is not possible to make comparisons. While the intent of Title IX was to improve sport opportunities for all women, the reality of competing equities (e.g., race, class, sexuality, and others) has rendered this structural change impotent in the struggle for real equity in sport. In sharp contrast to increasing rates of sport participation among high school and college age women, Latinas remain disproportionately underrepresented in North American sport (Jamieson & Baca Zinn, 1998).

Contrary to popular belief, Latina participation in sport is not a new phenomenon. The following material is drawn from Jamieson and Baca Zinn (1998, p. 180). There are examples of Latina athleticism dating back to the 1940s when the All American Girls Baseball League (AAGBL) began recruiting talented and experienced Cuban baseball players (Gregorich, 1993). Many Cuban women had been playing organized baseball in a league similar to the AAGBL called Estrellas Cubanas. The first Cuban woman to play baseball in the AAGBL was Eulalia Gonzales, who played for the Racine Bells. Two

years later, in 1949, Isabel Alvarez, Ysora del Castillo, Mirtha Marrero, and Migdalia Perez joined the AAGBL minor league ranks (Gregorich, 1993). Additionally, the sport of professional tennis boasts a diverse field of Latina athletes. While not all United States natives, Gigi Fernandez, Mary Jo Fernandez, Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, and Conchita Martinez have participated in multiple tennis events in North America. In women's professional golf, Nancy Lopez stands out among her peers, especially as the youngest inductee to the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) Hall of Fame (LPGA homepage, 1997). In the college ranks, Lisa Fernandez, a softball pitcher for the University of California at Los Angeles, was named the top female collegiate athlete of the year in 1993, and pitched for the 1996 Olympic gold medal winning United States national softball team. Although these are examples of elite athletes, it is clear that Latina athleticism exists. Thus, their invisibility in the research on women in sport is curious.

A report commissioned by the Women's Sports Foundation (WSF) (1989) examined the United States Department of Education's High School and Beyond database. Data in the High School and Beyond study included questionnaires, transcript records, and school information for more than 12,000 respondents who were high school sophomores in 1980, and were subsequently re-interviewed in 1982, 1984, and 1986. The WSF (1989) report focused on two issues, the influence of sport participation on high school experiences (measured by perceived popularity, participation in extracurricular activities, high school grades, educational aspirations, and test scores), and the influence of sport participation on social mobility (measured by academic performance, educational progress and attainment, and occupational expectations and attainment).

Data from the WSF (1989) report suggested that participation in high school athletics was significantly and positively associated with high school retention, lower dropout rates, higher achievement test scores, self-reported popularity, college attendance, and progress toward a bachelor's degree for rural Hispanic females. In fact, Hispanic female athletes from rural schools were three times less likely than their non-athletic peers to drop-out of school (WSF, 1989). Hispanic female athletes in sub-urban schools were more likely than non-athletes to feel popular, get involved in extracurricular activities, stay involved in sports as adults, and aspire to community leadership (WSF, 1989). All Hispanic female athletes in the WSF (1989) study were two to four times more likely than Hispanic female non-athletes to attend and stay in college. However, these results did not hold true in urban settings (WSF, 1989), where the majority of the nation's Latino population resides (Rumbaut, 1995).

A body of research largely lead by Picou (1978) and his colleagues (Picou & Hwang, 1982; Picou, McCarter & Howell, 1985) offers a more critical examination of the purported athletic participation/academic achievement relationship. Picou (1978) found that "the impact of athletic achievement for educational aspirations was primarily mediated by social and psychological processes" (p. 437). In fact, the notion that students engaged in athletics internalized values, norms and behaviors that spilled over into academic aspirations was not supported across racial groups. Picou (1978) also refuted the "increased interpersonal encouragement" hypothesis, which suggested that athletes received more encouragement for college aspirations than did not athletic peers (p. 437).

Picou & Hwang (1982) examined the interactional and linear additive models of educational aspirations among "disadvantaged athletes" (p. 359). The interactional model

suggested that participation in interscholastic athletics has stronger socialization consequences for disadvantaged youth who receive relatively little structural and interpersonal support for educational and occupational aspirations and achievements (p. 60). The linear additive model suggested that participation in interscholastic athletics was one of many potential influences that would enhance educational achievement for disadvantaged youth. Picou & Hwang (1982) found that a) the importance of interscholastic athletics for the formation of educational aspirations was relatively similar for both advantaged and disadvantaged athletes, b) with the exception of black women, athletes who were classified as academically disadvantaged held higher educational goals than their non-athletic peers, and c) interscholastic athletic involvement was most important for white men who received little or no parental and peer influence for college aspirations.

Picou, McCarter and Howell (1985) examined the importance of high school athletics for adult achievement and educational attainment. Following students beyond high school, Picou, McCarter and Howell (1985) found that a) white men benefited most from athletic involvement in terms of eventual employment opportunities, b) black women who had been interscholastic athletes experienced negative effects in their employment opportunities, c) white men were the only group to experience positive effect of athletic involvement on their educational attainment, and d) black women experienced a negative effect on educational attainment. These data were drawn from a regional sample, thus may not represent the experience of diverse men and women across the nation. Yet, they add to a growing body of literature that suggests that educational and athletic achievements have different consequences for different people. Under-

representation of women of color in varied athletic contexts and roles may be a contributing factor in the findings discussed above.

The most comprehensive analysis of Latino/a representation in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) (Acosta & Carpenter, 1988) suggested that Latino/a leadership in NCAA athletics was scarce at best. As part of a longitudinal study on the representation of women in collegiate athletics, questionnaires were sent to NCAA colleges and universities that offer intercollegiate athletic programs for women. Approximately 800 institutions were surveyed with a response rate of 70 percent. The Acosta & Carpenter (1988) data yielded the following estimates of Latina leadership in NCAA athletics. There were roughly .009 Latina administrators, .08 Latina head coaches, and .07 Latina assistant coaches per school in all NCAA institutions. In the same study, Latinas accounted for 1.3 percent of all female athletes among the NCAA institutions that responded (Acosta & Carpenter, 1988). The significant lack of Latinas in positions of leadership within women's sports has consequences that may influence not only perceived opportunities as athletes, but also as coaches and administrators. Many persons may serve as role models to Latina students and student athletes, however, the fact is that the chance of having a coach or administrator who is Latina is less than one in 800 according to Acosta and Carpenter's data (1988). This absence of Latina leaders clearly influences the disproportionately low representation of Latinas as they see very few persons in the realm of athletics with whom they share cultural and historical commonalities.

More recently, the NCAA has expanded its graduation rates summary (NCAA, 1997) to include a breakdown of data by race/ethnicity and gender. The graduation rates

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report included data on all undergraduate students who were enrolled in a full-time program of study for a degree and all student-athletes receiving athletics aid during the fall of 1996/1997 academic year. Racial/ethnic group membership was self-reported. The data on participation rates for Latinas revealed three significant trends. First, it is clear that across the NCAA institutions, Latinas were disproportionately under represented as student-athletes. In 1997, Latinas accounted for six percent of all female students in NCAA institutions. In the same year Latinas made up a disproportionately lower percentage of student athletes, accounting for only three percent. In contrast, White women accounted for 71 percent of all female students, and 75 percent of all female athletes, a disproportionately higher percentage of female athletes.

A second trend suggested that participation in intercollegiate athletics by Latinas might be less varied than that of other women. Sport specific data were limited in the NCAA report, however data were collected for the sports of basketball, cross-country and track (one category), and all “other” sports. In all divisions combined Latinas made up two percent of all female basketball athletes, three percent of all female cross country and track athletes, and three percent of all “other” athletes. The category “other sports” accounted for more than half of all female athletes in the report and represented more than 15 different sports. Again, White women continued to be over represented, accounting for 84 percent of all women in the category “other”. The figure for Latinas (three percent; N=498) was slightly higher than their overall participation percentage but still a disproportionately low figure.

A third trend identified in the NCAA (1997) data suggested that Latinas received a disproportionately lower amount of athletic scholarships to pay for their education at

NCAA institutions. In fact, a very small percentage of all female students (N=1,430,894) received athletic related scholarships (two percent). However, the trend across racial/ethnic groups varied. For example, White females receiving athletics aid accounted for 1.3 percent of all female students, while Latinas who received athletics aid made up only .05 percent of this total. Even more illustrative is the fact that only two percent of all female students on NCAA campuses are student-athletes receiving athletic related aid. Among Latina students less than one percent (.8 %) are student-athletes, while among White women the figure matches the overall figure at two percent. Given these data, a disparity of 1.2 percent would account for more than one thousand Latinas who did not receive their fair share of athletic related aid at NCAA institutions. This results in a significant discrepancy in educational funding among female students on NCAA campuses.

These data taken together suggest that athletic experiences in high school and college are not created equally. Overall, these studies revealed that high school athletics may have some holding power and may offer significant educational benefits for Latinas in rural settings, but had no holding power or other benefits for those in urban settings (WSF, 1989). Intercollegiate athletic participation rates revealed disproportionately lower numbers of Latinas in leadership roles (Acosta & Carpenter, 1988) and as student-athletes (NCAA, 1997), constricted choices for sports participation (NCAA, 1997) and differential chances for receiving athletic related educational funds (Coakley & Pacey, 1984; NCAA, 1997).

Summary

The literature reviewed in the preceding section was focused on experiences among Latinas in both educational and athletic settings. These scholarly and research efforts suggest that Latinas are often not only underrepresented in classrooms and on athletic teams, but also face various forms of disadvantage in these social institutions. Clearly many factors, structural and cultural in nature, contribute to the educational experiences among Latinas. In turn, the educational experiences of Latinas are influenced by and exert influence upon athletic experiences in schools. This review of literature has shown that educational and athletic structures are organized around inequalities that situate many Latinas at a disadvantage for accessing higher education and elite levels of athleticism.

Critical Feminist Discourse on Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality

In the sociological study of any society it is impossible to make sense of people's lives without examining social stratification and its historical and political salience in various regions. In the United States, race, class, gender and more recently sexuality have been examined as institutionalized axes of social stratification. While they operate at institutional levels (e.g., in hiring practices, in curriculum design, in opportunities for leisure pursuits), they have real consequences in personal lives. Clearly all women (and men) live at the axes of these structured inequalities, however it is the socially constructed meanings that maintain a social hierarchy that privileges some while disadvantaging others. Latinas face multiple inequalities in their personal and collective attempts to meet educational, employment and athletic goals. Moreover, early scholarship on race, class, gender and sexuality treated each of these categories as fixed

and unambiguous entities. This research attempts to uncover their complexity as dynamic, situational and historically specific shapers of women's lives. Thus, in what follows, I will treat race, class, gender and sexuality separately and then as intersecting influences in the lives of women.

Race in Women's Experiences

In order to think about Latina experiences of collegiate athletics, it is critical to reflect on the meaning and history of the category "race" in the United States. The notion of race as a dynamic, socially constructed category, rather than a fixed, unambiguous biological determinant seems to offer the most promise for understanding women's experiences as racialized subjects (Frankenberg, 1993; Omi & Winant, 1994). Omi & Winant (1994) argue that there have been three historically specific paradigms of race theory that scholars have relied upon over the past half-century. These paradigms include ethnicity, class and nation based theories of race.

The ethnicity paradigm arose in the 1920's and 1930's and offered an explicit challenge to the previous biologicistic paradigm. Marking this shift most significantly was a naming of racial difference in social and cultural terms rather than the previously accepted biological terms (Omi & Winant, 1994). Basically, the ethnicity paradigm supported concepts of cultural pluralism and assimilation as it argued that like white immigrants, people of color would gradually assimilate into the mainstream of United States society. Over time, the limitations of this immigrant model would become clear and ethnicity-based theories would attempt to address emerging dynamics of race in the United States (Omi & Winant, 1994).

The class paradigm of racial theorizing was made up of a variety of approaches that emphasized economic structures and processes in their analyses of racial dynamics (Omi & Winant, 1994). In much the same way that socialist feminism failed to fully explain the oppression of women of color (Andersen, 1993), other class-based theories of market relations, stratification and class conflict did not fully address the power of race to situate people in positions of domination and subordination. Nation based theories of race were rooted in colonialism where actual “racial dynamics are viewed as products of colonialism and therefore, as outcomes of relationships that are global and epochal in character” (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 37). It’s strength in comparison to ethnicity or class paradigms lay in its inclusion of several elements of racial oppression, such as inequalities, political discourse, cultural domination and territorial and institutional segregation, rather than focusing on a single fundamental aspect (Omi & Winant, 1994).

It is important to note that actual shifts in theoretical paradigms are not absolute and in fact, strands of each paradigm may be found in the others (Omi & Winant, 1994). These paradigmatic shifts may be seen in the sport studies literature as well. Sociological analyses of race in sport have centered on sport as a mirror of race relations in the larger social order. The primary foci for research have been in three areas, differences between Black and White athletes, discriminatory practices in sport, and sport as a mechanism to improve racial relations (Birrell, 1989, 1990; Eitzen, 1996a; Frey & Eitzen, 1991; Sage, 1990; Smith, 1992). To date, analyses of race in sport sociology have further obscured diversity in three ways. First, analyses have equated race with black, leaving out other racial categories. Second, Black athlete has typically meant Black male athlete, distorting any analytical consideration of gender as racialized experience. Third, class is obscured

by the tendency to read race as race-class (Birrell, 1989; 1990). For the most part white persons have been considered raceless in much of the research and scholarship on sport, treating their experiences as the human model, rather than demarcating it as particularly White experience.

Differential treatment by race has been documented in sport, including the opportunity to occupy specific positions, differential standards for success, and disproportionate numbers of ethnic minorities in "star-roles" (Pascal & Rapping, 1970; Yetman & Eitzen, 1982; Johnson & Marple, 1973; Phillips, 1976; Loy, McPherson, & Kenyon, 1978). Recently positional segregation by race has been documented in women's collegiate volleyball (Eitzen & Furst, 1993). In general, Whites are found in positions high in interaction, coordinative tasks, leadership, and outcome control. Blacks are found in peripheral positions where these skills are not required and physical skills are (Eitzen & Furst, 1993; Leonard, Ostrosky & Huchendorf, 1993). Studies of positional segregation offer clear examples of the power of socially constructed notions of race to shape the sport opportunities and experiences among women. What they do not offer is insight to the varied responses that Latinas and other women of color may employ in resistance to racially linked positions on their teams.

The exclusion of women and Hispanic, Asian, Native American groups from analyses of race has resulted in an incomplete theoretical understanding of the salience of race in sport and in society (Birrell, 1989; 1990; Dewar, 1993; Hall, 1996; Smith, 1992). Smith (1992) provided a review of scholarly and research literature on women of color in sport and society in which she suggested that analyses of women of color in sport had primarily been categorical and distributive in nature resulting in useful, but superficial

understandings of sport as an institution organized around race, class, and gender. Smith (1992) argued that sociological understandings of women in sport and society will continue to be limited and distorted as long as women of color are not included as research participants and scholars. Despite this and other calls for research that is inclusive of varied identities and experiences (Baca Zinn et. al., 1986; Birrell, 1990; Dewar, 1993; Pronger, 1996; Smith 1992), much of sport sociology remains entrenched in what Sabo (1995) has referred to as “White science” or “the historically constructed realm of knowledge production that, in particular, is rooted in Anglocentric, androcentric, and rationalistic cultural and political agendas” (p. 238).

Theoretically, some would argue that in current social arrangements race is more salient than ethnicity for situating Latinas in subordinate social positions because for the most part people do not know what ethnicity someone is or what cultural values go with a particular ethnic group (Omi & Winant, 1994). Despite the fact that ethnic heritage may not elicit the same magnitude of social response as do racial constructions, it is a significant factor shaping opportunities in women’s lives. In terms of Latino/a identity, lumping of all Latinos/as into one “Hispanic” monolithic cultural category further colonizes people of varied Latino/a ethnicities. Moreover, census data clearly show that ethnicity has real consequences in the lives of diverse women, as women of different Latina ethnicities are situated in varied positions of privilege and penalty (see chapter four). Historically, nativity and ethnic heritage have figured heavily into the social and political landscape of the United States and they continue to situate Latinas in various social locations.

Class in Women's Experiences

Class analyses in sport sociology have tended to obscure other meaningful social categories of analysis, such as race, gender, and sexuality, by suggesting class as the most salient of all oppressions/privileges in sport settings. Sociological analyses of class have focused on elite athletes and “big-time” athletic programs (Flint & Eitzen, 1987; Sage, 1996), on sport as a site for the production and reproduction of class stratification (Greendorfer, 1978; Hasbrook, Greendorfer & McMullen, 1981; Hasbrook, 1986; 1987), and sport as a site for upward mobility (Coakley, 1994; Sage, 1990). Progressive analyses of class in sociology focus on relations of power and differential access to power, rather than analyzing monetary or material wealth. In fact, material wealth and commodities are critically examined to include things that do not typically have a monetary value associated with them, but offer their owner some sort of entree to privilege. Elite athletic skill may be seen as just such a commodity or material possession, especially as it may offer one entrée to the privileged world of post-secondary education. This body of literature is significant in understanding how Latinas, in their varied positions of privilege and penalty, experienced the social institution of softball.

Eitzen (1996b) suggests that in sport, just as in the larger society, the poor pay more than their fair share for the maintenance and growth of sport programs. Subsidized public arenas serve as both symbolic and actual burdens on the poor and powerless (Eitzen, 1996b; Kidd, 1990). The unequal cost of spectatorship keeps most lower class persons and families from attending sporting events (Eitzen, 1996b; Sage, 1990). The exploitation of big-time college athletes serves the needs of capitalists and maintains a system controlled by dominant ideology (Eitzen, 1996b; Sage, 1996). Finally, unequal

financing of public schools and their sports programs creates greater access to sport for some, and little or no access for others (Eitzen, 1996b). In sport, class stratification is primarily manifested in terms of access, patronage, control, and social mobility (Sage, 1990). The power elite may control access to sport in at least two significant ways. First, by restricting membership, such as in the case of country clubs or golf and tennis facilities, only those of the appropriate social class are admitted. Additionally, sport participation may be out of reach for many working class persons simply due to time and financial constraints (Sage, 1990).

Sport has been frequently cited as an avenue for social mobility, especially for minority groups (Snyder & Spreitzer, 1976). Some arguments for the social mobility-sport relationship have relied on testimonials of lessons learned through participation in sport that translated to success in the occupational world (Loy, 1968; Sage, 1990). Others have relied on the visibility of lower social class members making it big in sport (e.g., golfer, Nancy Lopez and boxer, Oscar de la Hoya). Critics of the social mobility-sport relationship suggest that very few people make it big in sport. Only 1 in 10,000 men make it to professional sport levels (Sage, 1990). This ratio is of course even more disparate among women. Despite this limited extent of actual social mobility through sport, sport symbolically serves to promote and sustain the hegemonic ideology about widespread social climbing in the larger American social structure (Sage, 1990).

One study of women's participation in NCAA athletics revealed that White women received the majority of full scholarships and tended to receive some form of partial aid or tuition waiver more often than other women in division I and II programs (Coakley & Pacey, 1984). Moreover, "other minority" women (not including Black

women) received less partial aid and were most likely to be participating in division I and II women's athletics without any form of aid (Coakley & Pacey, 1984). Increasingly, data such as these reveal a disparate opportunity structure that shapes not only participation patterns, but also perceptions of opportunity for participation in sport among all women.

Relying on Gerson's (1985) model of social conditions and women's decisions about their lives, class becomes a significant category of analysis for this research. Regardless of actual self-identified class status and measures of annual income, racial-ethnic women experience varying degrees power in social institutions. Thus, parent's educational attainment, parent's employment level and generational status become important aspects of class status among the Latinas who were interviewed here. The realities of life such as dislocation from higher education, perceived need to work, and other social conditions that shape women's baseline orientations toward collegiate athletics. Moreover, it is precisely how successful one is at navigating middle class structures of education and organized sport that shapes how direct or curvy one's path may be.

Gender in Women's Experiences

Feminist analyses of sport have uncovered various systems of oppression and domination of both women and men (Hall, 1992; Messner, 1990) and have exposed gender as a significant organizing principle in American society and North American sport. In the seventies and early eighties the study of women's experiences as gendered individuals in male dominated sport reigned supreme (Bell, 1986; Boutilier & San Giovanni, 1983; Cahn, 1994; Felshin, 1981; Gerber, Felshin, Berlyn & Wyrick, 1974; Hargreaves, 1993; Hart, 1981). Gender analyses for the most part left men out of the

equation, and treated women as the gendered beings. Role conflict, gender roles, and essentialist conceptions of women and men were the leading intellectual tools. Bell (1986) suggested an internal role-conflict existed for girls who wanted to do well in sport, but were also required to live up to the dominant cultural expectations of womanhood. Gerber, et. al., (1974) suggested a dialectic of woman and sport existed as well as an apologetic employed to ease the dissonance between these mutually exclusive roles. A dialectic of sport and woman was soon the focus of analyses.

The purported incompatibility between woman and sport served to expose limited conceptions of these socially and culturally specific terms. Boutilier & San Giovanni (1983) argued that to even have discourse on the dialectic suggested some investment in mutually exclusive definitions of woman and sport.

To ask if women can remain women and still play sports means that one has in mind a view of women and sport that accepts the socially constructed definitions of these two realities as contradictory and conflicting. To ask this question means that one accepts the white, male, heterosexual, middle class definitions of women and of sport (p. 117).

The trivialization of female athletic endeavors also serves to maintain the dialectic between woman and sport. By constantly comparing women's sporting activities to the more legitimized male version, the conflicting characteristics of woman and sport are highlighted (Eitzen & Baca Zinn, 1989; Felshin, 1981). Trivialization of women's athletic endeavors occurs at all levels of sport and may take on various forms. Bryson (1987) suggested that there are four specific ways that those in power have contained women's sport participation. First, sport is defined in terms that contribute to masculine

hegemony. Second, men are making critical decisions about sport that affect the environment in which women's sport exists. Third, achievements and successes of women in sport are largely ignored by the media, by the institution of sport itself. Finally, Bryson (1987) suggested that even when female athletes or women's sport gets any sort of recognition, it is commonly trivialized either in comparison to "real" sport or in comparison to women's more meaningful accomplishments in the home.

Lenskyj (1990) argued that the maintenance of male power and privilege depends in part on ensuring that sex differences are carefully constructed and institutionalized in social structures, beliefs, and practices" (p. 240). One of the most pervasive forms of institutionalization today is the media. Today women in athletics receive more media coverage than at any other time in our history. However, the gender hierarchy is carefully woven into mediated representations of women in athletics. In their essay on media representations of female athletes, Kane & Greendorfer (1994) suggested that gender difference is translated into gender hierarchy, because in existing social arrangements females are defined not only as "other than" but "less than" their male counterparts (p. 31). They also argue that "By portraying female athletes as feminized and sexualized others, the media trivialize and therefore undermine their athletic achievements" (Kane & Greendorfer, 1994, p. 31) and maintain gender as an individual attribute, rather than exposing sport as a gendered institution.

Recently, feminist scholars have recognized the limitations of a gender-only perspective, and suggest that gender interacts with other systems of inequality to produce multiple hierarchies within sport and society (Birrell, 1989; 1990; Hall, 1996; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Messner, 1993; Smith, 1992). For example, Hall (1996) suggested that sport

studies scholars are currently moving toward analyses that provide insight to the many forms of domination present in sport and society, thus concepts and theories of gender roles, socialization, and role conflict offer little analytical progress today. Hall (1996) made the following argument:

Now we need to focus on sport as a site for relations of domination and subordination (gender, race, class, sexuality, and other forms) and on how sport serves as a site of resistance and transformation (p. 31).

Studying gender as it is mediated challenges partiality and distorted images that have been historically based in false universals of woman and man. Baca Zinn & Dill (1994) suggested that for racial-ethnic women, lesbian women, older women, disabled women, and lower social class women, gender is but one part of a larger pattern of unequal social relations. How gender is experienced depends on how it intersects with other systems of inequalities (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1994). They further suggest that "race, class, and gender stratification affect all [women and men], not just those who are most oppressed" (p.5). Biological traits such as race and gender have meaning only because they have been socially ranked and rewarded (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1994). For Baca Zinn and Dill (1994), it is the social response to these otherwise meaningless characteristics that results in inequality. In sport, these social responses include constructing and maintaining difference through gendered and racialized arguments such as "natural" athletic ability of African American men and women and cultural conflict among Latina athletes and families.

Current discourse suggests that there are several masculinities and femininities to be constructed by various women and men. However, the equation of masculinity with

athlete may be especially problematic among elite, skilled female athletes. This may be even more significant among female athletes who participate in sports that are socially constructed within a gender binary of masculine or feminine. In such a conception of sport activities, softball is often considered more masculine than feminine. Binary conceptions however offer very little in the way of understanding how women who may be diverse in their own gender constructions actually experience elite forms of competitive softball. Similar to the fluidity of racial theories, gender theories also overlap even as they may seem outdated or less sophisticated. Elite female athletes may often be sandwiched in between the strength and empowerment they may get from sport and the concomitant question of their loyalty to established feminine roles. In the present study, examples of role conflict, the apologetic as well as individual forms of womanhood were articulated. For the most part, being a woman was but one aspect of the collegiate softball experience among the Latina women interviewed.

Sexuality in Women's Experiences

Why talk about sexuality in a study about Latinas in collegiate softball? Athletics and softball in particular may provide space in which to challenge dominant social constructions of sexuality as well as maintain the current gender order (Lenskyj, 1994). Little empirical data exists to provide insight to the salience of sexual identities in the experiences of Latinas in sport settings. Much of what informs this research comes out of a growing body of literature by and about Latina lesbians and the emerging literature on lesbianism and homophobia in sport.

Recent scholarship on the experiences of gay men and women in sport suggest that sexual preference, while linked with gender identities, is a significant shaper of

men's and women's lives in its own right (Lenskyj, 1986; 1987; 1990; 1991; 1994; Pronger, 1990; 1996). Sport has become the most appropriate site for monitoring the maintenance of the current gender system especially as homophobia and compulsory heterosexuality have become the "glue" that holds this system together (Griffin, 1996; Lenskyj, 1994). In fact, dominant forms of sport are socially and culturally classified as feminine or masculine depending on their functions in enhancing heterosexual attractiveness (Lenskyj, 1987; 1990; 1991; 1994). The possibility of being labeled "lesbian" is enough to keep some women out of sport. The presence and visibility of lesbians threatens the allegiance of all women to men in the project of male domination.

Accusations such as these promote conceptions of individual deviance rather than zeroing in on systemic domination of all women and men. "Credentialed" heterosexual women pose less of a threat than do lesbians, whose independence from men is sexual, social, emotional, and economic" (Lenskyj, 1991). These credentials may be accrued through compulsory heterosexual practices, such as marriage, childbearing, and a failure to challenge the gender order in any public way. Thus, media images, half-time reports, and life stories are inclusive of heterosexual practices in order to maintain the myth that most women in sport are straight and that lesbian life is unfulfilling. The camouflaging of lesbians and gay men in sport has served to protect the right of straight men to sexualize female athletes, while maintaining their own privileged status as the true athletes (Lenskyj, 1986; 1987; 1990; 1991; 1994). Moreover, the blaming of lesbians for the bad image of women's sport works to subordinate all women, not just those who choose a lesbian identity.

Carla Trujillo (1994) suggested that the mere existence of sexual identity confines Latinas and other women. She also offered an example of how she is constrained due to her public identity as a Latina and a lesbian. She put it this way:

I am invalidated by family and stereotyped in the minds of many. I am charged by the mainstream with personalizing too much, suspected by my own communities for 'succeeding' in the white heterosexual world. I am granted conditional acceptance by some and receive minimal toleration by others. I am desperately attempting to live, amid all this prejudice and negation, a life as positive and fully self-actualizing as I can. (p. 276).

In the introduction to their edited collection of writings about Latina sexualities Alarcon, Castillo and Moraga (1993) stated the following. "Our sexuality has been hidden, subverted, distorted within the 'sacred' walls of the 'familia' – be it myth or reality - and within the ever more privatized walls of our bedrooms." Although sexuality is not the focus of the present research sexuality is a major axis in the matrix of domination, and women's athletics have clearly been adopted by many as a battlefield for sexual identity politics. Thus, experiences of collegiate softball, regardless of individual sexual identities, will be shaped by current social constructions of sexualities. It is imperative in the present research to link the power struggles that emerge out of identities as racialized, sexualized, classed and gendered persons in United States society and sport.

Griffin (1998) interviewed college athletes, coaches and administrators regarding their experiences as lesbian women in collegiate sport settings. The experiences shared by Griffin's (1998) informants suggested that sexuality was something to be strategically managed throughout athletic careers. Various strategies employed by collegiate athletes

included aspects of denial, shame & self-hating, secrecy, cautious pride and liberated pride reflecting particular comfort levels with lesbian identities. Moreover, Griffin (1998) found that among her informants small schools, low profile athletic settings and established lesbian, gay and bi-sexual campus groups made it “easier” to choose to come out. However, the choice to come out was more complicated for women of color and women of lower social class status. While all lesbian women face significant consequences in choosing to come out, white women are privileged in the sense that they may find a home among other white lesbian women.

For many Latinas who are lesbian, choosing to come out means risking family ties and being viewed as a *vendida* (sell-out) to Latino/a culture (Chavez-Leyva, 1996; Trujillo, 1994). Chavez Leyva (1996) suggested that ethnicity itself may have become a form of sexual control. In much the same way that suspicions about female athletes may scare some women away from sport involvement (Griffin, 1996; 1998), constructions of lesbianism as a pathology contracted from American culture may constrain the sexuality of Latinas. Thus, the threat is that one’s ethnicity will be “erased” if one also chooses a “deviant” sexuality is a powerful one. The significant point here is that different women face different consequences for the choices they make.

Griffin’s (1998) informants supported this when they suggested that racial identities did shape their thinking about coming out. However, this was not the experience of the white women that Griffin (1998) interviewed. This suggests that for white lesbian women whiteness is naturalized and not racialized, while women of color are simultaneously racialized and sexualized. It is imperative to discuss sexuality in the lives of all women, but especially in the lives of Latinas as their sexualities have been

constrained in ways that are different from that of white women. Chavez Leyva (1996) argued the following in this regard:

The trajectory of Latina lesbian histories challenges the models, the chronology, the very language set forth by scholars of white lesbian and gay history. Regional differences, disparate economic opportunities, intersections of racism and sexism, immigrant status, nativity, ethnic affiliation, varying degrees of assimilation, and finally, cultural and religious values, often distinct from those of the dominant society, create a unique context for Latina lesbian history (p. 146).

It is only within a multiple context such as Chavez Leyva (1996) suggests that Latina sexualities and their relevance to community, family and political identities may be fully explored. The collegiate athletic setting may be one of the most appropriate places to begin to bring Latinas into the discourse on sexualities.

Intersecting Inequalities: Women of Color in Sport

Several studies have suggested that race, class and gender are ever present as a distinguishing characteristic, especially in the building of masculinities and femininities (Bissinger, 1990; Foley, 1990; Grey, 1996). In each of these studies, the power of intersecting influences of race, class, and gender was revealed to be operating in sport (Bissinger, 1990; Foley, 1990; Grey, 1996). In a study of high school sports in an increasingly diverse Kansas community, Grey (1996) found that American athletics and related rituals resulted in the further marginalization of immigrant and minority students, rather than the liberating and cohesive effects sport is purported to offer.

Foley (1990) suggested that American high school football ritual is a powerful metaphor of American capitalist culture. Football rituals, such as the homecoming

ceremony, traveling to other communities, cheerleading, and fan support reflected hierarchies of privilege based on race, class and gender (Bissinger, 1990; Foley, 1990). More specifically, various forms of football ritual can be used as a standard by which to judge one's willingness to assimilate (Foley, 1990; Grey, 1996). Ultimately immigrant and minority students learn that the way to gain respect is by conforming to "American" standards, and sport becomes the most visible means to claim one's American allegiance. Grey's observation of the ongoing racial tensions in a Kansas high school led him to interpret this phenomenon in this way, "Not only did the Hispanic student who excelled at sports raise his relative status in the school and become a member of the so-called jocks, but his status in the community increased as well" (p. 304). Thus, participation in American sports provided students an opportunity to assimilate not only on campus, but also in the larger community, creating a false sense of racial harmony.

Ironically, the effects of dismantling racism for the duration of an event such as a football game, may actually make racial and class divisions more painfully obvious. The myth of inter-racial harmony and dismantling of inequalities is a myth that ends at the stadium gates (Foley, 1990). In each of these studies, the communities remained stratified by race, class, and gender despite the presence of a few celebrated minority athletes, cheerleaders, and coaches. Inter-group contact and increased visibility of minority athletes was not enough to challenge a racial order that is embedded in inequalities.

Abney and Richey (1992) have argued that the opportunity to occupy positions of sport leadership has been constrained for African American women due to stereotypes, lack of access to education, lack of financial resources, and lack of role models.

Historically, African American women have been carefully constructed, by the media, as marginal women, who are sexually deviant, and possess “natural” physical ability (Cahn, 1994; Corbett & Johnson, 1993; Green, Oglesby, Alexander & Franke, 1981; Smith, 1992; Williams, 1994). It has been suggested that "the silence surrounding African American athletes reflects the power of these stereotypes to restrict African American women to the margins of cultural life, occupying a status of distant 'Others'" (Cahn, 1994; p. 127). More recently, scholars have argued against culturally deterministic explanations of African American female's over representation in certain sports (Cahn, 1994; Corbett & Johnson, 1993; Green, et. al., 1981; Smith, 1992), and have questioned the notion of gender equity, as another form of White and middle class women's privilege (Coakley & Pacey, 1984).

Challenges to myths and stereotypes of African American women in sport have revealed structural barriers to full and varied participation (Green, et. al., 1981). Differential socialization for African American young girls was cited as a significant factor in their entry and experience in sport (Greendorfer & Ewing, 1981), as well as among Hispanic females (Acosta, 1993). Others have focused on historical context and challenged conventional research that reifies race as the single situator of African American women in society and sport (Cahn, 1994; Corbett & Johnson, 1993; Williams, 1994). Expanding the discourse to include all women of color in sport has been a recent phenomenon (Birrell, 1990; Dewar, 1993; Smith, 1992). Abney and Richey (1992) suggested that stereotyping, ignorance, attitudes toward “difference”, institutionalized discrimination, political constraints on sports organizations, and lack of minority women in leadership positions all contribute to lower participation rates among minority women

in sport. Additionally, socialization into certain sports (and away from others) may actually be the result of a combination of factors, such as lack of opportunity, exclusionary practices, financial outlay, lack of role models, rural/suburban access to facilities, and variety of programs offered (Acosta, 1993; Coakley, 1994).

Together, these studies have contested the argument that sport is a natural site for the de-politicization of race, as well as a site for the creation and maintenance of community harmony. They further suggest that sport is an ideal site for the maintenance of the racial order (Bissinger, 1990; Foley, 1990; Grey, 1996). Even resistance by immigrant and minority persons can be co-opted as evidence of a lack of desire to become American (Grey, 1996). Ultimately, in sport just as in other social institutions race, class, sexuality and gender matter, and they hold different consequences for different groups of people.

Summary

In this section of the review of literature I have discussed those scholarly and research materials that I have found most useful in thinking about the significance of race, class, gender and sexuality in the experiences of women. I have shown that each of these categories of analysis is powerful in shaping women's experiences of the social world. I have described the how these categories of analysis operate independently and interdependently in sport settings and I have suggested that sport is a viable site for the continued exploration of the significance of race, class, gender and sexuality. In what follows, I discuss the significance of multiracial feminism, an example of a structural inequalities framework for examining women's experiences of the social institution of softball.

Structural Inequalities Perspectives

Sociological analyses of sport have relied primarily on two major theoretical frameworks, functionalism and conflict theory. While there exist various branches of each of these macro perspectives, they are fundamentally different in how they view social systems. Where functional theorists suggest that the social system is a “natural” structure and it exists apart from its members, conflict theorists argue that the social structure has been constructed by its inhabitants and would not exist if *people* had not created it (Coakley, 1994; 1996; Frey & Eitzen, 1991). Further distinguishing the two grand theories is their approach to social stratification.

The functionalist views social stratification as a necessary and beneficial aspect of the maintenance of the social order. Underlying this perspective is the notion that there will always be scarce rewards available, but that the opportunity to compete for these rewards is equally available to all members of the social system (Coakley, 1994; 1996). Ultimately, social stratification is conceptualized as a means of filtering the most highly skilled and capable persons to positions of leadership to ensure the maintenance of the social order. Role theory and socialization theory are examples of functional perspectives that have been applied to the study of the social institution of sport (Coakley, 1994; Hall, 1996).

For conflict theorists, social stratification exists because people have created social meaning around identities such as race, class, gender and sexuality. Equality of condition and equality of opportunity are not separate entities in this perspective. It is argued that inequality of conditions becomes structured across generations into social classes, which then limit the degree of equality of opportunity that may be realized

(Coakley, 1994; 1996). Stated differently, the social location of persons directly affects their access to opportunities and social mobility. Moreover, conflict theorists suggest that changes to the social structure are constant and affect members of various social classes differently, providing some with privilege, while others are penalized (Coakley, 1996).

A structural inequalities perspective focuses its analytical lens on the social structure. It removes value-laden conceptions of gender and seeks to uncover the ways that the social structure works to produce gendered outcomes or to maintain other inequalities. Inequalities are viewed as relationships that shift with changing structural contexts (Coakley, 1996; Messner, 1993; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Sage, 1990). A structural inequalities perspective takes into account multiple systems of oppression, avoiding false reification of class or gender over other systems of domination (Baca Zinn, et. al, 1986; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Sage, 1990). Race, class, gender, and sexuality may be treated as interlocking systems of domination in a structural inequalities framework (Baca Zinn, et. al., 1986; Eitzen & Baca Zinn, 1992).

Moreover, structural inequalities frameworks shift the analysis from the individual to the institution (Eitzen & Baca Zinn, 1992). Rather than identifying deficiencies in marginalized groups, a structural inequalities approach identifies the organizational structure that perpetuates hierarchies of privilege in sport and society (Eitzen & Baca Zinn, 1992; Sage, 1990). Thus, structural inequalities frameworks take into account the fact that as sport and society continue to shift and take on alternative forms, individuals and communities will experience these changes differently (Eitzen & Baca Zinn, 1992). The consequences of inequalities of race, class, gender and sexuality will not only be

experienced in disproportionate ways, but will also lead to new and different systems of inequality (Eitzen & Baca Zinn, 1992).

Multiracial Feminism

Multiracial feminism, as Baca Zinn and Dill (1994) define it is "not a singular or unified feminism but a body of knowledge situating women and men in multiple systems of domination" (p. 11). A multiracial feminist analysis "treats racial inequality as a vital shaper of women's and men's lives and advances a powerful and coherent premise-that racial ancestry, ethnic heritage, and economic status are as important as gender for analyzing the social construction of women and men" (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1994, p. 11). This perspective is in concert with Messner and Sabo's (1990) call for a non-hierarchical theory of sport. "A non-hierarchical theory involves the development of theories that allow us to conceptualize varied and shifting forms of domination in such a way that we do not privilege one at the expense of distorting or ignoring others" (Messner & Sabo, 1990, p.10). This is precisely the type of theory that will inform sport scholars in a more comprehensive manner.

Multiracial feminism is "an attempt to go beyond a mere recognition of diversity and difference among women to examine structures of domination, specifically the importance of race in understanding the social construction of gender" (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996, p. 321). In this way, multiracial feminism moves sociological analyses away from gender-only perspectives, and toward an intersections approach to the study of multiple inequalities. The specific characteristics that distinguish multiracial feminism from other feminist frameworks are described below. The following material is taken from Baca Zinn and Dill (1996, pp. 326-327).

1. Multiracial feminism asserts that gender is constructed by a range of interlocking inequalities. A person experiences race, class, gender and sexuality differently depending upon their social location in the simultaneous and interlocking structures of race, class, gender and sexuality.
2. Multiracial feminism emphasizes the intersectional nature of hierarchies at all levels of social life. Differently stated, intersecting forms of domination produce both oppression and opportunity. Thus, at the same time that structures of race, class, gender and sexuality create disadvantages for women of color, they provide unacknowledged benefits for those who are at the top of these hierarchies; whites, members of the upper classes and males.
3. Multiracial feminism highlights the relational nature of dominance and subordination. Race is recognized as a vital element in patterns of relations among minority and white women.
4. Multiracial feminism explores the interplay of social structure and women's agency. That is to say that within the conditions of race, class, gender and sexual oppression, women create viable lives for themselves, their families and their communities.
5. Multiracial feminism encompasses wide-ranging methodological approaches, and relies on varied theoretical tools as well. More specifically, this framework holds that marginalized locations are well suited for grasping social relations that remained obscure from more privileged vantage points. Lived experience, in other words, creates alternative ways of understanding the social world and the experience of different groups of women within it.

6. Multiracial feminism brings together understandings drawn from the lived experiences of diverse and continuously changing groups of women. Among Asian Americans, Native Americans, Latinas and Blacks are many different national, cultural and ethnic groups. Each one of these groups is engaged in the process of testing, refining, and reshaping these broader categories in their own image. Such internal differences heighten awareness of and sensitivity to both commonalities and differences among diverse women.

This research has its analytic focus on the experiences of a select group of Latinas who made successful paths to collegiate softball. Multiracial feminism (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1994; 1996) provides a framework for examining how these women experienced both enabling and constraining social conditions as particularly racialized, classed and sexualized persons. Moreover, this framework recognizes the importance of individual agency in the making of women's lives. Thus, how these women respond to the social conditions they encounter along the way to softball is clearly influenced by their social location within a web of oppressive forces of race, class and sexuality.

A Developmental Approach: Studying Pathways of Latina Collegiate Athletes

Kathleen Gerson (1985) examined how women respond to the social conditions they inherit and carve out lives for themselves. She offered what she calls a "developmental approach" to studying women's pathways toward their adult lives.

Gerson (1985) suggests,

We can ignore neither the subtle ways that childhood experiences influence later life choices nor the structural constraints on women's options. But neither is enough. A complete theory of women's behavior must include how women

themselves, as actors who respond to the social conditions they inherit, construct their lives out of the available raw materials (p. 37).

In Gerson's (1985) estimation, neither structural coercion, nor socialization theories are comprehensive enough to explain the divergent paths that women may take. Thus her developmental approach provides an analytic lens for examining both early childhood socialization experiences and shifting social conditions throughout adulthood. Gerson (1985) suggests that women differ in their early expectations about the goals they plan to pursue as adults.

"Exposed to a diverse, complex set of experiences as children, women, like men, develop a variety of conscious and unconscious aspirations long before they are able to test these wishes as adults" (p. 20).

For some women, these early expectations take the form of well-designed plans in which the future seems certain. For others, these goals are less clear, more like vague hopes that may or may not be realized (Gerson, 1985, p. 20). Gerson (1985) suggests that however misty or clear, these early expectations form the baseline for adult life. Moreover, once established, these early orientations are subject to the real constraints and opportunities encountered in adulthood. That is, the social conditions adult women face can either undermine or support their original goals. Unexpected events can lead adults to reevaluate past assumptions and reorient themselves toward the future. Thus, pathways through adulthood may either follow or diverge from one's baseline.

Gerson (1985) also acknowledges women's agency in creating meaningful lives despite the social conditions they inherit. On this she suggested the following.

Although social institutions constrain behavior in powerful ways, of which we are often unconscious, they are rarely static or completely unyielding. Social arrangements, like the people who embody them, are constantly being changed as successive generations inherit a specific historical context and make their imprint on the social order (Gerson, 1985, p. 37-38).

Unlike, Gerson's (1985) participants, the women I interviewed all had paths that lead them to the same location – collegiate softball, but their paths were divergent in many ways. It is how these paths diverge that illustrates the power of social conditions to shape women's options in creating adult lives. Simultaneously, the women I interviewed are constantly aware of their vast choices compared to women who went before them. Thus, they may make structurally coerced choices at times, but they also exercise human agency in their interactions within particular social structural contexts. I am most interested in how Gerson's (1985) developmental approach will enable the illumination of these women's experiences as both heirs to particular social conditions and actors upon them.

Summary

In this review of literature, I have suggested that the invisibility of Latinas is not unique to sports studies, and reflects a long-standing national neglect of Latino/a communities in the United States (Jamieson & Baca Zinn, 1998). More specifically, Latinas remain invisible in sport studies due to a) the false homogenization of women in research and scholarship (Andersen, 1993; Baca Zinn & Dill, 1994; 1996; Dewar, 1993; Birrell, 1990); b) the primacy of gender as an analytic category in sport studies (Baca Zinn, et. al., 1986; Birrell, 1989, 1990; Dewar, 1993); and c) the simple fact that Latinas

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do exhibit disproportionately lower rates of participation in sport as compared to other women (NCAA, 1994; 1997). What remains unexamined in sport studies is *why* Latinas exhibit disproportionately lower rates of participation in sport. Dislocation from educational settings, lack of financial resources, lack of visible similar others in athletic pursuits, and unfamiliarity with the collegiate system may all play a role in the current rate of participation among Latinas. Yet, there may also be a host of other factors constraining sports participation among Latinas (Abney & Richey, 1992; Acosta, 1999; Jamieson, 1995; Jamieson & Baca Zinn, 1998).

This review of literature also suggests that in United States society, race masks other forms of disadvantage, making room for, and giving credence to culturally deterministic explanations of racial and ethnic inequalities (Anzaldua, 1987; 1990a; Baca Zinn & Dill, 1994; Birrell, 1990; Collins, 1990; Segura, 1992). This body of research and scholarship, to paraphrase Hall (1996), suggests that Latinas do not simply experience increased rates of oppression; their disadvantaged status in sport is qualitatively different from that of their White counterparts (Hall, 1996). Moreover Latina experiences of sport may be distinctly different from that of other Latinas who are diverse in terms of race, class, ethnicity and sexuality.

The connections between the bodies of literature reviewed in this chapter are the foundation for the analyses that follow. Women's experiences in sport are diverse and complex, making it necessary to offer comprehensive understandings of the varied social conditions that shape women's decisions about sport involvement. The bodies of literature reviewed here suggest that all women face shifting social conditions, including social constructions of race, class and sexuality that influence decisions about sport

involvement. How these conditions shape the development of baseline orientations for sport and maintenance of pathways toward collegiate softball is the focus of this research. The specific design of this research follows in chapter three of this manuscript.

Chapter Three

The Process of Discovery

In this chapter I will discuss the design, data collection and analyses that were used to complete this research. An overview of the research design is provided first, followed by a description of the participants, instrumentation, setting, procedures for data collection, and analyses of data. It is my sense that although understandings of diverse women in various social institutions are expanding, a gap remains between distributive and categorical understandings and rich, thick descriptions of real life experiences of women. Clearly, the questions that I had set were simply not going to be answered via a written survey subjected to statistical measures of validity and reliability. Thus, in order to answer my intellectual and analytical questions about experiences in the social institution of sport I had to actually talk with Latinas. In what follows I will describe in detail how these conversations actually came to be, and how they were molded into a particular type of informative analysis.

Design of the Research

The current research was designed to examine women's experiences in collegiate softball in a manner that allowed for the evolution of questions as well as the opportunity to analyze data across multiple cases. Having many examples of feminist qualitative research designs, but few examples of inquiries about the experiences of Latinas in sport, this research employed complementary interview methods in two phases. Following a pilot study, it was clear that the range of issues, experiences and questions relevant to women's experiences in collegiate sport could not fully be identified prior to conducting the interviews for this research. Thus, this research began by conducting focus group

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interviews with former collegiate softball athletes. Many of the participants in phase one of this research were not only former collegiate athletes, but also current collegiate coaches, professional softball athletes, and elite amateur softball athletes. It was by design that these interviews made up phase one of this research, as these women not only shared their experiences as athletes, but also informed my understanding of current practices in collegiate softball.

For several reasons, the design of this research also included individual interviews with current athletes in phase two. First, interview protocol and questions for current athletes were refined through interviews and analyses in phase one of this research. Second, individual interviews are an effective method of pursuing more detailed data regarding information that may have been obtained in a group interview. Third, current athletes may have an investment in the structure of collegiate softball that former collegiate athletes do not (although this difference may be somewhat diminished given that many former collegiate athletes were also collegiate coaches).

This particular design of research allowed for fluid analyses. That is, I was able to move back and forth between phase one and phase two data. Although, the interviews and analyses in phase one informed the evolution of interview questions in phase two, the interviews in phase two continued to further clarify analyses of data in both phases. Ultimately, this research design produced qualitative data that examined the structural and cultural conditions that shaped the collegiate athletic paths of a particular group of Latinas. This brand of evolving interview processes and fluid analyses is based in some very traditional forms of analyzing interview data (Vaughn, Schumm and Sinagub, 1996) as well as in more current themes of standpoint epistemology. I talk more about my

particular theoretical position later in this chapter. A diagram of the design of research (figure 1) may be found in appendix A.

Participants

I elected to speak only to Latinas who had participated in collegiate softball because I was interested in uncovering how their experience of sport may differ from what we have come to know based largely on White women's experiences (Birrell, 1989, 1990; Dewar, 1993; Hall, 1996). For purposes of this study, participants were of any Latino/a ethnicity however, the vast majority of participants were of Mexican heritage mirroring the predominantly Mexican make-up of Latino/a persons in the United States and California (Rumbaut, 1995; U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). Where possible, purposive sampling methods were used to increase the likelihood of representation across Latina ethnicities, classes, and sexualities. The process of identifying and contacting both former and current collegiate athletes is described in more detail in the discussion of procedures later in this chapter.

In all, interviews with former collegiate athletes included 11 Latinas who had completed at least one year of collegiate level softball in the US in the past ten years, and no longer competed as a collegiate softball athlete at the time of data collection. This included any collegiate level of competition, from community college to NCAA division one. One additional participant was a senior who at the time of the interviews was returning for her final year of eligibility in collegiate softball. This particular woman also participated in an individual interview as a current collegiate athlete. Current collegiate athletes were Latinas who had completed at least one year of collegiate level softball in the US, and at the time of data collection competed as collegiate softball athletes. This

included any collegiate level of competition, from community college to NCAA division one, and student-athletes of any class standing (e.g., freshman to senior). In all, 19 current collegiate softball athletes of Latina heritage were interviewed, 17 of which will be included in these analyses.

Instrumentation

The data collection instruments used in the present research were developed by the principal investigator. The “Latinas in Sport Background Questionnaire”, a two page, 16 item demographic survey, was administered to all participants in order to understand self-identified categories of ethnicity, sexuality and class, as well as other relevant distributive data. This demographic survey included questions about the age, class, ethnic identity, sexuality, collegiate experience, sport experience, income & financial aid status of participants. It also included questions about ethnicity, educational attainment and occupational status of parents of participants in the present research. Demographic surveys differed slightly for former athletes and current athletes only in specific questions about income and occupation. Administration of the demographic survey at the beginning of the interviews maximized time for the discussion portion of the interview, and allowed for clarification of survey responses. These demographic surveys may be found in appendix B and appendix C.

A facilitators guide was developed for use during the focus group interviews and the individual interviews. In both cases the questions developed were simply guides, used to focus the discussion. Each guide included thematic areas and various levels of questions from easy and non-threatening to questions requiring more thought and personal revelation. The guides included questions about initial involvement in sports,

experiences along the way to collegiate level sport, supportive conditions, challenges faced and memorable experiences in the context of softball. These interview guides may be found in appendices D and E.

Selection of Setting

Women's collegiate softball was selected as the site for this research for several reasons. Softball has been among the fastest growing sports for high school student girls since the passage of Title IX. In 1997, softball ranked fourth among high school female student athletes in terms of numbers of participants, and 13 percent of all high school female athletes participated in softball (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). On the college level, however, NCAA (1994; 1997) data have shown disproportionately low rates of participation in intercollegiate athletics for Latinas. Softball is one of two collegiate sports that has shown slight promise as a site of increased presence of Latinas, however, these numbers are still quite low. Thus, it was expected that a reasonable number of Latinas who competed in collegiate softball could be identified and invited to participate in the current research.

The state of California was chosen as the site to conduct this research primarily because it offers a large number of Latino/a persons from which to identify participants, but also because it contains an "affordable" two and four-year college system. The California Community College system and California State University system are two rare examples of affordable higher education in the nation. Thus, the opportunity to identify Latinas at these institutions, as well as the many other institutions located within California seems somewhat enhanced. Additionally, the California State University system has been touted as a leader in the project of compliance with Title IX of the

educational amendments act, making it mandatory that each of the twelve campuses have proportional representation within male and female athletic programs. This proactive policy may make more scholarships available to women at these institutions, and increase the likelihood that Latinas will be participating in collegiate softball. Moreover, as a border state (Mexico/US), California offers a unique, politically charged setting in which to study divisions of race-ethnicity and other inequalities in women's sport. For these reasons, California based women's collegiate softball has been deemed a viable site for the proposed research.

Interviews with Former Collegiate Athletes

Focus group interviews while commonly used in marketing and advertising, have a history in the social sciences as well (Johnson, 1996; Krueger, 1994; Vaughn, Schumm, Sinagub, 1996). The studies of audience reaction to war-time radio broadcasts conducted by Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton and Merton's (1946) significant work for the US Airforce are considered to be the earliest examples of focus group interview research (Johnson, 1996; Krueger, 1994; Vaughn, Schumm & Sinagub, 1996). A focus group is defined as a small group discussion in which a qualified moderator uses prepared questions and probes to generate discussion around a specific theme (Krueger, 1994; Vaughn, Schumm & Sinagub, 1996). Others have suggested that the goal of the focus group interview is to elicit perceptions, feelings, attitudes, and ideas from participants about a selected topic (Vaughn, Schumm & Sinagub, 1996, p. 5). In this case, the topic was the experiences of collegiate softball settings.

In the present study, focus group interviews provided a broad base of information from a group of 11 former collegiate athletes. The focus groups were homogenous in that

all participants had played at least one year of collegiate level softball, but heterogeneous in the sense that they may have had very different experiences on different teams, and at various competitive levels. The basic format of the focus group interviews required an average of one and one half to two hours to complete, and included introductions, a brief outline of the research, completion of informed consent (appendix E) and demographic survey (appendix B) and a set of focused interview questions (appendix D). I facilitated each of the focus group interviews on my own, and recorded them via audiotape and hand written notes.

Identification of Former Collegiate Athletes

Former Collegiate Athletes were identified from collegiate softball media guides, professional softball web pages and by snowball method. Because these athletes are no longer on prominent collegiate team rosters in athletic media guides, their identification was more difficult than was that of the current athletes. Several media guides provided a section on former collegiate athletes, complete with years played, current occupation, and general information on current place of residence. From these sections in the media guides, I was able to identify Latino/a surnames and begin to develop a list of Latinas who had competed in collegiate softball.

Several former collegiate athletes who are Latina have joined the Women's Professional Fast Pitch Association, and thus were identified through web pages and hard copies of team rosters. Team rosters included the hometown of each of the athletes, so those who reside in California were easily identified. Often, pictures and surnames were available to aid in identifying Latino/a heritage women. These names were combined

with those identified in the collegiate media guides to form a list of approximately forty former collegiate softball athletes of Latino/a heritage.

From this list, regional groups were developed and reviewed in order to identify viable sites in which to conduct focus group interviews. A viable site was one that showed the potential for five to ten Latinas to attend a “local” facility for a one and one half to two hour interview. Four to six regions were identified with a goal of completing four well attended (at least six participants) focus group interviews. After identification of regions, a letter (appendix G) was mailed to each potential participant (N= 40) briefly describing the research, requirements for participation in the study, potential sites and dates for the focus group interviews, and a document of informed consent. Individuals were asked to complete and return the informed consent by a specified date in order to indicate their interest in participating in the study.

Due to a low response rate to the mailing, phone calls were made to committed participants to request assistance with identification of additional participants. In some cases, phone numbers were provided for other former collegiate softball athletes, but often committed participants contacted others on their own. In two cases, the interviews were almost completely arranged for me by one of the interview participants. This type of interest and desire to contribute to this research was energizing and motivational for me. A large majority of the past collegiate softball athletes that could be identified through media guides were still involved in collegiate softball (e.g., as coaches) thus, springtime is extremely busy for these women. The focus group interviews that did occur were confirmed only days prior to their facilitation and had lower attendance than originally desired. Yet, the information and experiences shared by these eleven women

greatly enhanced the interviews with current collegiate athletes and provided provocative data regarding the experiences of Latinas in collegiate softball.

Procedures and Data Collection

Focus group participants were asked to arrive at a prescribed time and were informed that the interview would last approximately 90 minutes. Each interview began with introductions, a brief description of the research and completion of the informed consent and demographic survey. A semi-structured set of questions were used to keep participants on the topic however, latitude was given for participants to share relevant information that may evolve out of group interactive discussion. Focus group interviews were conducted in a location that was easily accessed by all participants, and that had facilities suitable for interactive discussion and audiotaping of the interviews.

Each of the interviews had a distinct ambience. For example, one interview took place in an indoor batting practice facility, while another took place in the home of one of the participants. I traveled usually alone, but once with my sister, and facilitated these focus group interviews in the evening during the week. They were all casual in style often with beverages and snacks available for participants, lots of interaction between participants, laughter, and thoughtful discussion. I sometimes felt awkward about my privilege as a listener who did not have to expose as much of myself as did the women that this research focused on. Most often, I felt proud to be among these women, to be welcomed into their homes, and into their personal experiences. In some interviews what I enjoyed most was the interactions between participants, especially those who had remained close friends after their years of collegiate softball. They had knowledge of each other, and a respect for each other that seemed to come out of a shared and valued

history. Although this history may have begun for them when they met on their collegiate softball teams, they seemed to connect on a deeper level than merely as softball teammates.

There was one interview completed in a pizza parlor. At a certain point in the evening noise became a hindrance to our communication, but in the interest of time, we had to continue in a less noisy corner of the restaurant. This was my least favorite and least informative interview, not because of the persons involved but literally due to background noise. I found it difficult to concentrate on what these women were saying and consequently did not probe as deeply into their experiences as I was able to in other settings. Overall, the focus group interviews began tentatively and superficially but eventually moved into deeper more thoughtful expression of personal experiences within families, schools and sport. For the most part participants waited for me to raise a particular topic for discussion, but once they began interacting more freely, other issues of importance to them were discussed. Often participants elicited information from each other that I may never have gotten to on my own. This type of interactive discussion on a particular topic was ideal for beginning this process of discovery about the experiences of Latinas in collegiate softball.

Focus groups closed with participants getting a chance to ask questions, generally about the research or about my experiences in sport. I did not leave a single interview without revealing something about myself to the group, at their request. This was comfortable for me and actually made me feel less awkward about my position as a collector of their experiences. Some of the women asked how these data would be used in the future and if they could see it as soon as it was written. I was both happy and

anxious about their interest in the outcome of this research. Their requests made it clear to me that this was important to them. I felt a sense of anticipation from many of these women. Each time I left a focus group I felt like I had new investors and partners in this research.

On three occasions I was invited to join the interview participants for something following the interview. One time I was able to observe a private pitching lesson lead by two of the interview participants. A second time I was invited to have a late dinner, and on another occasion my sister (who sat in on one interview) and I were invited to a gay dance bar. Several of the women involved in the focus group interviews were also coaches who helped me to gain access to current softball athletes, thus I was able to stay in contact with them after the focus group interviews. They each played a significant role in my ability to schedule and conduct meaningful interviews with current athletes.

Individual Interviews with Current Collegiate Athletes

Following the focus group interviews, a selected sample of current collegiate softball athletes was invited to participate in semi-structured individual interviews. Similar to the focus group interviews, individual interviews centered on a) paths to collegiate softball, b) support systems, c) challenges, and d) meanings of sport participation. However, these interviews were more focused and provided a setting in which to further observe the themes that had emerged from interviews with former collegiate athletes along with current experiences in collegiate softball. This semi-structured approach to qualitative interviewing allowed access to “unexpectedly significant topics” (Bryman, 1988, p. 7) as they arose in conversation with participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Weiss, 1994). It was my job

to focus the discussion, but also to respect and value individual experiences as they diverged from the specific line of inquiry (Bryman, 1988; Weiss, 1994).

Identification of Current Collegiate Athletes

Current collegiate athletes were identified through review of collegiate athletics media guides and a snowball method relying on participants in both phases of the study to assist in the identification of potential study participants. A list of potential participants was developed and letters were mailed to the coaches of these student-athletes (appendix H) to inform the coach of the research, request their assistance in contacting the student-athletes and gain their support for the study. Additionally, enclosed with the letter to the coach were individual letters to each student-athlete (appendix I) inviting each individual to participate in the research. Interested participants were asked to respond through the mail if they were interested in participating in the study.

Phone calls were made to coaches to answer any questions about the study and coordinate convenient times to plan interviews with student-athletes. In most cases coaches were very responsive to the letters and acted as vital communication links between the student-athletes and myself. A couple of coaches offered to schedule the interviews for me since they knew the schedules of their student-athletes and had daily interactions with them. I declined these offers in an effort to “weed out” those student-athletes who may have only participated to please a coach. After a student-athlete had expressed interest in participating in the study, a second contact was made to schedule the interview (usually a phone call, but sometimes e-mail or fax was used). Interviews took place from the southern edge of California up to northern California.

Procedures and Data Collection

Interview participants met the interviewer at a location of mutual choice (e.g., coffee shop, library, athletic field). Interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 90 minutes, and were recorded by the interviewer's hand-written notes as well as audiotaped when permitted by the participant (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Thomas & Nelson, 1990; Weiss, 1994). Every participant in the present study permitted audiotaping of interviews. Participants were informed of the purpose of the research, were allowed to see their own interview forms and notes upon request, were provided time for asking questions of the interviewer and were asked to verify the accuracy of biographical statements that would be part of the completed report of research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Each interview began with a brief description of the research followed by completion of the informed consent (appendix J), demographic survey (appendix C), and discussion of structured interview questions (appendix E). Participants were asked to begin the discussion by sharing how they initially became involved in sports and eventually made it to collegiate softball. The interview took on a casual, yet directed discussion format that allowed for movement in and out of the prescribed topical areas.

Throughout each interview, I attempted to keep the discussion focused on the previously identified topics and yet allowed room to explore other relevant topics as they came up. The semi-structured approach was meant to include unexpected relevant discussion, rather than preclude participants from straying from the existing topics. The majority of interviews began slowly and at a cursory level of discussion, however once participants began sharing their experiences in sports discussions seemed to get easier, more relaxed and more deeply personal. It was purposeful that the interview instrument

began with easy, straightforward questions and moved into more thought provoking, in-depth questions. In a couple of cases time was a constraint and discussion remained at a somewhat superficial level, or particular topics were skipped entirely. Yet, most interviews felt as though they could have gone on indefinitely. These somewhat varied interactions with participants are a valuable part of the research experience and simply reveal the contributions made by both researcher and research participant.

Interviews concluded with a verbal expression of thanks by the researcher and time for the interviewee to ask questions. Nearly all participants wanted to know more about the process of writing their stories and in what form their stories would become available for public consumption. They wanted to know where it might be published and when they would get to see it. Some asked about the researcher's experiences in graduate school and in collegiate athletics. On occasion the wrap-up discussion went on for ten to 15 minutes. All participants were provided with a postal address, phone and e-mail address for the researcher and were encouraged to contact her if they had questions or further comments to share. A diagram of the entire process of data collection is located in appendix K (figure 2).

Analyses of Data

What does it all mean, anyway, when the talking is done, the microphone cable is rewound, and the tapes are labeled and transcribed? What is the status of an interview narrative? An interview is not, in any simple sense, the telling of a life so much as it is an incomplete story angled toward my questions and each [woman's] ever-changing sense of self and of how the world works.

(Frankenberg, 1993, p. 41)

As Ruth Frankenberg (1993) so eloquently pointed out, the interview is really but a slice of life and it is cut by the researchers investigative scalpel. While it is noted that the interview can not tell a life story, it may tell many stories that may reveal connections, contradictions, and ways of organizing life within a larger social context. It has also been suggested that in doing qualitative research “we contextualize events in a social system within a web of meaning, and provide a namable causation. We transform [events] into meaningful patterns and in doing so we exclude other patterns, meanings, or causations” (Fine, 1993, p. 290). Clearly, I have contextualized the experiences of both former and current collegiate athletes in my project of analyzing the structural and cultural conditions that influenced the paths of these women to collegiate softball. In this section of chapter three I will discuss my theoretical positioning, objectivity and validity in qualitative methods, and will provide a detailed description of the analyses of these data.

Theoretical Positioning

I have applied a structural inequalities perspective to the sense making of these data. A structural inequalities perspective takes into account multiple systems of oppression, avoiding false reification of class or gender over other systems of domination (Baca Zinn, et. al, 1986; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Sage, 1990). Race, class, gender, and sexual preference may be treated as interlocking systems of domination in a structural inequalities framework (Baca Zinn, et. al., 1986; Eitzen & Baca Zinn, 1992). Moreover, the application of a structural inequalities framework shifts the analytic focus from the individual to the institution (Eitzen & Baca Zinn, 1992), revealing the organizational

structure that perpetuates hierarchies of privilege in women's collegiate sport (Eitzen & Baca Zinn, 1992; Sage, 1990).

Multiple feminist perspectives were also significant in my analyses of the experience of collegiate softball among Latinas. One such perspective, Multiracial Feminism is "an attempt to go beyond a mere recognition of diversity and difference among women to examine structures of domination, specifically the importance of race in understanding the social construction of gender" (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996, p. 321). A Multiracial Feminist (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1994; 1996) framework moves sociological analyses away from gender-only perspectives, and toward an intersections approach to the study of multiple inequalities. This perspective is in concert with Messner and Sabo's (1990) call for a non-hierarchical theory of sport which "involves the development of theories that allow us to conceptualize varied and shifting forms of domination in such a way that we do not privilege one at the expense of distorting or ignoring others" (p.10). Ultimately, I have examined the individual experiences of these women in order to make sense of the significance of race, class and sexuality as power constructs that situate all women differently in the social institution of sport.

I am particularly interested in how these inequalities shape women's paths to collegiate athletics. Relying on Gerson's (1985) framework for examining the shifting structural and cultural influences on women's decisions about work, career and motherhood, I analyze the varied conditions that shaped the paths of Latinas to collegiate softball. Gerson's (1985) analyses suggest that a "comprehensive explanation of women's behavior must include how women themselves, as actors who respond to the social conditions they inherit, construct their lives out of the available raw materials"

(Gerson, 1985, p. 37). A significant aspect of Gerson's (1985) model is that it reflects shifting constraints and enabling conditions in the lives of women. For example, women may receive messages as young women about doing well in school, but as they prepare to leave high school these messages may change to reflect the needs of their families. If it is perceived that earning a wage is a more immediate need, then education may be delayed. This example is reflective of both cultural conditions (e.g., messages about the importance of education) and structural conditions (e.g., needs of a financially constrained family unit). It is from this theoretical framework that I have identified and analyzed the varied structural and cultural conditions faced by this selected group of Latinas who successfully made paths to collegiate softball.

It is additionally significant to note that I also rely on the particular perspectives of the women who were interviewed as a starting point for these analyses. That is, I value the real life experiences of these particularly situated women as meaningful knowledge about the social world (Birrell, 1990; Collins, 1990; 1991; Pronger, 1996). From their particular standpoints, they each offer a meaningful glimpse into the experiences of women in sport structures. Learning about women's lives clearly requires multiple perspectives, and women in varied social locations are often best situated to provide these perspectives. As "outsiders within" (Collins, 1991) or persons with a "view from below" (Gorelick, 1991) all women are situated in ways that offer a critical examination of the social structure from which they emerge to create their lives. While, I will apply multiple feminist frameworks to make sense of women's experiences of collegiate softball, I purposefully begin at the standpoint of each of the women interviewed in the present research.

Objectivity in Qualitative Research

Although it is often suggested that data are more valid if collected in a setting where the investigator is distanced from the data, some suggest that a researcher may be subjective in his/her beliefs about a particular research issue, without making the data any less objective (Fine, 1993). Perhaps more to the point is the recommendation that a researcher ought to acknowledge what they bring to the research in their “selves” (Krieger, 1985; Merriam, 1988; Peshkin, 1991). In this research, my own Chicana and bi-racial experiences suggest to me that relations among women in sport are more complex than liberal equity policies or universal feminism have addressed. It is this Chicana consciousness, my own experiences as a collegiate athlete, and my working class upbringing that have shaped my approach to the study of women’s sport as a site for cultural and social reproduction. And, it is this collective consciousness, along with the application of both structural inequalities and multiple feminist perspectives that will filter the varied accounts from interview participants, to make intellectual and analytical sense of these accounts. These aspects of who I am will indeed shape my re-telling of stories shared by interview participants.

Generalizability of Qualitative Research

Analyses of interview data are particularly vulnerable to accusations of low internal validity, perhaps due to the reflexive nature of the method, and the varied interactions between interviewer and interview participants (Maxwell, 1992; Thomas & Nelson, 1990). However, the method of analysis in the present research is consistent with suggestions regarding the enhancement of validity and reliability in qualitative research. For example, Merriam (1988) and others (Denzin, 1971; Peshkin, 1991) have

suggested several ways to ensure internal validity in qualitative methods in general.

These methods are 1) triangulation of data, 2) checks for plausibility (check data and interpretations with subjects), 3) data collection over a long period of time, with interviews and repeated observations, 4) peer examination and evaluation of one's findings, 5) involvement of participants in all phases of research, and 6) clarification of researcher's own bias and theoretical orientation at the beginning of the research.

In the present research, data from focus group interviews, individual interviews, demographic surveys, and relevant literature were triangulated in order to maximize the meaningful validity of these findings. Data collected via the demographic surveys were reviewed with each interview participant to clarify the information reported. Data collected during interviews was subjected to a consistent process of clarifying and understanding meaning. Although this was done in one interview with each participant, it was an ongoing process for the researcher throughout the six week period of data collection. Despite not having a colleague in review of the raw data, two advisors were periodically consulted throughout the analyses process. Participant involvement has been limited following collection of these data. This seemed appropriate for the goals of the current research. A discussion of researcher biases may be found in chapter one and in the discussion that preceded this section of the manuscript.

While the methods discussed above were employed to enhance generalizability of these data, Firestone (1993) argues that qualitative methods are not at any great disadvantage and that reservations about the lack of generalizability seem to be overstated (p. 16). He identifies three broad arguments are generally used to assert claims of generalizability. These are a) extrapolation from sample to population, b)

analytic generalization or theoretical extrapolation, and c) case to case translation (Firestone, 1993, p. 17). Case to case translation is the argument most often linked to qualitative methods (Firestone, 1993). I have relied on Firestone's (1993) notion of case to case translation to conceptualize the generalizability of the present data. Given this conceptual framework, generalizability may be "enhanced by thick description that allows assessment of the applicability of study conclusions to one's own situation" (p. 18). I follow Firestone's (1993) logic also when I suggest that despite attempts to maximize the generalizability of these findings, it is incumbent upon the reader to "assess these claims critically" (p. 16).

Analyses of Interview Data

Vaughn, Schumm, and Sinagub (1996) have offered a step by step approach to the analysis of focus group data. Taking their cue from the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Lincoln and Guba, (1985), the trio suggested the following five steps: 1) identify the big ideas, 2) unitize the data, 3) categorize the units, 4) negotiate categories, and 5) identify themes and apply theory. These five steps have guided the analyses of both focus group and individual interview data in the present study. A diagram of this process of data analyses may be found in appendix L (figure 3).

The interview notes and full transcripts were duplicated several times and used in a number of different ways to analytically review these data. The copies of transcripts were color coded by participant in order to make it easier to identify participants once the writing began. Immediately following the interview, (prior to reviewing tapes and handwritten notes) general ideas about big themes and important interactions were recorded.

This timeliness is imperative, especially when the interview is to be reviewed, analyzed and reported by one person working in isolation.

Following review of the interview tapes and hand-written notes, the data were reviewed carefully multiple times in order to identify big categories of significant information (Vaughn, Schumm & Sinagub, 1996). The first review of data included looking for support of the identified big categories of analysis. Using codes for these categories, I made notes in the margin of the transcript as to which category I felt items belonged. A second similar review allowed for the inclusion of new categories, or the alteration of original categories (Vaughn, Schumm & Sinagub, 1996).

Given the categories that had been identified in the margin, I then reviewed the transcripts and selected units of data that would aid in making sense of the emergent significant issues. This step initially seemed simplistic, yet it was difficult. It was at this point that choices were made about the relevance of the accounts of participants. Again, the purpose of the research had to guide this aspect of the analysis but so too did the theoretical perspective of the investigator. This is precisely where my own politics, history, social consciousness, and particular brand of academic training lead me to identify certain patterns in the data, while ignoring others (Fetterman, 1993; Weiss, 1994). One might think that unitizing the data can be done just as accurately in one's head, however, the actual task of pulling the transcript apart into units of data that tell particular stories is transformative to say the least (Vaughn, Schumm, Sinagub, 1996). The act of separating thematic categories into meaningful and cohesive units of data brought me further into the data, and to some extent provided a bit of distance from my

own preconceived notions about women's experiences in sport. This process yielded new and/or transformed categories of unitized data.

The placement of unitized data was then reconsidered. At this point, units of data were moved to other locations, new categories were created, and obsolete categories were deleted. Ultimately, a set of rules/guidelines for the inclusion of units of data into identified categories was established and recorded. This step in the reduction of these data resulted in the creation of the final categories with related units of data under each category.

Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the design, data collection and analyses that were used to complete this research. An overview of the research design was provided first, followed by a description of the participants, instrumentation, setting, procedures for data collection, and analyses of data. I have suggested that the questions guiding this research were simply not going to be answered via paper and pencil surveys, nor could these data be accurately evaluated through mathematical equations of significance. In order to answer these intellectual and analytical questions about experiences in the social institution of sport I had to actually talk with Latinas. I have thoughtfully and thoroughly described how these conversations actually came to be, and how they were molded into an informative analysis about the experiences of a select group of Latinas in collegiate softball.

Chapter Four

A Social Demographic Profile

In this chapter I will provide a social profile of the women who were interviewed for the present research, and I will briefly discuss the historical and social demographics of Latinos/as in the United States. The provision of this profile is important to these analyses because it illustrates the diversity among Latinos/as as well as the significance of this diversity for their location within a racialized, classed, and gendered United States society. Social demographic data on Latinos/as in United States society is especially compelling given the history of intellectual accusations of pathological Latino/a families. Social demographic data illustrate that women of Latino/a heritage take up diverse social locations and that ongoing systemic inequalities shape their opportunities for constructing their own adult lives (Gerson, 1985; Ortiz, 1988; Rumbaut, 1995; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998).

Individual Social Profile of Participants in the Present Research

A demographic survey was administered regarding self-identified categories of ethnicity, sexuality and class, as well as other relevant distributive data among participants and parents of participants. These data provide a social profile of the women interviewed and thus aid in making sense of individual paths to collegiate softball. For example, it is interesting to note the diversity among participants in ethnicity, sexuality, financial aid and scholarship awards and level of athletic competition. Many of these factors will be discussed in the analyses chapters of this manuscript. Table 1 shows a descriptive social profile for each of the interview participants in the present research.

Table 1. Selected Demographic Data, by Participant and Parent

	AGE	Ethnicity	Genus	Sex	Class	Curr. Occup.	FinAid \$	Work Income	College Attain.	Athletic Start	Athletic High	Mother Ethnicity	Father Ethnicity	Mother Educ.	Father Educ.	Mother Occup.	Father Occup.
Carmen	20-24	AA/MEX	1	Straight	MID	STU	PS + FA	0	4	DI	DI	MEX	MEX	17+	16	Pro	Tech
Micaela	20-24	MEX	1st	Straight	LOW	STU	PS + FA	0	4	DI	DI	MEX	MEX	<10	<10	NE	Svc
Melissa	20-24	MEX	1st	Straight	MID	STU	Part Schl	<19K	4	CC	DI	MEX	MEX	12	12	Tech	Tech
Lucy	20-24	MEX	1st	Straight	MID	STU	Part Schl	<10K	3	DI	DI	MEX	MEX	14	12	Tech	Tech
Marie	20-24	HON/CAUC	2nd	LSBN	MID	STU	0	0	2	CC	CC	HON	White	12	14	Svc	Pro
Ise	20-24	MEX	2nd	Straight	MID	STU	PS + FA	<10K	4	CC	DII	MEX	MEX	12	12	Svc	Tech
Sydney	20-24	NIC	1st	Straight	UP	STU	Part Schl	<10K	3	DII	DII	FRN	NIC/GRM	17+	16	Pro	Svc
Joelle	20-24	MEX	2nd	Straight	UP	STU	Part Schl	0	2	DII	DII	MEX	White	14	<10	Svc	Pro
Ana	20-24	MEX	2nd	Straight	MID	STU	Fin Aid	0	3	DIII	DI	MEX	White	14	16	Svc	Pro
Connie	20-24	VENZ	1st	Straight	MID	STU	Full Schl	0	4	DI	DI	FRN/SPAN	VENZ	17+	17+	Tech	Pro
Marisol	20-24	HON	1st	Straight	MID	STU	Fin Aid	<10K	3	CC	DI	HON	HON	12	12	NE	Prod
Jane	20-24	SPAN	2nd	Straight	MID	STU	0	<10K	2	DI	DI	SPAN	Irish	14	14	NE	Pro
Mickey	20-24	MEX	1st	Straight	MID	STU	Part Schl	0	4	CC	DII	MEX	MEX	12	12	Tech	Svc
Gloria	19	MEX	3rd	Straight	MID	STU	Fin Aid	0	2	CC	CC	MEX/NAV	MEX	12	12	Tech	OFL
Karin	20-24	MEX	3rd	Straight	MID	STU	Full Schl	NA	5	DI	DI	MEX	MEX	16	16	Svc	Svc
Nicole	20-24	MEX	3rd	Straight	MID	STU	Full Schl	NA	2	DI	DI	MEX	MEX	12	14	NE	Svc
Rita	25-29	AA/MEX	1	Straight	MID	STU	0	<10K	B+	DII	DII	MEX	AA	17+	16	Pro	Tech
Julie	25-29	MEX	3rd	Straight	MID	STU/Pro	0	30-39K	B+	DI	DI	MEX	MEX	12	12	Tech	Tech
Aina	25-29	PR	3rd	Gay	MID	Pro	0	>60K	B	DI	DI	PR	SCT	12	14	NE	Svc
Yolanda	25-29	MEX	3rd	LSBN	MID	Tech	0	10-14K	B	CC	DI	MEX	MEX	<10	12	E	E
Miranda	25-29	MEX	3rd	LSBN	MID	Tech	0	20-24K	B	DI	DI	MEX	MEX	<10	12	Tech	Svc
Bugs	25-29	MEX	1st	LSBN	MID	Pro	0	40-49K	M	DII	DII	MEX	MEX	<10	<10	NE	Tech
JJ	20-24	MEX	3rd	Bi	MID	Svc	0	30-39K	B	DII	DII	MEX	MEX	12	12	Tech	Prod
Kim	25-29	MEX	3rd	Straight	MID	Svc	0	15-19K	B	DII	DII	MEX	MEX	14	14	Tech	Svc
Rosalita	25-29	MEX	3rd	Gay	MID	Tech	0	15-19K	B	CC	DII	MEX	MEX	12	<10	Tech	Prod
Monica	30-34	MEX	3rd	Bi	MID	Tech	0	40-49K	B	DI	DI	MEX	White	14	14	Pro	Svc/Ret
Christina	25-29	MEX	3rd	Straight	MID	Tech	0	25-29K	B	DI	DI	GRMN	MEX	17+	16	Pro	Tech

*Occup - STU=student, Pro=professional/managerial, Tech=Technical, Sales, Support, NE=Not employed, Svc=Service sector, Prod=production/crafts work, OFL=operator/fabricator, laborer, E=employed.

Participant Biographies

Carmen is in her early twenties, is of Mexican descent on her mother's side, and African American descent on her father's side and identifies as straight. Carmen plans to pursue a career as a physical therapist and/or collegiate softball coach, thus is planning on completing a master's degree. In high school, Carmen was a multi-sport athlete, playing softball, basketball, and volleyball on teams that were made up of Latinas and White women. Currently, Carmen plays division I softball at a university in the southwest. On this team, her teammates are predominantly white.

Micaela is in her early twenty's, self-identifies as Mexican and straight. She is the first in her family to attend and stay in a 4-year institution, and is currently in her senior year at a prestigious, academically acclaimed school, where she studies history. Micaela plans to continue her education, complete a doctoral degree and work as a professor, high school teacher or at-risk youth coordinator. During high school, Micaela played softball and soccer on predominantly white teams. She chose to play softball rather than soccer in college in large part due to the financial resources that were available at the institution of her choice. Currently, at her division I institution, Micaela competes with a predominantly white team.

Melissa is a straight, Mexican woman in her early twenties. Melissa works part-time and earns less than 15 thousand dollars annually, but also receives a partial athletic scholarship, which pays for her books, tuition and offers assistance with living expenses. Melissa participated in high school softball, ASA travel softball and high school volleyball on predominantly white teams. She began her collegiate career at a

community college, however, at the time of the interviews Melissa was competing in division I softball where her team was predominantly white, but had several Latinas on it.

Lucy is in her early twenties, self-identifies as straight and Mexican. She is in her junior year at a division I institution and plans to pursue a master's degree in speech and language pathology or deaf education. Lucy currently works part time and earns less than 10 thousand dollars annually, but also earns a partial athletic scholarship in the amount of \$2,250 annually. Lucy played softball in high school and in ASA travel programs, primarily on teams that were predominantly white. Currently, Lucy competes in division I softball on a team that is predominantly white, but shows about 30 percent Latina representation.

Marie is a lesbian, Honduran/Caucasian woman in her early twenties. She is in her sophomore year at a community college and hoping to transfer to a four-year college next year. Marie plans to earn her bachelors degree in criminal justice and/or photography. Currently, Marie lives with her parents, does not work, and earns no athletics aid. In high school, Marie participated in softball on a team that was predominantly white, and played ASA travel ball. Marie currently competes in softball at a community college where her team is predominantly Latina.

Ise is in her mid-twenties, of Mexican descent and straight. Ise is in her fourth year of college and earns a partial scholarship that amounts to approximately \$500.00 per year. She also holds a part-time job at which she earns less than \$10,000 per year. Additionally, Ise receives approximately \$6,000 in financial aid annually. Ise plans to complete her bachelor's degree and work toward a career as a probation officer or counselor. Ise played softball and basketball in high school on teams that were

predominantly white. She began her collegiate career at a community college where her team was predominantly white, had a break in her education, and currently competes in division II softball where her teammates are predominantly Latina.

Sydney is in her early twenties, Nicaraguan and straight. Sydney is in her junior year at a division II college where she plans to complete a bachelor's degree and work toward a career as a law enforcement officer or as an agent with the FBI. While in school, Sydney earns a partial scholarship in the amount of \$1,100 plus housing assistance and she earns less than \$10,000 annually from a part-time job. Sydney played softball in high school and in ASA leagues on teams that were predominantly white. She currently competes on a division II collegiate team that is predominantly Latina.

Josie is a straight, Mexican woman in her early twenties. She is currently in her sophomore year at a division II university where she earns a partial athletic scholarship that provides books, tuition and a monthly stipend that total \$1,500 annually. Josie's academic goals include earning a master's degree and pursuing a career in business, marketing or real estate. During high school Josie competed in softball on a team that was predominantly Latina. On her current collegiate team, Josie's teammates are equally mixed white and Latina, and her head coach is a woman of Mexican heritage.

Ana is a straight, Mexican woman in her early twenties. Ana began her collegiate career at a division III school and is now in her junior year at a division I university where she is a "walk-on" on her softball team. She receives no athletic scholarship money, but does take on approximately \$2,500 annually in student loans to help her pay for her education. Ana's academic goals include completing a master's degree and eventually working as a strength and conditioning coach or exercise physiologist. During

high school Ana competed on softball, basketball and volleyball teams that were predominantly white. Although her college team shows some diversity, it is also predominantly white.

Connie is a straight, Venezuelan woman in her early twenties. Connie is currently in her senior year and is a “walk-on” on her division I softball team. She earns an athletic scholarship, which pays for her tuition, books and provides \$400.00 each month for living expenses. Connie’s academic goals include completing a master’s degree and developing a career as a marriage and family consultant or counselor. During high school, Connie competed in soccer, tennis and softball on predominantly white teams. Connie is one of several Latinas of diverse ethnicities on her collegiate team, yet the team remains predominantly white.

Marisol is a straight, Honduran woman in her early twenties. After beginning at a community college, Marisol is now in her junior year at a division I university and is a “walk-on” on the softball team. She works part-time and receives financial aid (loans, grants and EOP funds) to help pay for her education. Marisol plans to complete her bachelor’s degree in Communications with an emphasis in Public Relations. During high school Marisol competed in softball, basketball and volleyball on predominantly white teams. Marisol is one of several ethnically diverse Latinas on her college team, yet the team remains predominantly white.

Jane is a straight, Spanish woman in her early twenties. Jane is currently in her sophomore year at a division I university and plans to become a doctor, perhaps specializing in sports medicine. Jane receives no athletic scholarship money or financial aid. She works part-time earning less than \$10,000 annually. During high school Jane

competed in softball and basketball on teams that were predominantly white. Jane is one of several ethnically diverse Latinas on her predominantly white collegiate team.

Mickey is in her early twenties who self-identifies as Mexican and straight. Mickey is a senior at a division II university in the Southwest and earns approximately \$2,500 annually in athletic related scholarship money. She plans to earn her bachelor's degree and pursue a career in marketing research and possibly develop her own business. During high school, Mickey competed in softball, volleyball and cheerleading on teams that were predominantly white. She currently competes in softball at a division II university where her team is predominantly Latina.

Gloria is a nineteen year old, straight, Mexican woman. Gloria is in her sophomore year at a community college and plans to eventually complete a doctoral degree and pursue a career in politics or educational administration. She and her daughter live with her parents and she earns financial aid in the approximate amount of \$3,400 per year. Gloria competed in softball and soccer in high school on teams that were predominantly white. She currently competes in softball at a community college in the southwest on a team that is predominantly white.

Karin is in her early twenties, of Mexican descent and identifies as straight. She is a fifth year senior on a full athletic scholarship from which she earns \$350 per month and has her books and tuition paid by the institution. Karin plans on completing her bachelor's degree and earning a teaching credential in order to pursue a career as an elementary school educator. During high school Karin competed in softball, basketball and volleyball on teams that were predominantly white. Karin currently competes on a nationally ranked division I softball team that is also predominantly white.

Nicole is a straight, Mexican woman in her early twenties. She is currently a sophomore at a division I university where she earns a full athletic scholarship that provides books, tuition and \$350.00 per month for living expenses. Her academic goals include earning her bachelor's degree and pursuing a career as a teacher or in some law enforcement capacity. During high school Nicole competed in softball and volleyball on teams that were predominantly white but also included several Latina and Pacific Islander women. Nicole's collegiate team is quite elite in national competition and is made up of mostly white women, however there are a few Latina athletes and two Latina coaches on the roster.

Rita is in her mid to late twenties and is of African and Mexican American heritage and identifies as straight. Rita lives in her parent's home while she is completing her master's degree in social work, and earns about \$9,999 or less each year. Rita was a multi-sport athlete in high school, participating in softball, basketball, and volleyball. She went on to play division II softball for three years, prior to an injury that forced her to re-think her educational and athletic goals. Rita's teammates throughout her playing years were predominantly white. Rita has not participated in any organized athletics in the past year.

Julie is a third generation Mexican-American woman in her mid twenties who identifies as straight. She lives in her parents' home, works as a elementary school teacher and hitting coach in the Southwest. Julie's income falls in the \$30,000 and \$39,999 per year range. She has earned her bachelor's degree from an elite division I institution in the Southwest and is currently working on a master's degree in educational administration, with the possibility of going on for a doctoral degree. Softball is the only

sport Julie chose to play, playing as a youth, in high school, and in division I collegiate athletics. On all of her teams, her teammates were predominantly white.

Alma is a bi-racial, Puerto Rican woman in her mid to late twenties, who identifies as gay. Alma earned a bachelor's degree from a division I university, where she also played softball. She currently works in sales, earning roughly \$60,000 annually. During high school, Alma competed in softball, basketball and volleyball on racially mixed, but predominantly African American teams. Her division I collegiate softball team was predominantly white, but also had several Latina athletes. Alma does not currently compete in softball.

Yolanda is in her mid-twenties and self-identifies as Mexican and lesbian. Currently, Yolanda is a head coach at a division I university in the southwest. Yolanda completed her bachelor's degree while playing softball and currently earns approximately \$15,000 annually. During high school, Yolanda competed in softball, basketball and volleyball on teams that were predominantly African American. Yolanda also competed in community college and division I softball, where her teams were racially mixed. She does not currently compete in softball.

Miranda is a Mexican woman in her early twenties who identifies as lesbian. Miranda is currently completing her bachelor's degree and works as a site director for a youth day care facility. Miranda's annual earnings are roughly \$25,000. During high school, Miranda competed in softball, basketball and volleyball on teams that were predominantly Asian and white. Later, Miranda played division I softball on a predominantly white team, except for her senior year, when there were several Latinas on the team. Miranda currently competes in the Women's Professional Fast-pitch League

and in highly competitive ranks of ASA softball. On each of these teams, her teammates are predominantly white.

Bugs is a Mexican woman in her mid to late twenties who identifies as lesbian. Her individual annual income ranges between \$40,000 and \$49,999. Bugs holds both a bachelors and masters degree in physical education, and she currently works as a junior high school physical educator and as a collegiate softball coach. During high school, Bugs played several sports including softball, basketball, volleyball, track, and soccer. On these teams, her teammates were predominantly Latina. However, when Bugs went on to play division II softball her teammates were predominantly white. Today, Bugs participates in community recreation leagues in softball, soccer, and pool, again with predominantly white teammates.

JJ is a Mexican woman in her mid twenties, who identifies as bi-sexual. She earned her bachelor's degree in Psychology and Criminal Justice at a division II school in the southwest, and currently works as a correctional officer. JJ's reported annual income ranged between \$30,000 and \$39,999. JJ played division II softball after having played in high school and as a young girl. Her high school and college teams were described as predominantly white.

Kim is a Mexican woman in her mid-twenties, who identifies as straight. She holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology and works as a cosmetic laser technician and medical assistant in the Southwest. Her individual annual income ranges between \$15,000 and \$19,999. During high school Kim was a multi-sport athlete including softball, volleyball, and soccer. Kim played division II softball and continues to play

slow-pitch softball and adult women's soccer. Of all the teams that Kim has played on, her teammates have been predominantly white.

Rosalia is in her mid to late twenties, identifies as Mexican-American and gay. Rosalia is a head softball coach in a division II program in the southwest where she earns roughly \$18,000 annually. Rosalia played softball in high school among other Latinas, and played both community college and division II softball on predominantly white teams. Currently, Rosalia plays professional and amateur softball primarily with white teammates.

Monica is in her early thirties, Mexican on her mother's side and White on her father's and identifies as bi-sexual. Monica earned a bachelor's degree in physical education and works full-time as a softball coach at a division I institution earning approximately \$45,000 per year. Softball and volleyball were Monica's sports of choice in high school, where she played on predominantly white teams. Monica's college softball team was 30 percent Latina, yet the elite amateur team on which she played most recently was predominantly white.

Christina is a straight woman in her mid twenties, and is of Mexican and German descent. Christina holds a bachelor's degree and currently coaches softball at a division I institution in the southwest earning between \$25,000 to \$29,999 annually. Her sport experiences have been on predominantly white teams, however, on her college team roughly one third of her teammates were Latina. Christina was a multi-sport athlete in high school and had a chance to be a two-sport athlete in college, but chose to focus on softball. Christina continues to compete in elite softball on both ASA and international teams.

Aggregate Social Profile of Participants

Although the women interviewed are clearly individually distinct, it was also helpful to understand how they came together as a group. Thus, the data that was presented earlier in Table 1, was manipulated to show an aggregate profile of the women who were interviewed. These aggregate data are shown in Table 2 on page 95 of this manuscript. Demographic data show that the large majority (63%) of the participants were 20 to 24 years old, a typical age range for undergraduate college students. Participants were also overwhelmingly of Mexican heritage, with 78 percent claiming a Mexican Latino/a ethnicity. This is reflective of the numeric dominance of Latinos/as of Mexican heritage in California. It is also interesting that 22 percent of participants were from diverse Latino/a ethnic heritages.

Not surprisingly, the majority (44%) of the women I interviewed were at least third generation born in the United States, however, a good number were also first generation (37%). Generational status is significant in understanding access to resources, interaction with various social institutions, language and general knowledge about U.S. culture and social structures. Also not surprising was the fact that 70 percent of the women interviewed identified as straight (heterosexual). There may be a link between sexuality, age and generational status, but it is beyond the scope of this research to quantify this relationship. It is interesting to note that nearly 30 percent of these women identified as gay, lesbian or bi-sexual, a higher percentage than that believed to operate in society at large.

Equally interesting was the fact that despite widely varied educational, occupational and financial situations most participants (89%) claimed a middle class

identity, while only 7 percent and 4 percent claimed either upper or lower class identities respectively. This may be related to their situation as college students, more than it is to their financial situation. Educational status and attainment is related to income. At the time of the interviews 56 percent of participants had not yet completed a bachelor's degree, 41 percent of respondents had earned a bachelor's degree. While several of these women were working toward graduate degrees, only one had completed a Master's degree at the time of the interviews.

These aggregate data also show that 30 percent of these women began their collegiate careers at a community college and 44 percent of these women went directly from high school to division I softball. A total of 59 percent of participants eventually competed in division I softball, showing successful transitions for some from lower divisions of competition. These are significant experiences along the path to collegiate softball that will be discussed in the analysis chapters of this manuscript. These data are shown in Table 2 below.

Aggregate Social Profile of Parents

Demographic data regarding parents of former collegiate athletes were also recorded. These distributive and categorical data include information on parents' ethnicity, education and occupation. These data are important for understanding family social locations among diverse Latino families, especially as they produce conditions that shape women's choices about their lives.

The most common Latino/a ethnicity among parents was Mexican, accounting for 74 percent of mothers and 69 percent of fathers. Interestingly, 19 percent of fathers were White, while only one (4%) mother was not of Latino/a heritage. This is important in

Table 2. Aggregate of Demographic Data for Participants.

Demographic Characteristic	Categories	Value	Percent
Age	< 20	1	4
	20-24	17	63
	25-29	8	30
	30-34	1	4
Latino/a Ethnicity	Mexican	21	78
	Honduran	2	7
	Puerto Rican	1	4
	Other	3	11
Generational Status	1st	10	37
	2nd	5	19
	3rd	12	44
Sexuality	Straight	19	70
	Gay or Lesbian	6	22
	Bi-sexual	2	7
Class	Lower	1	4
	Middle	24	89
	Upper	2	7
Occupation	Student	17	63
	Technical, Sales, Spprt	5	4
	Service	2	7
	Managerial, Professional	3	19
Financial Aid/Athl. \$	Yes	14	52
	No	13	48
Annual Income - Work	None	10	37
	1-\$9,999	6	22
	10K-19,999	4	15
	20K-29,999	2	7
	30K-39,999	2	7
	40Kand more	3	11
Yr. College/Deg. Earned	1-2 Yrs	5	19
	3-4 yrs	10	37
	Bachelor's	11	41
	Master's	1	4
First College	CC	8	30
	DIII	1	4
	DII	6	22
	DI	12	44
Highest College	CC	2	7
	DII	9	33
	DI	16	59

terms of racial constructions, cultural values and accessing power in a white dominated society. In terms of educational attainment, 55 percent of mother's had completed 12 or fewer years of formal education, 26 percent had completed either a two or four-year

degree and 19 percent had completed more than four years of college. Among fathers 52 percent had completed 12 or fewer years of formal education, 44 percent had completed either a two or four-year degree, and only one father completed more than four years of college. These rates of educational attainment are relevant to later discussions of educational dislocation among the women who were interviewed.

The occupations of mothers and fathers were varied with the majority (38%) of mother's working in technical, sales or administrative support type jobs and fathers (35%) in service sector jobs. Twenty three percent of mothers were not in the paid labor force, but worked in their own homes as unpaid household laborers. Nearly one third (31%) of fathers worked in technical, sales or administrative support type jobs. These data are shown in table 3 on page 97.

Social Demography of Latinos/as in the United States

While it is imperative that the women interviewed be seen as individuals who made particular paths to collegiate softball, it is also important to understand the disadvantaged location of Latinos/as in the United States. In this section I provide a brief profile of Latinos/as in the United States in order to aid the reader in making sense of the particular conditions that influence both early expectations for adult lives and choices along the pathways to adulthood.

Of the 267.6 million people estimated by the 1997 United States Statistical Abstract, Hispanics accounted for 29.4 million, or 11 percent of the total population; up 32 percent from the 22.4 million counted in 1990. It is estimated that if this trend continues, Latinos/as will account for 31.4 million and 36.1 million persons in the United States in the years 2000 and 2005 respectively (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998).

Currently, in the United States, roughly 63 percent of Hispanics are Mexican, 15 percent are Central and South Americans, 11 percent are Puerto Rican, four percent are Cuban, and roughly seven percent are “Other Hispanics” (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). The Hispanic population in the United States is concentrated in five primary states, California, Texas, New York, Florida and Illinois (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998).

Table 3. Aggregate of Demographic Data for Parents.

Demographic Characteristic	Categories	Value	Percent
Mother Latino/a Ethnicity	Mexican	20	74
	Honduran	2	7
	Puerto Rican	1	4
	Other	4	15
Father Latino/a Ethnicity	Mexican	16	59
	Honduran	1	4
	Puerto Rican	0	0
* 5 of these are White	Other	10	37
Mother Education	≤12 years	15	55
	13-14 years	6	22
	15-16 years	1	4
	17 or more years	5	19
Father Education	≤12 years	14	52
	13-14 years	6	22
	15-16 years	6	22
	17 or more years	1	4
Mother Occupation	Not Employed	6	23
* based on N=26	Managerial, Professional	5	19
	Technical, Sales, Spprt	10	38
	Service	5	19
	Production	0	0
	Operator, Fabricator	0	0
Father Occupation	Not Employed	0	0
* based on N=26	Managerial, Professional	5	19
	Technical, Sales, Spprt	8	31
	Service	9	35
	Production	3	12
	Operator, Fabricator	1	4

Despite significant growth in numbers among all Latinos, Latinas continue to face lower college attendance and graduation rates, lower than average family annual income, and higher than average rates of poverty (Rumbaut, 1995; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). The 1997 census data reported that roughly 55 percent of Latinas (age 25 and

over) had completed high school and 10 percent had completed a college degree. In the same year, 15 percent of all employed Hispanic women worked in lower blue collar occupations (operators, fabricators, or laborers) and 19 percent worked in upper white collar occupations (managerial, professional).

Differences also occur among different Hispanic ethnic groups. For example, in 1997 Mexican origin population showed the lowest rate of high school graduation, at 49 percent. Puerto Rican and Cuban women graduated from high school at rates of 61 percent and 65 percent respectively. Roughly 8 percent of Mexican women graduated from college while 11 percent of Puerto Ricans and 20 percent of Cubans graduated. Women of Latino heritage also work in various occupation sectors that cut across ethnicity. When compared to Puerto Rican and Cuban women, Mexican women were most likely to be employed in lower blue collar occupations and least likely to be employed in upper white collar occupations. Additionally, while not only specific to women, median household income and poverty status of families are significant factors in the opportunity structures for young women. Women growing up in Hispanic households in 1997 were likely to experience lower than average household income and higher than average family poverty rates (U.S. bureau of the Census, 1998). These data are shown in Table 4 on page 99.

These data illustrate the social landscape from which many Latinas have come to various United States social institutions, such as education and sport. They point to the ethnic, national, historical, and regional diversity of Latinas in the United States. For example, while Hispanic women face economic difficulties at higher rates than do White women, Puerto Rican women seem to be most disadvantaged in terms of income and

poverty status (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). Moreover, Cuban women fare better than do Mexican and Puerto Rican women in educational attainment, labor force participation, income and poverty status (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998).

Table 4: Socioeconomic Characteristics of Major Racial Groups and Hispanic Origin Groups in the United States, 1997 - Female.¹

Racial Ethnic Groups	Total Persons	H.S. Grad	Coll. Grad	Lower Blue Collar	Upper White Collar	Median Income Hshld	Below Poverty Family
All Races	51	82	22	7.4	31	37,005	10.3
Non-Hisp. White	73	83	22	6.0	34	40,577	6.3
Non-Hisp. Black	12	76	14	11	21	25,050	24
Hispanic Total	11	55	10	15	19	26,628	25
Mexican	-	49	7.5	17	16	25,347	31
Puerto Rican	-	61	11	10	26	23,646	36
Cuban	-	65	20	7.0	24	35,616	17

Note. These data were abstracted from the Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1998.
 - = no data available.

Summary

The uncovering of such diversity suggests a need for comprehensive, rigorous analyses of Latinas in sport who may have varied ethnic, national, historical, and regional experiences in the United States. Any viable explanation for the disproportionate underrepresentation of Latinas in United States collegiate athletics rests at least partly in their social location within a web of structural inequalities (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1994; 1996; Collins, 1990). Where possible, demography of the participants in the present research and social demography of Latinas in the United States will be interwoven provide comprehensive analyses of the experiences of these women along their paths to collegiate softball.

Chapter Five

Baselines and Shifting Social Conditions

In this chapter, I analyze how the women I interviewed came to be involved in sport and how they made their own paths toward elite softball, including interactions in families, organized sport structures and schools. The experiences of these women illustrate both structural and cultural conditions that influenced individual expectations for sport involvement. Varied and constantly shifting conditions came together to situate these women in particular positions from which they made choices about involvement in elite softball. Specifically, these analyses address the role of families, sports structures and schools in the development of individual expectations for sport involvement. I provide analyses in two broad categories, a) baselines and early expectations and b) shifting conditions and maintaining expectations.

Baselines and Early Expectations for Involvement in Organized Sport

Although it is true that Latinas, like other women face social constraints in their choices about family life, school, athletics and employment, their fate is not a collective one nor is it derived solely from a set of monolithic family values. Indeed young women in Latino families receive encouragement for involvement in sport, athletics, the labor force and other social institutions, however, this encouragement is shaped by particular family and cultural values as well as structural inequalities (Acosta, 1999). Acosta (1999) examined the experiences of three Latinas who made their way to athletics and careers in physical education. Her case studies revealed that despite some shared family traditions, each woman received support in ways that were specific to the social location of the families. Acosta (1999) concluded that while all women struggle to gain

unconditional support for sport involvement, Latinas may face additional challenges due to a) the absence of Latina role models, b) limited financial resources, and c) ambivalent attitudes of family members toward higher education and sport. It has been suggested that early socialization experiences may form what Gerson (1985) referred to as “baseline orientations”. These baseline orientations set the stage for how women encounter and act upon the available options in their lives.

Gerson (1985) suggests that women differ in their early expectations about the goals they plan to pursue as adults. “Exposed to a diverse, complex set of experiences as children, women, like men, develop a variety of conscious and unconscious aspirations long before they are able to test these wishes as adults” (p. 20). For some women, early expectations unfold as clearly defined plans while for others, these goals are less clear, more like ambiguous prospects that may or may not be fulfilled (Gerson, 1985, p. 20). Gerson (1985) suggests that however murky or brilliant, these early expectations form the baseline for adult life. Moreover, once established, these early orientations are subject to the real constraints and opportunities encountered in adulthood. That is, the social conditions adult women face can undermine or support their original goals. Unexpected events can lead adults to reevaluate past assumptions and reorient themselves toward the future. Thus, pathways through adulthood may either follow or diverge from one’s baseline. In this section of chapter five, I will analyze how the women interviewed developed baseline orientations for sport, which would influence later decisions about collegiate softball.

Parents

The development of early expectations for involvement in sport seems to be highly correlated with the messages young girls receive from their parents about the value of sport involvement. Greendorfer (1993) suggested that unlike males who receive strong, consistent influences from significant socializing agents (e.g., parents, peers, coaches, teachers) for sport involvement, females tend to “receive more general, diffuse and subtle influences that socialize them into sport” (p. 12). Additionally, despite the fact that most female athletes come from families where physical activity is valued, the socialization of young women into sport may not be conscious or deliberate (Greendorfer, 1993). Consistent with Greendorfer’s (1993) findings, the women I interviewed came from families where sport was highly valued and parents were often involved in organized leagues. Yet, in contrast to Greendorfer’s (1993) findings, many of the women I interviewed seemed to receive direct encouragement from parents and varied support from other socializing agents.

For example, Rita’s parents made it clear to each of their three daughters that they supported their involvement in organized sport. Although Rita’s mother had not been an “athlete”, she had been physically active as a young girl playing games with her brothers. Rita’s father had competed in collegiate athletics, thus she received direct encouragement for sport involvement from parents who had been physically active themselves. Rita talked about how she perceived her parent’s encouragement. Her words also underscore how she came to hold early expectations for her own involvement in sport.

We were encouraged ‘cause he was a college athlete and my mom – she was behind it. She didn’t play sports but she had three brothers and she used to play outside a

lot with them. My father was supportive. He didn't push or demand that we play or anything like that. He was just supportive and encouraging and wanted us to do the best we could. My first couple of years of experience were okay but I had coaches that were not the most knowledgeable about the game and he got frustrated. He didn't really like how they were handling my ability. He wanted them to progress, so he decided he would become a coach. Then, that's when he started the Dynasty team. It initially started with one team and now it has 16 teams.

Like Rita's experience, and indicative of Greendorfer's (1993) finding that most female athletes come from families where physical activity is valued, Alma also received parental encouragement and athletic role modeling. Alma suggested that her extended family was very sport oriented and she recalled getting her start by playing a variety of sports at family gatherings. Despite this encouragement that guided Alma toward her own expectations for involvement in sport, at the same time her opportunities were constrained due to a lack of organized leagues for girls. Alma recalled her mother playing a significant role in the foundation of a softball league that later became the avenue for her continued involvement in softball. Alma shared the following about the role of sport in her young life.

My whole family was athletic. My grandfather coached and all of my uncles played baseball. My mom played softball actually in the fifties – in like the Police Athletic League. So ever since I could walk I was always doing something athletic. My father played football, so we were always playing. There was always a ball in the house of some type. Anywhere we'd go, the family function, there was always some kind of activity. I was athletic so I was always out there

playing. I was always around the guys and since I could play they encouraged me more. Then when I was eight years old they started a league. My mom helped found the league so that I would get an opportunity to play.

Both Rita and Alma received direct messages from parents that sports ought to be a part of their lives. Yet, even in the midst of this parental support, the structure of sport was still not inviting to young girls. Title IX of the educational amendment act of 1972 was in place during this time, but was not yet enforced. Clearly Title IX represented an important structural change and was a harbinger of cultural change, both of which influenced women's decisions about sport involvement. In both cases above, however, parents took on the responsibility of establishing quality organized youth sport leagues for their daughters. It is also interesting to note that adult men and women collaborated to advocate for these young girls to have opportunities in sports. These are direct, potent messages about sports involvement that were internalized by these young women and lead them to develop expectations for participation in sport.

In the midst of larger structural change, like Title IX and the consequential increase in softball programs, it is curious that many women continued to face limited opportunities for sport involvement. Yet, parents found ways to get their daughters involved in organized youth sports. Families responded to the lack of youth sport programs in various ways, but the significant aspect was that these young women were provided with options and opportunities to make choices about their involvement in softball. For example, Monica received support from her parents, but especially from her mother who drove to a neighboring town so that she would be able to play in an organized league.

When I was little I just, I mean I was active. I was always outdoors. I would say probably fifth or sixth grade I was just always in the streets with all the neighbors and they were all guys, except for one, my friend Kelly. I always played with the guys. We played football in the street, baseball in the street, anything in the street. So that was my only sort of activity until we decided we kind of wanted to play. But there was nothing for girls at that time. I'm from a small town and I think it's different - now they (girls in her town) have a lot more opportunity, but they didn't at that time. So, my mom used to drive me and my friend, Kelly and all the local boys who wanted to, to go play baseball in the next town. I didn't start playing softball until like ninth grade. There was like a little recreation league in my town, but then ninth grade I started playing on the high school team.

Monica's comments above suggest that baseline orientations were not necessarily developed around softball, but more likely around various sport activities. In fact, various social conditions influenced choices for softball. Nevertheless, a baseline orientation for sport was enough to get these women started on paths toward collegiate softball. In fact, similar to Monica's varied sport experiences, several of the women I interviewed began their sport careers in Little League baseball rather than in organized softball leagues due to the lack of league availability in their local communities. For example, Nicole began her athletic involvement in Little League, and talked about how her success in baseball caused her to think twice before moving to the "girls" softball league.

I started in Little League. I took two years in that, and I was the only girl on my team you know. First, my mom and dad didn't want to sign me in when I was 7, because I really wanted to play. She was like, 'Okay we'll sign you up the next

year'. But I think the only reason she told me that, she didn't want to sign me up because she didn't think I was good, she didn't want to embarrass herself and all that stuff. And I was the only girl on the team, two years, 11 and 12. I made all stars, and I was the only girl on *that* team. Then after that I was too old to stay in little league, and finally my coach on my team said to me, maybe I should try softball, and go to girls softball. At the time I didn't want to because I'm like, 'Girls? They don't know how to play competitive and stuff'.

Like Nicole, Ana also got started in Little League, however she did not enjoy the same success. She talked about the limited availability of leagues for girls as the underlying reason for initial involvement in baseball, rather than softball.

Um, I played, my dad was interested in us playing softball 'cause he has three girls so, and he played sports in high school, and - I lived in a little town mostly of just pretty much Mexican people, you know, Hispanics and stuff, so, um, just baseball for boys mostly. There was no sports for girls, so he went down there and he signed me up and then I played on an all boys team (low level laughter) . . . I just, um, I was the only girl. I was terrible! (emphatic) I didn't know how to play! And I just didn't like it, you know? It was just too rough for me but um, I just kept, I really, I was too young to say that I was gonna' quit you know? So I just kept playing and then from there once I turned 12, I think I joined a softball team for the first time, in a city close by.

Miranda was five years old when her parents signed her up to play in the same Little League in which her brothers played. She was one of very few girls in the league

and she played on a team with her younger brother. It was not until she was 13 years old that she would begin playing softball.

I'm actually the third child in the family and I have three brothers and all of them played sports. They played baseball and football. So, that's how I got into softball, well first I played baseball. I played baseball for like eight years. Then I went into softball.

It is also interesting that Miranda, while competing against her brother, hit a homerun over his head. Even at her early age she knew that this display of superior athletic skill set her out of bounds (Lenskyj, 1986) in terms of appropriate gendered behavior. Perhaps her parents felt the same way and consequently moved her to the softball league. For Nicole, Ana and Miranda playing baseball was a lead-up to competing in elite organized softball. Despite their obvious talent, the protection of baseball as "naturally" male space seemed to shape the perceptions of coaches, parents and perhaps even these women as they continued beyond youth sports and into more competitive high school and traveling team organizations. Despite developing a baseline orientation for sport through initial involvement in baseball, various social conditions, such as gender ideologies and league structures, would influence later decisions about sport involvement.

To be accurate, not all of the women I spoke to experienced direct early support from parents for sports involvement. For some participation in athletics was default to other extra curricular activities that their parents had directly encouraged. Although, their early expectations may not have been focused on sport or specifically softball, once they gave up other forms of recreation, softball became an option. There were of course

various social conditions in flux that opened softball up as an option to these women. Gender ideologies and perhaps class ideologies may have also influenced parental preferences for non-school activities. For example, Sydney talked about playing baseball as an option to the piano lessons that her mother wanted her and her twin sister to take.

I got involved in sports because my mom wanted us to play the piano and I really didn't. And, my dad didn't want us to either, and so my dad signed us up to play baseball, so we played hardball for, probably like two or three years, we were seven. My dad wanted us to play hardball, so we played hardball with the boys. And, we were pretty good, actually, because we even got chosen for, like, MVPs for some things.

Similarly, Karin talked about her involvement in organized sports as an outgrowth of her parents' interest in sports, but not until after she had tried other recreational activities.

Since I'm the oldest my parents pushed me to do like gymnastics and ballet and dance and tap and all that stuff. My attention span was like small, very small. I was like 'Next? What's next?' So, they put me into t-ball and that was my love-just softball. Once I started that I just went off and then I started playing like recreational basketball. And then, I didn't start volleyball until I was in junior high-and I love volleyball. So, I played basketball, softball and volleyball all four years of high school.

Additionally, and perhaps more to Greendorfer's (1993) point, some women received less direct encouragement from parents, but developed expectations for their own sport involvement through watching parents compete in sports events. For example,

JJ remembered going to her father's recreation league softball games as a young girl, and talked about knowing that she would play softball as soon as she was old enough.

My dad was always involved in slow pitch. When I was young I knew I wanted to play. So as soon as I could play which was about age 9, I started playing Bobby Sox softball. I played 'till I couldn't play anymore because I was too old. Then I played in high school.

Clearly, among these women, the development of expectations for one's own involvement in sport was tied to direct encouragement from parents as well as to parental involvement and value for physical activity. Of course for young boys and girls who typically need to gain permission and financial support from parents for involvement in organized activities. Thus, parental values will shape opportunities for engagement in most activities outside of the home, including sports. Nevertheless, the experiences of these women contradict conventional notions about Latino/a values for both sport involvement, as well as women's roles within and outside of families. As indicated earlier, parental messages about sport involvement make up a significant component of several factors that may contribute to whether or not young girls develop expectations for sport involvement. Not all of the women interviewed here received direct support from parents or came from families where parents had participated in sport. In some cases, as we will discuss next, siblings played significant roles in the development of expectations for sport involvement.

Siblings, Friends and Neighbors

For various reasons, including financial constraints, limited access to sport resources and gender ideologies, several of the women to whom I spoke came from

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families where parents had not been physically active for purposes of exercise or sport. Despite their own dislocation from sport, many parents passively supported sport involvement for their children. In families where parents did not provide direct encouragement, these women received encouragement and support from older siblings. Through interactions with older siblings who were already involved in sport, many of the women developed expectations for their own sport involvement. For example, Mickey had both parental and sibling modeling of sport involvement, as her father and her older sister were involved in organized sport.

I was introduced to sports at a young age. I think I was like five years old. My father was a soccer coach and he also played in high school and played like adult league soccer. So, our first sport was soccer. Um my sister-I have an older sister that's a year older than I am and she played, or a coach recruited her to play on the Little League softball team. We had a park two blocks away from our house, so she played and then, um she played that season and then I joined the next season.

Mickey identifies the significant role of her father in socializing both her and her sister into soccer, but also indicates that the experiences of her sister in softball provided her with a model for sport involvement that went beyond her father's experience. Mickey's comments also illustrate the significance of having parks and playgrounds nearby in order to maximize opportunities for involvement of youth in various physical activities. Similar to Mickey's experience, Marie also talked about receiving encouragement from her parents and her older sister. Marie and her sister started playing

organized sports at the same time; thus they were able to experience organized youth sports together.

I was about 5 when I first started playing soccer and softball. My older sister played softball and it just kind of...we started playing when I was 5 and she was 11. My parents really liked for us to play sports. They encouraged us. I've been playing softball ever since then.

For some young girls, older brothers serve as models for sport involvement. While some research has suggested that same sex parents are most influential in socializing young girls into particular roles, siblings may be able to cross the gender divide in order to provide and receive encouragement for sport involvement. The women I interviewed suggested that brothers may be influential in the development of expectations for sport involvement. For example, Micaela recalled her support for involvement in organized youth sports as a means to keep her and her brothers out of trouble. Regardless of the reason, Micaela was the first girl in her family to be enrolled in organized youth sports.

I'm actually the first of my family who has been brought up in the United States, because I was the first one born in the United States. [My brothers and sisters] were born in Mexico. And, so, my two older sisters are the oldest and then I have a bunch of brothers ahead of me, and then it was me. And, so, I kinda just fit into that mode where you just kinda follow your brothers. So, my dad put all of my brothers and myself into sports so we could get away from the streets, and get involved in something else. So, I started playing softball when I was four years old.

Micaela's experience as the first of several siblings born in the United States makes her experiences in U.S. sport even more complex than that of the other women interviewed. As Grey (1996) has suggested school-based athletics in the United States do very little to welcome, celebrate and significantly include immigrant students. Rather, sport works as an additional site for the socialization and acculturation of immigrant students to middle class American values (Grey, 1996). Moreover, Grey's (1996) ethnographic research suggests that what little social status immigrant or minority students may gain as student-athletes does not carry over into the larger community. In effect, when students leave campus, they are faced with the same racist and ethnocentric ideologies that their non-athletic peers face. Despite this reality of racial relations on and off campus, Micaela also experienced increased opportunity for sport involvement compared to that of her older sisters. Thus, the move to the United States provided both structural and cultural changes in her family life that provided different options for sports than those of her older sisters. The manifestation of this was that Micaela received the same messages about sport involvement as did her brothers. Thus, in an indirect way, they were significant in her own development of expectations for sport involvement.

Kim's older brother played a more direct role in encouraging her involvement in sports. It was significant that Kim had an older brother who played in an organized soccer league. Not only did Kim often have opportunities to play soccer with him at home but she also was able to watch him compete in organized soccer league games. These interactions with her older brother influenced her expectations for her own involvement in sport, and expanded into interest in a variety of sport activities. Kim shared the following.

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My family was pretty sports oriented. I have an older brother so he got involved before me and I got involved playing in the backyard and then eventually soccer was the first thing. I started playing when I was five or six. I think I started softball the same year. Fairfax T-ball (laughter from other group members). I kept playing all through high school and played volleyball in high school.

Jane also talked about her older brother being a significant influence on her decisions about involvement in softball. Similar to the way that JJ developed expectations for her own sport involvement through watching her father compete in softball, Jane realized after watching her brother that she too wanted to compete in sports.

I had an older brother, and he basically was always playing sports, and when I was five, I decided that I wanted to play softball. He was a big baseball player, and I decided that I had to play softball. So, it was my brother that kinda' influenced me, and softball was my first sport, and I really seemed to enjoy that. Then, when I got into grade school, I went to a private grade school. So, we had the chance to play, like, we had athletic teams, we had like, volleyball, basketball, and so—and basketball was my next sport. I loved that too.

Unlike, Kim and her brother who participated in the same sport, I found it curious that despite watching her brother compete in baseball and other sports available to him, Jane chose to compete in softball. Why didn't she choose baseball? Was baseball an option for her? Perhaps Jane didn't want to play baseball, but more than likely Jane's choice was constrained by distinct messages that support the notion that baseball is for boys and softball is for girls. I will take this up in more detail later in this chapter. It is also curious to what extent Jane had increased opportunities for sport involvement due to her presence in a

private school. Structurally, a private school may be able to offer a wider variety of sport activities, but culturally the value for sports could be downplayed in favor of other cultural messages integral to the school's mission (e.g., religious or elite academic missions). It is hard to know how this played out for Jane given the limited information gleaned about her particular grade school.

Contrary to popular notions about the role of same sex parents in socializing young girls into particular roles (Greendorfer, 1993), siblings may be able to cross this gender divide. This may explain how older brothers may aid younger sisters in the development of expectations for sport involvement. Of course, this may be stating the obvious since boys have more opportunities than do girls to participate in a variety of organized sports. Still, it is significant that in Latino/a families, both older brothers and sisters may be significant socializing agents in the development of expectations for sport involvement among young girls.

When parents and siblings did not act as strong socializing forces for sport involvement, there were other significant adults and peers who encouraged these young women to participate in organized youth sport leagues. The power of multiple socializing agents for women has been documented (Gerson, 1985; Greendorfer, 1993), especially for women of color in sport (Smith, 1995). In fact, it has been documented that during the early teen years parents may fall behind peers and sometimes coaches as significant influences in the decisions their kids make about their lives. For example, Bugs recalled getting started in organized softball after she watched her "white" friends play in a game. Unlike most collegiate athletes today, Bugs's involvement in organized softball did not begin until the summer before she started high school. It is significant in this passage

that Bugs realized that few or no other Latinas were participating in the organized softball league. It is also significant that her older sister, who had not competed in sports was influential in their father's decision to allow Bugs to participate. Bugs recalled her initial start in organized youth sport in this way.

I'm the youngest of five. My oldest brother is 44. We didn't do anything. I didn't even know about Bobby Sox until I was about ready to go into high school – my eighth grade summer. My friends, my *white* (original emphasis) friends who were involved in Bobby Sox told me 'I got a game' and I went to watch them and then . . . I had played with my brother and neighborhood kids but nothing organized. So I got the paperwork, asked my dad and he said 'No' at first. My older sister talked him into letting me play. At that time there was a fee and transportation was an issue. But he let me do it. I went into high school and played, then to college and played and never stopped.

While Bugs eventually received support from her older sister in the specific task of gaining her father's approval for participation in a softball league, her introduction to organized sport came from her "white friends". None of Bugs's siblings had participated in organized sports, nor had any of them gone to college. These are important family structural conditions that surely influenced what by today's standards seems to be a late start for an elite athletic career.

Unlike Bugs, Yolanda had come from a family that valued physical activity. In fact, both of her parents had competed in high school athletics. Still, for whatever reasons, it was not her parents that provided the encouragement to get her involved in organized sport, it was a childhood friend. Yolanda talked about her memories of playing

in the “hood” with make-shift equipment prior to getting involved in organized youth sport leagues.

I started playing soccer first ‘cause that was my main sport. That was the little Mexican sport ‘cause my whole family loved soccer. And my best friend got me to play Bobby Sox. I played anything and everything. Both my parents, my mom played field hockey in high school. She was a tomboy herself, kind of roughneck I guess you could say. My dad was a basketball and baseball player. Being the only child I didn’t have any brothers and sisters to play with. I used to just go out in the street and just play. I just remember I was a little girl, I was about six or seven playing baseball for the first time in the projects. My best friend, [Karen Kiley], was like ‘Come on, play softball’.

Despite the fact that Yolanda’s parents had participated in high school athletics, they did not directly encourage her to become involved in organized sports. At the same time, however, informal soccer and baseball were common activities among family and friends. Like Bugs and Yolanda, Lucy remembered playing with friends in her neighborhood and then one day watching her neighbor play in an organized league. It was this experience of seeing her friend’s organized game that prompted Lucy to ask her parents to enroll her in the league.

I was probably about um, I’d say ten and um a neighbor of mine um played Bobby sox. And she was older than me, probably about three years older. And um, I would always go to her house. One day, I just went and watched her at the park. So, I came home and I told my mom that I wanted to play. So, the following year when signups came, we just went and signed me up. And I’ve

been playing ever since. That's probably about it. And then my neighbor across from me, he used to play catch with me when I was younger. And um, he plays slow pitch and he would always say, '[Lucy], you want to come out and play catch?' you know if he was doing something.

Lucy's experience is different from that of Bugs and Yolanda in that she did not recall the economic disparity that they did. Christina did not experience financial constraints to her sport involvement either. While she was physically active as a young girl, it took a physical education instructor to guide her toward formal competitive youth sports. Christina specifically recalled receiving early encouragement toward softball from a physical education teacher who had noticed her athleticism.

When I got into seventh grade my P.E. coach saw me playing football with the boys and saw me throw a football, so he decided that he wanted to show me how to play softball and he basically taught me how to pitch. Then he introduced me to a summer coach who introduced me to my pitching coach who I'm still with today . . . that and I always watched my dad play fast pitch in his adult league.

Meanwhile I was playing basketball, volleyball, swimming, tennis, and softball. I mean I did everything I could. My mom was picking me up from one practice and taking me to another. They supported it all.

Although each of these women eventually were able to participate in organized youth sport leagues, the social location of their families shaped their experiences of gaining access. Their varied experiences also point to the significance of multiple socializing agents in the lives of young girls. Had these young women not seen their friends play, known a neighbor who played or been identified by a physical educator they

may never have become involved in organized sport, and may never have realized that their parents would support them in this endeavor. These experiences may lend support to Greendorfer's (1993) finding that girls receive more diffuse, less direct encouragement for sport involvement than do boys. Certainly, Christina's experience of being identified as a talented football athlete, but then ushered into softball reflects cultural constraints on women's sport opportunities. Like Jane, who played baseball originally, Christina was simultaneously encouraged to participate in organized sport and discouraged from choosing particular sports.

Summary

The majority of the women who participated in the present research were born after Title IX of the educational amendments act (1972) had legislated that any educational institution receiving public money must provide equal opportunities for educational success among its diverse students. Because athletics are considered part of the educational mission of many schools, Title IX became the law through which women began to assert their right to athletics related resources, including athletic scholarships for college. As a cohort, the women interviewed for this research were structurally privileged as compared to earlier cohorts of women. In real-life terms, despite the slowness of compliance to Title IX, these women were among the first cohort of beneficiaries of this significant social structural change. Thus, their chances for developing orientations for sport may have been increased, although it is hard to know for sure. Moreover, the encouragement and support received by these women from a variety of socializing agents at relatively early ages was significant to the development of baselines for sport.

Research and scholarship on the experiences of African American and Hispanic girls in sport have revealed structural barriers to full and varied participation (Abney & Richey, 1992; Acosta, 1993; 1999; Corbett & Johnson, 1993; Green, et. al., 1981; Jamieson & Baca Zinn, 1998). Different experiences of socialization into and through sport were found for African American girls (Greendorfer & Ewing, 1981), and similar findings hold true for the socialization of Latinas (Acosta, 1993). More to the point here, twenty-seven years after Title IX became law Latinas show disproportionately lower representation in collegiate athletics as compared to other women (Acosta & Carpenter, 1988; Jamieson, 1995; Jamieson & Baca Zinn, 1998). Moreover, socialization into certain sports (and away from others) may actually be the manifestation of a combination of structural and cultural factors, such as lack of opportunity, exclusionary practices, financial outlay, lack of role models, rural/suburban access to facilities, and variety of programs offered (Abney & Richey, 1992; Acosta, 1993; Coakley, 1994).

It is interesting to note the temporal variety in the development of baseline orientations for sport. Current collegiate athletes as compared to former collegiate athletes were more likely to have established a baseline for sport involvement at an early age, typically by age seven. Although, more important than age, how parents, siblings and significant others interacted with these young women about sport was integral to the development of baseline orientations for sport. It is paradoxical that the very gender ideologies and structural constraints that limit women's experiences in athletics are also responsible for having directed these women's choices about sport and eventually lead them down a path toward collegiate softball (as opposed to a dead-end toward baseball for instance). As Gerson (1985) suggested these baseline orientations are merely early

goals or expectations that will surely be tested as these young women move toward adulthood and encounter a variety of social conditions. It is these shifting conditions and the maintenance of paths toward collegiate softball that I will turn to next.

Shifting Social Conditions and Expectations for Sport Involvement

As Gerson's (1985) developmental approach suggests, the constraints of real life either enable women to stay on direct paths toward their goals or cause them to veer from their paths and reassess their original goals. As we have seen in the previous section, each of the women interviewed here had baseline orientations for sport, yet varied social conditions influenced their ability to maintain paths toward collegiate softball. Not only were there baseline orientations tested by virtue of entering adolescence and young adulthood, they would also face social conditions that reflected their social locations within a web of structural inequalities. That is, inequalities of race, class and sexuality show up as social conditions that are both inherited and defied by this select group of women. In this section, I will analyze how shifting social conditions in families, educational settings, and organized sport shaped expectations for sport involvement among this select group of Latinas. Specifically, I will discuss social conditions in terms of a) ambivalence about college and athletics, b) maintaining and remaking culture, c) discomfort in the classroom, and d) recruitment rookies.

Ambivalence about College and Athletics

Baca Zinn (1990) emphasizes the importance of examining families as they are situated by systems of inequality, and as these social locations impose consequences on their members. Given that many Latino families experience disadvantaged social locations it is curious how this selected group of Latinas made their paths to the elite

sphere of collegiate softball. The women I spoke to made many difficult choices in order to make their way to collegiate softball. Not only did they have to find ways to access the structure of collegiate softball, it was also incumbent upon them to gain support from their working class families for involvement in both higher education and collegiate softball.

Much of the literature on Latinas in higher education suggests that entry to college is difficult for a number of reasons (Cardoza, 1991; Nieves-Squires, 1991; Ortiz, 1988; Simoniello, 1981). Among the parents of Cardoza's (1991) subjects there was a distinction made between aspirations and expectations for their daughters' educational attainment. While parents may aspire to support their daughters' educational goals, they often may not expect to be able to do this due to financial limitations (Cardoza, 1991). Simoniello (1981) conducted interviews with eight Mexican women who were employed in various professions. All but one of these women told Simoniello that despite receiving genuine support and encouragement for educational attainment, parental expectations changed after high school. Similarly, Yolanda, a former division one student athlete offered her insights about the mixed messages that many Latinas receive from their parents about college attendance. She comes to these insights from her own experiences as an athlete and as a division one head softball coach.

It's almost like [parents] don't care if you go to college or not. There's two extremes. There's one that says 'All my hopes and dreams because we never went to college, now you have to do it for the family.' Then there's the other extreme that 'We never went [to college], so what! Get a job somewhere. Work at J.C. Penney's and be happy. You don't need college!' So there's no real

middle-man, either you gotta' do it for the family or 'No one else did it. Why the hell should we spend all that money on you?' There's no importance. I've seen enough young ladies affected by that.

Yolanda's words underscore the real tensions between what Cardoza (1991) referred to as aspirations and expectations. The structural realities facing many Latino/a families make it difficult for parents to hold expectations for their kids to attend and graduate from college. Yet, the early messages received by the women I interviewed suggested that their success in school was important to their parents. Clearly, the value for education is a social condition that changes within families and across time, but it is the interaction of this condition with the agency of each individual woman that evolves into a life of one's making (Gerson, 1985).

As we learned earlier, Bugs was able to convince her father to enroll her in the local youth softball league, but it was when she began playing more often and getting serious about elite softball that she had to regain the support of her family. When Bugs was considering her opportunities to go to college she had to gain the support of her father in particular.

When I decided I was gonna' go to college and I showed [my dad] 'this is what tuition costs'. He was finally enlightened to the fact that higher education has a price tag. Because all of us kids went to school because it was free [k-12], and I really don't think he knew the meaning of tuition or what it was. So, when I showed him what it cost to go to college and then showed him that it was being paid for, and on top of that I was gonna' get financial aid because of my background. He went out and bought me a car! (Stated with great enthusiasm).

Yet, once she started playing collegiate softball her family showed their support by attending most if not all of her games. Bugs's family was not anti-higher education. They simply had not experienced it nor had they relied on it's purported benefits to make a life for themselves and their children in the United States.

My mother and father never made it to one of my high school games. And that wasn't because they didn't want to-they couldn't. My father had to work and my mother had to take care of the family. When I was in college I don't think they missed a game and that includes post-season when they were [in other towns and states]. And I can say the same about their parents (indicating J.J. and Kim, the other interview participants). I don't think they ever missed a game.

While various structural inequalities interact with Latino families, they do not mandate a particular Latino response. Many of the women I spoke to told me that at some point they learned that their father's didn't really want them playing softball. Yet, for varied reasons these women were able to continue playing and in many cases regain the support of fathers for sport involvement. Micaela could not understand her father's disinterest in her desire to take advantage of an opportunity to earn an athletic scholarship for college. After accepting a scholarship at a prestigious division one institution away from home Micaela learned that her father's cool attitude was due to failed attempts by her older brothers to attend and graduate from college. Micaela described his indifference in this way.

I'm the first one. [My brothers] quit half way through, and my dad was working, like, days and nights to kind of help them through, and pay for all their expenses, and they kind of dropped out, so my dad, after that and those were the two oldest

men, or boys, whatever you call it. So, after that there was, like, there was a gap of six of us or something.

Micaela continued,

And, my dad had really, you know, he really didn't care if we went to college, he kinda expected us not to go to college. He didn't want to push us, I guess, but he's also very negative about it, you know, because he had been hurt really bad by my two brothers. I had mentioned it to him before, like before I became a senior that I wanted to go to college. And he had had a lot of problems, not discouraging me, but telling me I'd be just like my brothers or, you know. So, in a way it was hard to prove to him that, 'No. I'm not going to be like my brothers.' And he actually- he would always tell me that he has no money to send me to college-he has no money to send me to college. And so up until a week before I came to [school] to move in [he told me]. . . . I mean, I hurt a lot, you know, I had a really hard time kind of accepting that when he actually told me.

The experiences of both Bugs and Micaela point again to the difference between aspirations and expectations among their parents. While both Bugs and Micaela found ways to move through what seemed like indifference to higher education, they also learned about their fathers' particular experiences or lack thereof with higher education. For Bugs, it was a matter of putting her educational aspirations into a framework that reflected her father's concern for the family's financial stability. Micaela came to realize that the failure of her older brothers in college had forever jaded her father's perspective on the value of higher education. Thus, for both Bugs and Micaela a seeming

ambivalence about higher education turned out to be related to their father's concerns for the economic stability of their families, rather than a distaste for education.

Not entirely unlike the experiences of Bugs and Micaela, Mickey had to get beyond the ambivalence about softball that her mother seemed to have. Although Mickey's mother was gainfully employed, as a single parent of two daughters, she was often concerned about finances. Mickey had been playing elite softball for several years, despite the fact that her mother didn't exactly approve of the time she had to put into it. Mickey had worked part time throughout her high school years in order to be able to pay for extracurricular activities, like cheerleading and softball. When it came time for her to go to college her mother felt work and education were plenty to focus on, and that softball was an unnecessary, however enjoyable, burden of time. This disregard for softball changed when Mickey took her mom on a recruiting visit to the four-year university and division two softball program that she would transfer to from her community college.

It was really funny 'cause my first year at [community] college it was a battle and then like once she came down to the recruiting trip with me and stuff, she goes 'You know, you don't have to work next year.' I've always had a job. I've had a job for the last six years and last year was the first year I didn't have a job. Like a part time job – its not like I had a full time job. She goes, 'You don't have to work. I have money.' Now that my tuition's paid for, my books are paid for and I get a little extra, she goes 'You don't have to work now!' And she was really cute about it. So, now I mean she loves it that I play. She knows that it makes me happy.

Despite her strong feelings about the futility of softball, Mickey's mother never stopped her from competing. While this is certainly not a ringing endorsement for involvement in sports, it was an open door. Moreover, in the same way that the divorce effected a significant family structural change, so too did the increased availability of scholarship funds and financial aid resources effect a significant structural change. These structural changes interacted with and shaped Mickey's mother's beliefs about the importance of collegiate athletic involvement.

Each of these examples illustrate the fact that Latinas may often have to work within and against a complex blend of social conditions within families in order to gain support and resources to attend college. The experiences of each of these women underscore the reality that many social factors come together to shape family systems. The fact that each of these women continued on her path to collegiate softball reveals their individual agency in shaping their lives. They are at once products of particular family environments, and change agents within them. Thus, seeing through the ambivalence was an enabling condition for these women as they continued along their paths toward collegiate softball. The skills of navigating multiple cultural settings would continuously prove significant in the maintenance of paths toward collegiate softball for the majority of the women interviewed.

Maintaining and Remaking Culture

In an eloquent essay called "A letter to my mother", Claudia Colindres (1993) revealed the depth of what is likely a common bond among women in families. Throughout her essay Colindres (1993) describes her experience in a predominantly white college as masculinizing and isolating. Her rich description depicts the intersection

of race, class and gender through her obvious struggle with being a woman and *una mujer* in an extended family that historically denied the education of her own mother.

It was in my senior year of high school that I saw your true colors. You were my ally, and you stood by me, when father tried to do to me what your father did to you, he was trying to keep me home, because I am a woman, *una mujer*. It was great to see you talk to him, scream to him that I had a right to pursue an education. It was invigorating! You were strong and powerful. You urged me to go away and continue my education even when you knew that I am a woman and therefore in your eyes also *mujer* (Colindres, 1993, p. 78).

Colindres (1993) underscores the fact that Latina mothers, like all mothers are not simply oppressed in families, they also “act to assert their own standards of mothering and to attain the resources necessary to sustain their children’s lives” (Glenn, 1994, p. 18). According to the women with whom I spoke the work of their mothers went beyond traditional gendered roles of mothers in families. Nearly all of the women I interviewed suggested that their mothers provided strong messages about educational and professional progress as a means to individual, familial and community enrichment. Concern for individuals and communities is not uncommon among women of color. As Collins (1994) argues, “For women of color, the subjective experience of mothering/motherhood is inextricably linked to the sociocultural concern of racial-ethnic communities – one does not exist without the other” (p. 47).

For example, Micaela described a very distinct message that she received from her mother about her role as a member of larger community.

A lot of it stems from my mom. She's the one that said, 'Do for the rest of us.' You know? And the rest of us didn't mean like my family, it was just like the other women in my whole family.... And so when I was growing up, my mom would kind of encourage all of us to look ahead, and look ahead, 'Don't quit here.' - and stuff. And, 'Do it for the rest of us who didn't have this opportunity to go on.'

Micaela provides an example of how women of color often teach their children to value not only individual achievement but also collective achievement. Moreover, her example refutes conventional claims that Latinas do not socialize their daughters to achieve in dominant social institutions, thus placing them in conflict between family values and individual goals for education and professional development. Collins (1994) argues that "conflict actually lies outside of the households as women and their families engage in collective enterprise to create and maintain family life in the face of forces that undermine family integrity" (Collins, 1994, p. 47). Micaela's example suggests that she is at once entrusted with representing Latinas who went before her, yet her status as a collegiate student-athlete separates her from her community of origin. By virtue of doing what others were denied, she is distinct from the very women who have propelled her toward higher education and athletics.

Nicole talked about receiving support from both of her parents, but also receiving significant messages from her mother about making choices in her life.

Oh, my parents, they pushed me. They wanted the best for me and my sister.

They were always giving me little talks, how important it was for me to go to college, and when I got out of college to get a good job, and stuff like that. My

mom was, 'I don't want you to be in the place where I was, you know, a housewife. I want you to have something better for yourself, not for you to depend on [someone else].' She was right.

Nicole reflects on her mother's message about independence and personal progress not only as individual achievement but also as part of her duty to her sister. Nicole and her twin sister were both going to be in college at the same time thus, Nicole's academic and athletic achievements were not only about her, but also about increasing the family's ability to support two daughters in college. Even more complex, Nicole was aware that she possessed more of the requisite skills to earn a scholarship and to succeed in college, so she took her role and her mother's message seriously. Nicole and others point to the very real fact that mothers and their children come to understand each other's position and rely on each others strengths to become empowered (Collins, 1994).

Although Karin's father went to college and was an athlete at a division one institution, he still had difficulty "letting go" of his oldest of three daughters as she made decisions about her own collegiate career. Karin, now a fifth year senior at a division one institution reflected on her interactions with her parents regarding these big decisions.

He didn't really want me to go 'cause he didn't want me to be that far away. Still to this day he wants me to get my credentials at [California] State because that's so close to home. But, my mom told him 'You've gotta' let her do what she wants to do. If she wants to live down there, let her do it, because if you make her come back here she will resent you if she doesn't like it.' And I feel mom's see that easier than the dad's do.

Karin's remarks reflect the reality of women's experiences as oppressed and subordinated persons in various social institutions. At the same time, her mother's firm belief in enhancing Karin's choices about higher education illustrates the power of women to affect each other's circumstance. It is possible that Karin's mother felt constrained by her parents as a young woman, and now has a chance to renegotiate such patterns of interaction in her own family. Whatever her reason, she exemplifies what Collins (1994, p. 47) refers to as "collective enterprise" among women and their children.

In a similar vein, Lucy shared the following about the social significance of her presence in collegiate softball, especially as it is a stark contrast to her mother's opportunities for post-secondary education.

I think it's a big step. It kind of can break the stereotypes that there's not a lot of Latinas out there doing much or that they're home, you know working or whatever, helping the family. You know, stuck at home. That's, I think it breaks that, 'cause my mom went through that. I mean her dad wouldn't let her go and she had a scholarship to go to San Diego State. He didn't want her to 'cause it was too far. She had to drive everyday to UC Santa Cruz because he didn't want her to live in the dorms.

The support for involvement in softball was perhaps an avenue for mothers to encourage their daughters to create their own independent lives. Nicole's mother admonished her to go on to college, make her own way and not become dependent presumably on a man. For each of these women, their experiences in softball may have provided their mothers with a glimpse into the lives they may have chosen for themselves given the opportunity.

At the same time, these women were becoming aware of the risks of entering a pervasively white, middle class context of education and sport. For example, in his study of Native American college scholarship athletes, Simpson (1996), found that various structural and cultural conditions contributed to typically abbreviated collegiate careers. Billy Mills, an Olympic gold medallist and product of the Pine Ridge Reservation shared the following with Simpson about venturing out from his home.

There's no way to return to the old way, spiritually and economically . . . If you go too far into society, there's a fear of losing your Indian-ness. There's a spiritual factor that comes into play. To become part of white society you give up half your soul (p. 294).

The experiences of these women represent a larger experience that most Latinas share. That is one of wanting to excel, but at the same time wanting to preserve one's Latina self in the midst of a middle class higher education context. It is these struggles between escape and return that make middle class notions of upward mobility inapplicable to the experience of women of color. Families are links to culture, and they are support systems for accessing middle class social institutions. Latinas who venture into higher education and collegiate athletics are faced with the complexity of what Zavella (1994) refers to as "culture in process". The concept of "culture in process" articulates the "dialectics of how the social structure and culture provide a context for the ways that Chicanas construct their identities" (Zavella, 1994, p. 207). Zavella's (1994) focus was on diversity among Chicanas, but I contend that her scholarship applies to diversity among Latinas of varied ethnicities, generational statuses, regions of settlement, social classes and sexualities. The seeming incongruity of moving on and remaining an

active member of one's family was not only about physical presence, but also about political and social connections as Alma expressed below.

After I went to school, it was 'Oh here comes the educated one'. I think when my mom used to say it, it was because I had come out of the traditional Latina thinking and I had broadened my horizons. And that was very difficult because her thinking was just her mother's thinking and for me to have my own mind compared to the family mind was very hard for her to accept. . . But it was funny too. When I went to school my pride in my family and being Puerto Rican was only enhanced and it made me more political. And the political side was something she was proud of.

Miranda talked about how playing softball on teams that were predominantly white lead to a separation from the culture that she had grown up with.

I think my separation [from family culture] began before college. I think it really began when I started playing softball because I didn't really hang around Latinos. I hung around mostly white people. So, I kind of basically did my own thing. I mean when I went home it was different, but we really didn't talk about it.

At the time of our small group interview Yolanda had recently lost her grandfather. She was thinking about what she stood to lose in his death and she talked about how her own Mexican identity is tied up in who her grandparents are, and that somehow this connects to her more "Americanized" life today.

Both my grandparents, both sets don't speak a word of English. So when I walk in there I am forced – I am asked to speak Spanish. I love speaking Spanish. I speak Spanglish. I understand everything. But, it's a presence – I don't have to go outside

and have somebody ask me 'Are you Mexican?', or whatever. My family knows. I walk in [to my grandparents' home] – it's the neatest smell. It's the neatest atmosphere in the world. And now he's gone. And I go into my house and my house is very Americanized, which is fine. I still speak Spanish with my parents, but its not the same without my grandparents and that bothers me.

Alma talked about how going to college led to a separation of her beliefs and those of her family of origin.

My opinion was very different from my family's, especially my mother's. She was very traditional, grew up in the fifties, Latina, be quiet, don't say nothing, just be happy that you're in America. And for me to have my goals in a career, it was just like night and day. To this day we are not allowed to speak politics in the house.

We are not allowed to speak religion because when I went to school – I mean growing up Latina, religion is like your life line – every Sunday, you're there. And when I started questioning my religion when I went to college, that was a big separation too.

Julie illuminated the process of creating culture and moving in and out of different cultural contexts. For her, the experience of being "Hispanic enough" changed over time her interactions with her peers in her neighborhood reflected their changing lives. Her education at an elite predominantly white university was a significant influence on her interactions with folks in her home community. Julie's comments underscore the constant work of maintaining ties to one's family of origin, neighborhood and culture despite the social consequences that often accompany any embrace of values that fall outside of white middle class values. Moreover, Julie illustrates that fact that culture is lost and remade all

the time (Zavella, 1994). As a U.S. born Latina, elite softball athlete, graduate student and educator Julie's values and ways of life continue to change and get further and further from those of her parents and perhaps further from many of her peers in the old neighborhood.

When I was in school I felt like my Hispanic friends were always trying to be white. I always felt like because I came from a very traditional Mexican family that they kind of would look at me back then kind of connote that 'Oh you're Mexican' or whatever. But now those people – now that I've been mainstreamed through a primarily White institution – you know at school and everything, I do feel sometimes that I've left my roots. I really do. I feel like I've lost part of my culture. Now those people who used to kind of act white and make fun of me because of my ethnicity are, in fact they just teased me the other day because I didn't know something in Spanish. They were like, 'What are you? Mexican or White?' I do wish I knew more about my culture and I wish, I really wish I could speak Spanish. I don't even know how to speak Spanish.

Clearly, Julie is situated "inside in an outside way" (Cuadraz, 1992). Despite her entrance to the predominantly white, middle class world of collegiate softball, she is still only a marginal member. Likewise, her changing sense of herself as a middle class Mexican woman, especially one who does not speak a distinguishing language situates her outside the margins of her home community. She is constantly having to display credentials in the white, middle class context of elite softball and the working class, Mexican identified community in which she grew up. Sometimes the push and pull of foundation and mobility was centered on friends who were not necessarily leaving the neighborhood, but moving toward different extra curricular activities. For example, Josie

spoke about the experience of moving between particularly situated friend groups and teammates. Her experiences also cut across race and class as she maintained ties to her home community as well as her athletic teams.

See, my friends were all cheerleaders. I was the only athlete, in high school. They used say, 'You know [Josie], you can't play softball forever.' And they never understood, 'cause I'm a - you see, nobody really gets scholarships where I live. They'd be like '[Josie], what are you gonna' do with it?' And I'd just be like 'I know what I'm doing. I know what I'm doing.' They used to be like, '[Josie], why don't you do other things? Why don't you get a job after school? Why don't you do that?' I'm like because if I get money here, its just like, fifteen hundred dollars that I'm getting is like having a part time job and helping me pay for school. I think it was just-I didn't really have a problem fitting in, but I was just really different from my friends. I couldn't relate to them (pause) in a lot of aspects. I always felt closer to my friends on the weekends than I did to the girls that I grew up with the entire time and went to all the basketball games with and all the dances with. That was hard.

Josie's comments above illustrate yet again this work that many women do to bridge friendship groups, but this is especially important work among women of color as they are often singled out as racial-ethnic minorities in sport settings. Lucy talked about how much she enjoyed high school, but also how softball separated her out from her friends as they became less and less interested in school.

I liked high school. It was fun. A lot of my um-It kind of got weird after a while 'cause after like my sophomore year, a lot of my friends who were Latina were

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(pensive pause) in trouble. You know, they stopped going to class. They just didn't want to and I was like the straight and narrow one. You know, always telling them 'Come on lets go. We gotta' go to class.' And they just you know, they decided to do different. And so they would go on to like the secondary high school, or the continuation high school. . . It was kind of weird, but um there was still a big core of friends that we used to hang out with. Most of 'em were the guys, but they were just always there for me, you know? And I had a friend. You know, I had plenty of friends, but those that I had grown up with, you know middle school, were you know, gone.

The experiences of these women as members of multiple communities illustrate the struggles between valuing home communities and venturing out into new communities. Anzaldua (1987; 1990b) talks about the varied ways in which Latinas find themselves crossing borders in their lives. Pesquera and de la Torre (1995) also have talked about the struggles of working class Chicanas in higher education who wish to retain their Chicana working class identities, and yet to progress in the largely white middle class world of academia. Similar struggles exist for Latinas who choose to compete in the white middle class world of collegiate athletics. In fact, many of the women interviewed in the present research were constantly moving between cultures, structures and identities.

This fluidity of identities, valuing of multiple cultures and ability to cross borders both enabled and constrained these women as they made their paths to collegiate softball. For example, messages from mothers seem to fortify these women in their quest for various types of achievement through softball. Yet entry into the elite, pervasively white,

middle class context of softball also distanced these women from the very communities that “lifted them up” to begin with. In the next section, I will illustrate that school settings were no easier than family settings for these women to navigate.

Discomfort in the Classroom

A study commissioned by the Women’s Sports Foundation (1989) suggested that participation in high school athletics was significantly and positively associated with high school retention, lower dropout rates, higher achievement test scores, self-reported popularity, college attendance, and progress toward a bachelor’s degree for rural Hispanic females. In fact, all Hispanic female athletes from rural schools were two to four times more likely than their non-athletic peers to attend and stay in college. These data did not hold true for Hispanic students in urban settings, where the majority of Latinas reside (Rumbaut, 1995). Despite what seems to be a declining significance of school softball programs for gaining entry to collegiate softball, educational success and preparation is key to making the transition from high school to college.

Picou, McCarter and Howell (1985) examined student achievement beyond high school and found that white men benefited most from athletic involvement in terms of educational attainment and eventual employment opportunities. They also found a striking negative effect for sport involvement in the educational attainment and eventual employment opportunities among black women. These data suggest that educational and athletic achievements have different consequences for different people. Women of color may be socially and structurally situated in such a way that sport participation may actually hamper their attempts at educational and employment progress. Much of this may be seen among the women in the present study as they struggled to balance

achievement in academic and athletic realms while navigating an elitist educational system that questioned their presence in various ways. For this select group of women, the relationship between softball and academic goals may be a symbiotic one, in that their success in both arenas depends on a certain level of success in the other.

Several of my informants suggested that they did not enjoy being in school and yet for varied reasons, often for softball, they kept going and maintained the required grade point average. For example, unlike her academically inclined brother, JJ did not enjoy being at school and did not possess confidence in herself as a student.

I knew that for me to go to college that would be the way to go because I wasn't the smartest person in high school. I wasn't even there half the time (laughter from group). My family had all these expectations because my brother had graduated and he went to [a university] and got this degree and that degree. He was "all that!"

Kim also struggled in high school. She suggested that her desire to continue playing softball kept her involved in school and motivated her to at least earn the mandatory "C" average.

I hated school! I hated it! So, softball was one thing that kept me going. I knew I had to keep a "C" average to be able to play. Since I played sports year 'round I had to really stay focused year 'round, and that was hard!

Carmen shared the following about her change in grade point average from high school to college, and what that meant for her chosen career field.

My grades are average. Softball kinda got too important for me. And, I always made sure. I never failed a class, and wouldn't get "D's", probably got "D's" in two

classes, because I didn't want the class. But I never, an "A" and a "B" was never a goal of mine. It was, I wanted to get "A's", but I never really worked as hard as I— in high school I had straight "A's". I could stay up and study until 2:00 and it was important because I had to get to college and things like that, and here it was like, I know in the back of my head I need "A's" and "B's" to get into PT school, but I just didn't. And now I'm kinda regretting it, because now I have to do extra stats to try and get to that goal, and it's just not, it's not a matter of me not being able to do it, I still believe. Nobody has proven to me yet that I can't do it, it's just a matter of softball was always more important.

Connie talked about the symbiotic relationship between athletics and academics. She admonishes herself for placing softball ahead of academics, and yet softball kept her involved in school. Thus, despite having a tough time in the classroom, Connie received confidence through her ability on the softball field.

I have never been a strong academic student. I just loved sports. Sports came first, before my academics. And I just, I was always just frustrated with school. But the thing is, is when I *want* something and work at it then I'm, I'm fine. But its just, academics was just very difficult for me. I wasn't like the worst student, but I, I know I didn't-I didn't put all my energy into my academics. It was more into my awards in sports, and this and that. People used to say 'Well that's not gonna' get you anywhere.' But that's what's paying for my education now. I mean, all that, all that work did pay off. And I had to learn that my academics does come first. And I've had to learn the hard way, but. But, I'm getting my

college education and understand what its worth. That's why I want to continue to go on.

Sydney also suggested that the academic requirements were difficult for her. She describes her experience as a student as frustrating and filled with remedial work. Although she did not say it directly, it seems that softball was the reason that she persevered and is now close to completing her bachelor's degree.

Just to have a 2.0 was tough. Even here. I didn't even think I'm going to be eligible this season. It was like, I was constantly calling Julie our compliance lady, you know, 'What do I need? What do I need?' I'm going to winter session, and I went to [the] JC to try to get units and grades transferred. I was just running over trying to get units and grades and get everything together so I can play.

Lucy recalled early academic struggles and distaste for standardized tests. Lucy also talked about how she went to summer school every summer and how she and her mom worked to increase her test scores.

I think my freshman year, I was just kind of average. Just getting' by you know? And after that its just everything was going really well. I was doing really well in classes. I don't like taking big tests like SAT, or the ACT. I didn't like those. They weren't for me. That wasn't my style of you know that thing. So, I struggled with those. I just kept doing-my mom bought me the flashcards, all that SAT prep stuff, you know? And, summer got by and I got my scores high enough so the clearinghouse would accept it. Um, so yeah, my high school grades were always good.

The many examples above illustrate the need for increased support and guidance of Latina student athletes. Clearly, these women who have made it to collegiate athletics are the exception to the rule. Despite constraining conditions, including lack of knowledge about higher education, lack of educational guidance and feelings of marginality in the classroom these women made it to collegiate athletics, and many of them continue to contribute their talents to this social arena. In some ways softball exacerbated their struggles within educational settings and in other ways softball became a much-needed link to the academic institution enhancing chances for success.

It is important to understand how Latinas have fared in educational settings as these experiences may directly influence opportunities, perceived and real, to participate in collegiate sport. Segura (1993) argues that multiple structural and cultural conditions shape the experiences and success of Latinas in educational settings. Segura (1993) examined the educational experiences of 20 Chicanas who had not graduated from high school, nor been prepared to enter a job of choice. Among Segura's (1993) findings about constraints to educational attainment were a) reluctance of family members to "interfere" with the work of educational professionals, b) channeling of Latina students into non-academic programs offering a lower quality of instruction, c) lack of encouragement or preparation from teachers and counselors for college attendance, and d) lack of clearly safe, anti-racist learning environments. Segura (1993) also identified the following conditions that enhanced educational attainment of her interview participants: a) consistent encouragement from parents for educational achievement, b) teacher innovation, c) multicultural curriculum, d) teacher "caring" and involvement, and e) formalized expectations for achievement.

Segura's (1993) findings provide a framework for understanding the experiences of the women in the present research, who for various reasons struggled through educational settings. Whatever the individual academic goals of the women interviewed in the present research, their desire for participation in collegiate softball was directly tied to academic success. Moreover, their ability to stay on paths toward collegiate softball was directly tied to their ability to perform in the classroom. Despite baseline orientations for sport, particular social conditions within schools may threaten one's opportunity to achieve their collegiate athletic goals. On the flip side, those women who are able to persevere in the face of educational adversity seem likely to stay on paths toward their early goals.

Recruitment Rookies

"Learning as We Went" is a phrase that Cuadraz (1992) used to describe how she experienced graduate school as a "scholarship girl" (p. 31). Cuadraz (1992) analyzed the challenges that many Latinas face when they choose to enter the middle class, white context of higher education. One of those challenges was learning how to gain access to higher education and collegiate athletics. Many of these women were the first in their families to attend a four-year university, as well as the first in their families to compete in collegiate athletics. While their athletic talent was often enough to catch a coach's eye, they also had to show that they could be socially and academically successful. Given that many of these women had no previous connections with the system of higher education in the United States, many of them were disadvantaged throughout the recruitment process.

Bugs, a former division II softball athlete and currently a division II coach who is also a full-time middle school physical educator suggested that Latinas and their families are not being educated about how to access higher education and collegiate athletics. She knows this from her own experience as the first in family to attend college. She also continues to have insight to this dilemma as a collegiate coach and k-12 educator.

Preparedness for college is the big problem for Latinas! They have no knowledge of financial aid or athletic scholarships!

Indeed, examples of educational dislocation were numerous among my interview participants. Rosalia suggested that she had no idea what collegiate softball was all about, how it worked, how one accessed the most elite level. Her mother completed high school and works for a county library, while her father completed eight years of formal education and works as a welder. Rosalia told about her experience demanding a try-out for a division one team.

Even when I got into [the division one school] the only reason that I went there was because at that time I didn't know anything about collegiate softball. [A division two school] had been recruiting me but I said, 'If I'm gonna' go on I wanna' go for the best.' At that time [the division one school] was at the top of their conference. So, I enrolled (note this is contrary to her high school counselor's prediction) and walked on. I didn't know at that time no walk-ons made it (typically). I didn't know at that time that that wasn't the way you got into division one. I had no clue. I just walked into [the coach's] office and said, 'I want to play. I play third base and short stop. I want to play!' And she gave

me a ten-minute try-out – me and one other girl. We got three cuts, three grounders and three pop flies.

This experience of educational dislocation held true for several of the women I interviewed. Monica reflected on the limited role of higher education in the lives of her parents.

I played on my high school team and at that time I had no clue about college ball. I didn't know anything. My mom went to two years of business school and my dad went to JC for a year or two. But, no they weren't familiar with the whole college thing and I wasn't either. And it was just friends or hearsay that 'Hey, there's a good coach at this JC. So, I moved to [a particular city] and played on the JC team for a year. That was my first experience with travel ball. . . That's when people started saying 'You know, you're pretty good. Maybe you could get a scholarship.' . . . My parents were real supportive, but they weren't familiar and I wasn't familiar, so I did it on my own with the help of my coach. He was really unfamiliar too. All we did was make some type of video, send it in and they said 'Come to our clinic or camp.'

Kim's parents each earned high school diplomas and completed one or two years of college. Kim talked about her lack of understanding and/or connection with colleges and universities.

I never knew how to pursue. No one ever told me and I never knew what I had to do. Luckily coach [helped out] or I don't know what would have happened. I probably would have never gone to university. Definitely [Bugs] told me about the Educational Opportunity Program or else I never would have gotten into

college. I did not score high on my SATs at all, so I had to go through the EOP for one year prior to softball. So, I had to keep my “C” average one year in college. I could not have anything to do with the team until that year was over.

Connie’s parents had been collegiate athletes and had completed undergraduate and graduate studies in the United States. Yet, when Connie was preparing for her transition from high school to college it was clear that her parents were dislocated from the U.S. high school to college transition.

Well, my parents-their thing-it was different because my parents came here from Venezuela, and they transferred from colleges out there to come here. My mother just went out to try-out for the volleyball team and she made it. In Venezuela she was a scholarship athlete. She had everything out there. And then she made it here which she already had a kid. You know, she had me, and it was just different. They never had the letter process. They didn’t know about scouts and that kind of stuff. And then - they were just used to being walk-ons. I guess that’s what I was. I went out into college doing the same thing.

Despite being somewhat heavily recruited, Connie began her collegiate softball career as a “walk-on”. She earned no athletic related aid, even after earning honors as the defensive player of the year. Connie transferred to her current university where she also “walked-on” to the softball team. While it is wonderful that Connie has had choices in her collegiate career, many of these were actually coerced choices. The combination of her parents’ divorce, her academic struggles and her emotional turbulence during the transition from high school to college resulted in particular conditions that shaped her decisions about collegiate softball.

Gloria also faced coerced choices about collegiate softball. As a young mother still living with her parents and struggling financially, Gloria saw college as a means of enhancing her daughter's opportunities in the future. Yet, precisely because Gloria was pregnant during high school, she fell short of the requirements to graduate with her class. She did complete her General Education Degree (GED) and then was able to enroll in the local community college. Gloria's less than stellar transcripts may have predisposed her academic counselors to assume that she was not "college material". Her experience is reminiscent of Segura's (1993) findings that suggested that Latinas are often guided into non-academic educational foci and receive little or no encouragement from teachers and counselors to attend college. Speculation aside, her experience with high school counselors did not enhance her ability to access the system of higher education. Gloria reflected on the guidance she received during high school to prepare her for college.

My [high school] counselors, they never once even asked me if I wanted to go to college. They never once ever told me about college. I never knew about RCC. My mom told me 'cause she took a class here. I didn't know nothing about it. Nothing when I came here, I didn't know nothing. They never mentioned anything. The counselor never even asked me what I wanted to be, you know, what I'm thinking of going into - never once asked me anything.

Even when students came out of high school having received useful academic and professional guidance, this guidance was limited to what academic counselors knew about athletic recruitment policies. For example, Lucy suggested that her high school provided effective academic advisement, although they were not quite up to date on the athletic "clearing house" materials that student athletes needed to complete.

They had the applications there or they had certain schools' um representatives come out and talk to us. If they were gonna' be there. If you wanted to miss a class, whatever, they were gonna', you know. So, I'm sure I would have been able to get the applications and stuff. I'm sure um, academically they didn't have the proper stuff for like the clearinghouse (NCAA forms). My counselor was like 'What's the clearing house?' I mean they had forms but it was like years previous. It wasn't the updated form.

Clearly the existing recruitment system could have been accessed by Connie and a few others but at the same time the system exists to work best for those who have the resources to work within it. In part due to a history of limited interaction with higher education, and in some cases with the United States secondary educational system, parents and athletes may be ill prepared to access the collegiate recruitment system. One of the ways that some Latinas get beyond their status as recruitment rookies and continue on paths toward a four-year college is to use community college as an intermediate step in the process.

Community Colleges: A Second Option

Several of the women I spoke to had begun their collegiate careers at Community Colleges but held out hopes of transferring to a four-year, division one or two program. In 1996, nearly 40 percent of 18 to 19 year old Latinas who were enrolled in school were enrolled below college, twice as many as the national average for all women (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). Thirty one percent of the 233,000 Latinas (18 to 19 years old) that were enrolled in school were enrolled in a two-year college and 30 percent were enrolled in a 4-year college, almost a one-to-one ratio of two-year to four-year college

enrollment. The data for women of all races show a one-to-two ratio for the two-year to four-year college enrollment. Latinas, more than any other groups of women are likely to be enrolled in a two-year college.

Nora and Rendón (1994) reviewed selected literature about access, retention and transfer rates of Latino students in community colleges. They found that among approximately 75% of students who enter a community college do so with the desire to transfer to a four-year institution, yet only about 25% of students execute this transfer successfully. Nora and Rendon (1994) caution their readers that access to community colleges does not necessarily translate into academic achievement for Latinos. Many two-year colleges offer excellent career and/or academic curricula, and they clearly provide educational access for many persons who might otherwise not enroll in college at all. Yet, for Latinas, two-year colleges may simply become a holding pattern leading to nowhere in particular (Nora & Rendon, 1994). Interestingly, among the women I interviewed 30% began their careers at community college, but only 7% remained there, and these women were in their second year of community college, so may be likely to transfer successfully also.

Marie told me how she decided to begin her studies and softball career at city college, and how she feels about having started at a community college rather than at a four year university.

Actually my sister had a four-year scholarship to Quincy College in Illinois, and she gave that up after two years, and came home and she was helping our coach, coach Huntsey. That's kind of how I got towards City instead of like West Valley . . . I also look at going to a community college almost like a second option 'cause

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if you go to a community college you get more time to prepare yourself to go on to a four year. And you possibly can get more offers when it comes to scholarships or whatever. So, I kind of look at going to city as a benefit, rather than a negative thing.

Rosalia recalled a conversation with a high school counselor that reflected a type of gatekeeping that many women of color experience. She shared the following.

I was not in any honors classes, so she told me that I wouldn't make it into Cal (CSU system) – that I would definitely not make into UC (UC system), that I wouldn't make it into Cal State. My best bet was to go to a junior college and I *might* be able to do good there (emphasis in original).

As Gloria made plans for her eventual transfer from community college to a four-year university, she went to “walk-up” counseling and received discouragement, specifically regarding her desire to transfer to the University of California system.

I had told her I need this class and she asked, ‘What kind of college are you interested in?’ I said well maybe UCR She goes ‘Are you sure you want to head that way?’ and I say ‘yeah, I seen it and it looks nice’. And she said, ‘How do you think your grades are?’ I said, ‘I think they’re good’. She’s all, ‘Well maybe you should check on it because UCR likes to take students with very good grades’. But she doesn’t know me; she didn’t have my educational plan there so she didn’t know what my grades were.

I asked Nicole if she would be at the school she is currently enrolled in if she had not earned the athletics scholarship. She suggested the following:

Would I come to school here? I think, no. Because the only way I would get to college is by a scholarship. Because I have a twin sister, and we graduated the same year and right now my parents, you know, couldn't afford it. . . .I might be able to go to Junior College or something, but I don't think so.

The experiences these women shared illustrate how academic and career counselors who attempt to redirect Latinas to “more suitable” academic and career goals play a significant role as institutional gatekeepers. These data also suggest that often Latinas begin their collegiate careers in community colleges, and as Marie suggested use this as a “second option” for preparing for a four-year university. Although research suggests that community colleges may simply act as holding grounds for Latinas (Nora & Rendon, 1994), several of the women I interviewed used their athletic connections to make a successful transition from community college to division I or II softball, and a four-year university. Thus, in the face of structural and cultural constraints to academic success, Latinas exercise their own agency, and make choices from the options available to them.

Summary

In this chapter I have shown how shifting social conditions within families, organized sport, and schools interact to produce viable options from which women make choices and carve out lives. Clearly several significant persons influenced the development of baseline orientations for sport involvement among the women in the present research. While parents were most often the leading socializing agents, siblings, friends and neighbors also contributed the socialization of these young women into sport. Additionally, shifts in cultural beliefs about women's participation in sport were

underway due to Title IX of the educational amendment act of 1972. Although these women represent a privileged few who were eventually able to access collegiate softball, they struggled to create paths through family, school and communities to collegiate softball.

I have also shown that Latinas are often disadvantaged in educational settings. The combination of historical dislocation from higher education, lack of resources for higher education, ambivalence of parents and poor guidance from counselors relegate Latinas to academically disadvantaged status. Thus, many Latinas take longer routes to collegiate athletics, beginning at community college and hoping to earn a scholarship to a four-year university.

Additionally, these data indicate that continued involvement in softball required that these women see through ambivalent messages about college, and continue to construct their own paths toward collegiate softball. Moreover, Latinas make their way out of particular family systems, equipped with strong commitments to larger communities as well as to their own educational and employment progress. For many college educated Latinas going home is not easy precisely because, as one informant put it, “[We] have been mainstreamed through our educational institutions”. At the same time, staying away from home is simply not an option for many Latinas as they continue to feel the push and pull of foundation and mobility. A model of baseline orientations is shown in appendix M. A model of paths toward collegiate softball is shown in appendix N.

Chapter Six

Navigating Inequalities and Marginality in Collegiate Softball

In this chapter the analytic focus is on the social conditions that this select group of women encountered in collegiate softball. Throughout these analyses, I zero in on how these women encountered and resisted constructions of race, class and sexuality, and how these conditions shaped their paths through the structure of collegiate softball. Although, the chapter is organized in a way that highlights the influence of class, race and sexuality as separate entities, where possible I illustrate the simultaneity of these influences in the lives of the women interviewed. That is, I will talk about particular social conditions faced by these women and will show that race, class and sexuality interconnect to influence the paths of Latinas in collegiate softball. The chapter is organized around three analytic sections, a) class-based hierarchies, b) racial constructions, and c) homophobia and compulsory heterosexuality.

Class-Based Hierarchies in Collegiate Softball

Collegiate softball is fast becoming a member of the corporate sport conglomeration. It is becoming increasingly privatized and rigidly organized. In fact, a recent article in the NCAA News (Abell, 1999) reported that 80% of all division one softball student-athletes came out of Amateur Softball Association (ASA) programs. This direct path from ASA to division one softball is definitely the fast lane to collegiate softball. Yet, many women never make it to this part of the path. Intentionally or not, ASA softball filters athletes by skill and a highly correlated visibility (the best teams will play more games in a tournament and have increased opportunity of visibility, especially during championship rounds). ASA works as a type of talent broker due to its singular

hold on the softball market. A small body of literature suggests that coaches and recruiting scouts “learn” to look for a particular type of athlete for particular sports and particular positions (Abney & Richey, 1992; Corbett & Johnson, 1993, Eitzen & Furst, 1993; Gonzalez, 1996). In the case of collegiate softball, the elite structure of ASA summer tournaments has become the primary recruiting venue. Access to ASA softball tournaments and teams is not available to all young girls, thus, it becomes a major factor influencing the decisions that young women make about collegiate softball. Moreover, the social demography of Latinas in the United States suggests that opportunities for involvement in organized sport will be constrained for many Latinas. Furthermore, dislocation from higher education may place Latinas at risk for being exploited in current systems of recruitment and distribution of athletic related financial aid. In this section I will examine the social conditions associated with class inequalities that were manifested in terms of a) gaining access to elite sport structures, and b) accessing financial resources.

Gaining Access to Elite Sport Structures

ASA magazine recently printed an article about the profitability of hosting their tournaments (McCall, 1999). Girls fast pitch tournaments were the most numerous and most profitable for host cities. Relying on the numbers reported by ASA, it is estimated that the cost per individual for a two-day tournament was \$250.00. This is a rough estimate that includes travel while in town, two-night stay in town, meals, and sightseeing. My sense is that this is a minimum cost, especially for elite teams that may travel across the nation to compete in tournaments. Moreover, many of these elite teams compete in tournaments every weekend throughout the summer; thus if they participated in eight tournaments the minimum cost for each athlete would be \$1,000.00 for the

summer. Clearly, this organizational structure works as a gatekeeper channeling only the most athletically talented and financially resourced young women into their organization.

Now, the higher up you go in travel ball the more these coaches know about college, recruiting and getting those girls out there. A lot of recruiting comes through [the travel ball coaches] writing letters, not from high school coaches.

As Rosalia indicated in the statement above, ASA softball has become the premier site for the promotion and recruitment of potential collegiate softball athletes. ASA softball is a sophisticated, nationwide organization of softball teams ranging in age from about ten to adult. Connie also suggested that playing travel ball is not so much an option as it is a requirement for softball athletes who hope to play collegiate ball. When I asked her if she had played travel ball she responded,

Yeah! You have to! ASA, and I also played travel soccer. You have to in order to make it to this level.

Connie's emphatic response underscores the salience of travel ball for those young women who desire to make it onto the roster of one of the nation's top ranked softball teams. In fact, more than two thirds (67%) of the women interviewed reported regular participation in ASA summer softball leagues throughout their high school years.

Among the remaining 33 percent, half of these women reported some participation in ASA summer softball, and despite having breaks in the action these women benefited from increased visibility on elite teams, increased competitive level of play, and association with other women who were making their way to collegiate softball. In all, nearly 80 percent of the women interviewed had some level of involvement with ASA summer softball prior to, during and/or after their collegiate careers.

Marisol talked about her experiences playing travel ball after having played one year at a junior college. Her experience of travel ball is unique compared to the rest of the women interviewed, who for the most part had played travel ball as teenagers and up to their collegiate careers. Marisol did not participate in ASA travel ball until after one year at a community college. The coach of a rival team in her collegiate conference invited Marisol to play on his women's open travel ball team for the summer season. She talked about the impact this experience had on her.

That's what totally opened my eyes. Here I am playing with these girls and they're all going to school. All of 'em are playing somewhere [in college]. I got to see a girl that I went to high school with – I played with. Right now she goes to UNLV. At the time she was going to Iowa. And we played against each other! And we went to high school together. So seeing that, you know I thought 'I *can* go on' (emphasis in original conversation).

Marisol was at one point along her path to collegiate softball constrained by the inaccessibility of travel ball, but following her first year in community college, this changed dramatically. As Gerson's (1985) model would suggest, significant changes occur throughout women's lives, thus creating new options and decisions. For Marisol, attending community college translated into new opportunities for involvement in and understanding of the world of collegiate softball at a four-year university. This was significant in her eventual opportunity to "walk-on" to a Division II nationally ranked team. Nicole's experiences with ASA travel softball began much earlier than did Marisol's. At about the age of 13, Nicole was invited to try out for an ASA team. It is significant that this occurred shortly after her switch from organized baseball to organized softball, a coerced choice that

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had its origins in gendered notions about particular sports. In spite of Nicole's doused opportunities in baseball, ASA softball became a significant trajectory toward collegiate softball.

I heard about these traveling teams and all-stars. I heard about them and I got a letter in the mail asking me to come out and try out, so I went out and tried out and I made the team, 14 and under. The cost was a lot, you know, but my mom, my parents got the money, you know, even though they sacrificed a lot, they, my sister was always the last person, it was always me that came first, but it paid out in the end, I guess.

Nicole was acutely aware of her family's commitment to her participation in ASA softball. Her words almost describe an early knowledge about the potential benefits of elite softball in her future. Nicole knew that her ability to access ASA softball had consequences for the rest of her family. Thus, she seemed to see this a path to a future economic and educational payoff. The fact that she was privileged by this opportunity became even clearer as Nicole entered high school and was faced with a mediocre program in a poorly funded school. Nicole chose to play both ASA and high school ball, but she found herself having to adjust her play to the skill level of those around her. By far, ASA was the more challenging team for Nicole, thus she probably developed more elite skills, and surely gained visibility in elite tournament play.

At my school, there wasn't a lot of publicity, you know. We didn't really have good coaching. That's another thing where I didn't really get a lot of exposure to college. They're different. My school was not the athletic school. They had people on varsity that didn't know how to catch a ball, you know. But, that's why I stood

out in high school, is because, you know, these people didn't want to play. They weren't committed, they weren't dedicated, they were just there to look pretty. You know, just to be popular, or you know, whatever, 'I'm on varsity', you know. But, [ASA] is a lot different, people are a lot more dedicated. They know what they're doing. At some point you play at that level and then you go back to travel ball, and then you have to learn it over again to play at that level. That's the bad part of playing at high school. My head coach said, 'if I had the money, I'd send you to St. Lucy's or—that's up where the big time softball players were. They knew.

Nicole and her high school coaches knew that the athletes at St. Lucy's were better positioned to gain entry to collegiate softball. Thus, in one sense the elitism and visibility of ASA softball may aid those student-athletes who otherwise would develop only within a mediocre school-based program. Yet, in another way, some women are relegated watch from beyond the fence as others take advantage of multiple opportunities to access collegiate softball structures. In the absence of resources for attending St. Lucy's, Nicole's parents did the next best thing - committed family resources to her involvement in ASA softball.

A similar example of family resources influencing opportunities for participation in elite softball was provided by Mickey. The divorce of Mickey's parents resulted in particular concerns and constraints that affected her decisions about work, school and softball.

I wasn't, well, in ASA ball, I wasn't really involved because of the money situation. I wanted to work in the summer and earn money so I could, money was so [necessary] in high school, just because of cheerleading. And so I worked all

summer long so I could pay for cheerleading and I never really, I would go to tournaments and stuff, but I never really was like one of those people who would go every single weekend. I was only involved in ASA ball like three seasons, you know three summers where every weekend it was something. But I never got too much involved in tournament play because of money.

Mickey's example connects the experiences of both Marisol and Nicole. Like Marisol, Mickey experienced a significant change in her life when her parents divorced. This altered her options for sport involvement at a critical point in her athletic career. Similar to Nicole, Mickey was acutely aware of the sacrifices her family would make for her to stay involved in the varied extracurricular activities that she enjoyed. For these reasons, summer travel softball was not a priority for Mickey during her high school years. This may have influenced her decision to begin her collegiate career at a community college, from which she transferred to a four-year university and division II softball program.

This is not uncommon among the women I interviewed. Thirty percent of these 27 women began their collegiate softball careers at a community college. Among those, 23 percent successfully transferred to either division one or two programs. The remaining seven percent are now in their second year of community college and may indeed construct viable paths to a four-year university and division one or two softball program. It should also be noted that 44 percent of these women made direct paths from high school to division one softball, 22 percent went directly to division two, and four percent went to division three. Clearly these women are elite athletes who were able to create viable paths to collegiate softball. It is also clear that in the transition from high

school to college, one significant distinguishing characteristic between the community college athletes and the others was regular participation in ASA softball.

Of course, a class-based hierarchy in collegiate softball is not solely based on financial resources, but on the opportunity to access a variety of resources. A class-based hierarchy in collegiate softball interacts with race to situate some women further outside of the lines in a marginalized location from which only those with the most material value may recover. Josie's experiences in ASA travel ball clearly illustrate how race intersects with class to situate Latinas in disadvantaged locations from which to make choices and decisions about their lives. Specifically, Josie's description of her travel ball experiences show how race and class intersected to stratify the athletes who continued in elite softball.

There were always Mexicans on every team I've played on. In [travel ball] the majority was White, but there was always like three or four of us Mexicans. So I never had to deal with that, 'cause back home 89% of my community are Hispanic-actually Mexican . . . Like when I was young, playing rec. ball when I was nine. It was like. There were two good teams. There was us. We were all Hispanic. And then there was a white team, from like all the rich neighborhoods at the time. And we were the better team always. For them it was like a privilege to come play us, and we'd bring like three of them on the team at the end of the season.

Noticeably, it is the recreation leagues where Josie's teammates were predominantly Mexican, but as she moved into ASA travel ball, her teams became predominantly white. What happened to all the Mexican girls who consistently out-

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played the rich, white girls? Where were Josie's hermanas (Latina sisters) as she continued on her path to collegiate softball? One explanation for this change in the make-up of Josie's teammates is the high cost of participation in ASA travel ball. Another explanation is the existence of systemic racially discriminatory practices such as those documented in the experiences of Latinos in major league baseball (Gonzalez, 1996). Gonzalez (1996) concluded that manager's and scouts may often make decisions from preconceived notions based on their own knowledge and beliefs about biology, culture and organizational needs (p. 155). This practice leads to discrimination in opportunities to occupy particular positions on the field, and after retirement, in the front office (Gonzalez, 1996). These same influences may be operating as coaches and parents identify young athletes to whom invitations may be extended for team try-out sessions. Josie's example illustrates that only those perceived to hold material value for the existing power structure will have opportunities to gain entrée to the middle class context of collegiate softball.

Moreover, while involvement in ASA softball leagues guarantees increased visibility for athletes, those women who can afford to join the most skilled, the most active, and best equipped teams have an even greater chance of being seen during recruitment periods. Sydney was able to shop around for teams when coaching was not up to her standards or teams were disbanded. Despite her moving around, she always had a competitive traveling team with which to compete and from which to receive more than adequate visibility during recruitment periods.

We weren't winning with the old Dynasty team or Perfection. We weren't winning, practices were sloppy, and he – I mean we were pretty good. It's like

you're good at first and then you kind of just die, and I don't like to die. I like to be good, like our Silver Bullets team. We were really good. Then our Silver Bullets team merged with the Southeastern Rebels – so then we were on the Rebels. I was just on a hundred different teams. After the Rebels – we were really good on the Rebels too. We went to Nationals. I went to Nationals with the Silver Bullets, the Rebels, and my freshman year in college I went back to Dynasty and I went to Nationals again.

Marisol provided a personal example of how the class hierarchy influences the availability of opportunities for participation in collegiate sport. In the following passage Marisol provided a bit of her own structural analysis.

Perfect example! Perfect example! [player's name]. Here she is, full ride scholarship to UCLA. We grew up in the same city, okay? If you have money and you wanna' play sports you go to the private schools. You go to St. Lucy's all girls' school or you go to Damien, all boys school. If you don't have money and you can't afford to go to-you go to Bonita. That's where I went. [She] had all year-her parents had money, okay? She went to the [team name], okay? They're the most expensive team and the hardest team to get on, under 18 and under 16, and she's played for it, for them since she's in Little League-'cause I played Little League with her. That's it, and I never saw her again, 'cause after that she went to the private school or she went to the travel teams and then . . . I'm watching ESPN-she's on freakin' TV, playing for the U.S. junior Olympic team. And then I saw her in the summertime playing women's open and I'm like 'So,

where are you going?' She's like 'Oh, I'm going to UCLA.' She's a perfect example of what money can do!

Marisol's example highlights the disparate opportunity structure that all women attempt to navigate in order to achieve their goals. Marisol focuses on money as the pivotal resource, but money is just one manifestation of power. The woman described above seemed to have access to many forms of power that shaped her direct path to division one softball. Marisol, in contrast did not have links to U.S. higher education, nor did she have money to "buy" those links. Thus, her opportunity to access elite softball came through a much longer and more curvy route than that of the woman she describes above. Josie spoke about "being noticed" through her participation on an all-star team that had some wealthy young women on them. This team had the resources to compete in many highly visible tournaments.

I would always get MVP at every nationals we'd ever go to and little by little like a lot of the um, one of the ASA coaches was there and he was trying to recruit me. And then a couple other coaches tried to recruit me, and there was this, my teammate, she was um, she was very wealthy. Her parents are the owners of [a particular manufacturing industry], and her mom was like, 'You gotta' come play for [our traveling team]'. That's the team I've always played for in travel ball.

Sydney, Marisol and Josie each describe the power of access to ASA softball, and other elite softball networks (e.g., private high school's with strong programs). Their experiences suggest that while participation in ASA softball may offer opportunities for collegiate softball involvement, these opportunities are disparate. That is, young women from financially elite families are better situated to take advantage of all the ASA softball

has to offer. Latinas from middle class families, like Sydney, are able to “work the system” making their paths to collegiate softball more direct. Moreover, the opportunity to participate on a team with middle and upper class teammates may also increase the opportunities for continuing on one’s path toward collegiate softball. This may have been the case in Josie’s experiences. Whatever the individual experience, Marisol’s description of the inequalities in access to elite softball make it clear that Latinas often experience marginal status among their teammates, despite having gained access to this elite social structure.

Accessing Financial Resources: Financial Aid, Scholarships and “Free-loaders”

Latinas come to college and collegiate athletics with varied resources and support structures. Many students of Latina heritage may qualify for need-based financial aid, but many do not. Athletic scholarships, in reality, are awarded to very few female athletes, and data show that many of these are doled out to students whose families would be able to pay for their education (Coakley & Pacey, 1984). Coakley & Pacey (1984) found that athletic scholarships were not awarded to women in division I and II collegiate programs based on financial need. In fact, when father’s level of employment was controlled, there were no significant differences in the distribution of scholarships. What did shift with father’s employment level was how students financed those aspects of their education not covered by the scholarship. For example, students may work in the summer, take on educational loans, or apply for need-based financial aid. Despite increases in the quantity of athletic scholarships available to women, the number of student athletes receiving full-ride scholarships is diminishing across racial and gender lines (Eitzen, 1999). These are significant trends in terms of how women make decisions

about sport involvement. These harsh realities may actually undermine some women's opportunities to achieve their athletic goals, while leaving the door wide open for women who are able access collegiate ranks without hardship to themselves or their families.

Cuadraz (1992) interviewed ten Chicana "scholarship women" about their experiences in graduate school. Cuadraz (1992) argued that educational institutions do not reduce inequalities, but accentuate them, especially as socialization into and through higher education may simply be a continuance of the socialization received by youth in their middle and upper class homes (p.32). Both Cuadraz (1992) and Cuadraz & Pierce (1994) found that Latinas experience both privilege and penalty as "scholarship" students, and are often viewed as institutional tokens in collegiate settings. Although scholarship women were "pushed to the margins, they were really insiders to the very social structure that reproduced such inequalities" (Cuadraz, 1992, p. 32). In fact, scholarship women were in a unique position to experience the contradictions of being "inside in an outside way" (Cuadraz, 1992, p. 32).

Some Latina collegiate athletes may experience similar marginalization due to their varied statuses as "scholarship athletes". This marginalization may be manifested in tensions about the distribution of financial aid and athletic scholarship money. For example, Bugs described the tension that developed between Mexican and White athletes due to differential financial aid and athletics aid awards.

There was animosity for us when we played on these teams that are mostly white and we were getting paid just because our skin's brown and we got a 'rrrrr' in our last name. And that was hard! And I feel strongly about this! I have no regrets nor do I feel badly because I really think there was a mistake in society and there

was discrimination. And it didn't affect me at all and it may not have affected my parents directly but somewhere down the line there was. And my father was called Henry when his name was Alfred damn it! And that's what bothers me. But I don't feel bad - because *none* of my brothers and sisters had the opportunity, and if I had I was gonna' take it.

Although the animosity that Bugs spoke of above was manifested in jealousy about disparate financial support, the example actually uncovers deeply held beliefs about who has a "right" to higher education, and reveals a primarily white, middle class fear of being displaced by racial-ethnic others. Moreover, Bugs found herself having to perform academically and athletically in a social setting that did not necessarily welcome her presence. Despite this experience and a history of mistreatment in American society, Bugs contends above that she was not affected by discrimination. Yet in an almost contrary point of view, she acknowledges the sting of discrimination among her family members and her desire to access college in spite of historically rampant anti-Latino sentiment. It is paradoxical that lack of financial resources may be the primary factor that many Latinas never get involved in sport and yet the same financial need provokes animosity from their white teammates. Clearly, legislating access does not address the entire problem of racial-ethnic divisions on collegiate campuses or in collegiate athletics.

Micaela, a student-athlete at an elite, private division one university was often the target of questioning about financial aid and scholarship moneys. Some of her teammates and roommates expressed jealousy about what seemed to be a disproportionately larger amount of financial aid as compared to their own awards. She specifically recalled a roommate asking her how many loans she had out and how much she received in

financial aid. After Micaela told the roommate what she wanted to know, the roommate responded in a derogatory manner by saying, “Must be nice”. Micaela described how this interaction with her roommate made her feel.

She knew that I’m not the wealthiest person, you know. And I am considered one of the poor ones here, well, I am the poor one. But I don’t think she understood exactly what it meant not to have the family, the money and all that is needed, you know? She doesn’t understand that its harder on me just because we don’t have any resources to pay for school and schools cost a lot more money than my dad makes, you know? And she doesn’t understand what I had to do to earn that money, to earn whatever, because I earned everything I got. I’m not freeloading here. I’m not. I had to work to pay for my ASA. I pay my own rent, my own groceries. And I don’t think she understands all that - all that comes with it, all that I worked for. She just sees the end product of what I have. I don’t think she understands and sometimes that’s tense between us.

Bugs and Micaela provide rich examples of the tensions that may develop around the distribution of financial aid. In the example Bugs provided, there are clear connections between racial ancestry and class privilege. Both Bugs and Micaela are in a position to experience the legacy of exclusion from higher education that many Latinos/as have experienced, and at the same time their presence on campus is contested through constructions of them as “free-loaders”, or drains on financial resources. They are, as Cuadraz (1992) put it “inside in an outside way” (p. 32). They are inside the institution, but are outside of the middle class culture that envelops the institution. It is this location

perhaps, that offers them a vantage point from which to see that their “accusers” simply “don’t understand” the conditions under which they made their way to collegiate softball.

It is instructional to examine the actual receipt of financial aid and scholarship money that the women interviewed received. Just over half of them (52%) received some form of financial aid to attend college. Among those receiving no financial aid, 37 percent were former athletes for whom past financial aid award were not recorded as part of this research. Athletic related awards ranged from partial scholarships, which covered the cost of textbooks to full scholarships, which provided textbooks, tuition and a monthly stipend (typically between \$250 and \$400). Need-based financial aid is also wide-ranging and may not completely match a student’s need. Among the 52 percent (n=16) who received some form of financial aid, 19 percent held full scholarships, 31 percent held partial scholarships, 19 percent received need-based financial aid only, another 19 percent received a combination of need-based and athletic related aid, and 13 percent received no financial aid. Coakley and Pacey (1984) found that White women received the majority of full scholarships and tended to receive some form of partial aid or tuition waiver more often than other women in division I and II programs. They also suggested that “other minority” women (not including Black women) received less partial aid and were most likely to be participating in division I and II women’s athletics without any form of aid (Coakley & Pacey, 1984). Given the demography of the participants in the present study and the research by Coakley and Pacey (1984), the animosity directed toward some of the women interviewed seems to be based in a false belief about Latinas taking unfair shares of financial resources on campuses.

Micaela also talked about how the availability of athletic related aid shaped her choice to participate in softball. Despite gaining entrée to an academically elite, division one program, Micaela's choices were constrained by her family's limited financial resources, as well as the elitist structure of collegiate athletics.

At the time, I didn't hear a lot about soccer scholarships. There wasn't a lot of money into soccer. It wasn't its day yet. So, I kinda had to make the decision what will pay my way through college and how to make [the most of it] and I kinda realized that my senior year. I didn't want to realize it and accept it, because I loved soccer so much, but my senior year [I realized] 'I got to go through softball'.

Micaela's experience with her roommate is reminiscent of the experience Bugs shared earlier, and not uncommon for women of color who often are stereotyped as "quotas" on campus. Many Latinas are the first in their families to go to a four-year educational institution if not the first to go at all. Potentially more important here is the fact that many of these first time college enrollees may also be first generation born in the United States. Thus, their families are still working on gaining access to major American social institutions and are often looked upon as foreigners taking away opportunities for the more deserving off-spring of "Americans". It is also interesting to note the ways that women continue to move through conditions that might constrain opportunity. Bugs and Micaela offered examples of Latina perseverance in the face of racial and class inequalities. Not only were they members of a system that had historically denied them access, they were also subject to the cultural baggage of their teammates and classmates. This adversity seemed to fortify some women in their efforts to continue on their pathways through collegiate softball.

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Ana also talked about feeling marginalized based on financial issues, but her experiences as a middle class Latina was different than that of Bugs and Micaela. She reveals a somewhat common experience of Latino/a collegiate students being caught between financial resources and financial need. Her words describe what is commonly being referred to as the “middle class squeeze” in the U.S. economy. That is middle class families are often caught between the cost of higher education and qualification for need-based aid. Thus, many middle class families accrue debt in order to pay for higher education. Ana’s words below underscore the particular location of her family, and describe her feelings about being caught in between need and resources.

Money is definitely an issue. You know, my mom’s a budget clerk. My dad’s a teacher. You know, that’s not a lot of income, and I think...having my [younger] sister get a scholarship, you know, that is a big lift off my parents’ shoulders, you know. And, me here, it’s closer, so we’re not having to pay for plane tickets home and stuff like that. But, I had a scholarship at the other school. [My parents] weren’t having to pay, so they’ve only really had to pay for one semester of school and then, this year. And, I don’t know. I tell my mom all the time, you know I want to pay you guys back, ‘cause I think that that’s not fair that you guys are trying to-I’m not helping you out you know. The scholarship was supposed to be – that was my part of the deal, you know. But [my mom’s] you know, ‘Don’t worry about it, we’ll make it’, and if we can’t then I’ll just transfer to Fresno State or something and commute home.

Ana went on to describe the type of financial assistance she was able to acquire. She also describes what is a common legacy of economic disadvantage among Latino/a

families. Her words illustrate the fact that despite experiencing upward mobility, a legacy of financial disadvantage is close behind.

I get the loan (Stafford), but I can't get any grants. I can't get anything like that because [my parents] do make enough, and they don't realize, I mean they really don't realize that just because you're not low class, you know that you don't need it. Because, yeah, both my sister and I will be in school, but what if she hadn't gotten a scholarship, you know? And I mean some people have their grandparents that, you know they can inherit money from them, but both mine worked in the field, so, you know their not gonna' see any money there.

This experience of not being "needy enough" may be especially debilitating for Latinas who tend to come from lower class families and have a legacy of poverty rather than a legacy of financial stability.

Although elite softball skill has offered some Latinas access to power, their location within a social structure that is organized around multiple inequalities actually situates them in varied proximity to power. Eitzen (1996b) suggests that in sport, just as in the larger society, the poor pay more than their fair share for the maintenance and growth of sport programs. The exploitation of big-time college athletes serves the needs of capitalists and maintains a system controlled by dominant ideology (Eitzen, 1996b; Sage, 1996). Ironically Latinas and other women who qualify for financial aid are now assets to those teams whose rosters have been bloated due to misguided attempts at compliance to Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act (1972). Monica and Christina, both division one softball coaches explained how this would work on a team

that was required to expand it's roster to 22 or more student athletes. Monica explained it this way.

So, if you wanted to give twelve full rides (full scholarships) then that means that over ten in those particular organizations get no money. And that's tough! You can't keep good athletes like that. You gotta' spread it out, try to help everyone out. And what's been fortunate is the people that do qualify for financial aid.

You draw that money out so they can get that. So, you've got more money left over to give other people. And um, it seems like the Latinas seem to qualify more than any of the others. It's a high percentage.

This is an interesting twist on the Title IX legislation. In order to come into compliance, some schools are expanding rosters in women's sports rather than adding new women's sports to their total offering. It may be too early to tell, but this seemingly relegates Latinas and other women of color, who experience poverty at higher rates than do white women, to institutionalized subordinate positions. In this case, Latinas may bear a disproportionate amount of the burden of financing the expansion of women's collegiate athletics. Rosalia, currently a division two head coach expressed concern about the messages that may be sent to 'minority athletes' through increased use of various financial aid funds rather than offering athletics related scholarships to minority athletes. She made the following impassioned argument:

We just had a meeting today about EOP and financial aid. Instead of 'Let's go find some athletes and give them a scholarship, let's see if we can get them in through EOP or financial aid, and let's work that way.' I don't think we're fully

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being educated in certain areas. Instead of going in and showing these athletes and their families how things should be done we're pushing EOP.

She went on to say:

These kids are intelligent human beings who have athletic ability! Let's give them what they deserve! They're not looking for a handout, nor are they looking to play at division II. But if we are lucky enough to get them in our program let's treat them like they have just earned something, not like they're second rate and now they've gotta' do all this other stuff so they can get out on the field. They've worked hard to be out there on the field, let's let them be there. Instead of, 'I'm gonna' be late for practice because I've got to go to my meeting.' That's sad!

The discourse about the appropriate use of EOP funds to assist and encourage student athletes to attend particular schools seems to be a recent and regional one. It is difficult to say with any accuracy, due to the limited availability of data on women of color in collegiate sport, how the use of such funds has influenced the experiences of women in collegiate athletics. Rosalia's comments underscore the power of the social institution of sport to construct and maintain a hierarchy of women in collegiate athletics (Birrell, 1990). It is also significant that Rosalia's experience as a former division two athlete and current division two coach empowers her to cast a critical "view from below" (Gorelick, 1991) while the experiences of Monica and Christina as former division one athletes and current division one coaches may situate them differently. They may in fact find it difficult to see the multiple experiences of women in elite softball settings, let alone offer a critical analysis of them (Gorelick, 1991).

Summary

In this section I have analyzed power relationships in collegiate softball. The experiences of the women interviewed for the present research illustrate differential access to power in collegiate softball. Getting into collegiate softball not only requires elite athletic skill, but also connections within the ASA network. Participation in ASA is itself a privileged experience, as doing so requires financial resources. Latinas who make it to collegiate softball are able to access resources to pay for their involvement in ASA softball. Additionally, those women who cannot afford to pay their own way have to demonstrate superior skill in order to gain access to ASA networks. Thus, many Latinas must perform better than their white and middle class teammates. Many Latinas need financial aid in order to attend college and compete in softball, they have no other way to finance their education. This of course situates them in opposition to teammates who receive differential amounts of institutional aid for college. Latinas who continue in collegiate athletics have surely had to move through cultural constructions of themselves as tokens. Finally, Latinas are at risk for being exploited by the institution of softball precisely because they do show financial need. They are often powerless in their dealings with coaches and, as student-athletes who qualify for need-based financial aid, may soon bear the burden of expanding rosters in collegiate softball (Eitzen, 1996a).

Racial Constructions in Collegiate Softball

In 1997, Latinas accounted for six percent of all female students on NCAA campuses, and only three percent of all female student athletes (NCAA, 1997). These numbers alone indicate that Latinas will be perceived as racially distinct from their collegiate peers. Latinas are also more likely than their white counterparts to have come

to college from financially and academically disadvantaged backgrounds, making them less-prepared for the transition to college, but also situating them as ideal targets for currents of backlash against racial minorities (Eitzen, 1999). While research has indicated that inter-racial contact through participation in sport has resulted in friendship and building of community across race and ethnicity, sport remains a structure that stratifies participants not only on skill, but also across racial lines (Abney & Richey, 1992; Eitzen, 1999). The women interviewed in the present research were acutely aware of their position as “outsiders within” (Collins, 1991) among their collegiate softball teammates. Their experiences reveal a fluid type of identification and resistance of racial constructions. As “outsiders within” (Collins, 1991) or women who are “inside in an outside way” (Cuadraz, 1992) the women interviewed are situated in ways that offer a critical examination of the social structure from which they emerge to create their lives.

Racial and ethnic inequalities are yet additional social conditions that influence women’s choices about sport involvement. In this section I will analyze the racialized experiences of the women interviewed in terms of a) outsiders in the dugout and b) drawing on difference.

Outsiders in the Dugout

Rita eloquently described her experiences on her predominantly white collegiate softball team. Her experience was also shaped by the fact that she received little opportunity to play and prove her skill, thus limiting her chances to feel like a contributing member of her softball team. Her head coach was African American and her assistant coach was Latina but this didn’t seem to make her presence as a bi-racial Latina any easier for her. She described her experience this way:

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You go through your life being the one girl of color in every class, elementary school through high school. Then you go into college and it's the same experience. Then I go to this softball team and I'm still that one of so many. Then, when you're not included in the team aspect (e.g., no playing time) it impacts and it can make you feel more isolated, and it didn't ever have to be about race, but it impacted it.

Rita's words illustrate the pervasiveness of white, middle class values in her educational and athletic experiences. As she suggests, actual events in her collegiate softball experiences may not have been overtly about race, but race constantly situated her on the margins. It is this experience of marginalization that offers Rita a perspective on the structure of collegiate softball that reveals its flaws. Clearly race is always present in women's lives, and messages about race are conveyed in various ways. More to the point, racial constructions in collegiate softball contexts work to maintain the centrality and naturalization of whiteness, while simultaneously relegating Latinas and other women of color to the margins. This type of positioning of women as racial subjects occurs in many forms. For example, Micaela's experiences competing in both high school athletics and traveling teams in soccer and softball illustrate a similar racialized location among her teammates. Her high school teams were racially mixed, but her traveling teams were typically all white except for her self. She talked about how her attendance at a known "ghetto" school set her apart from her traveling teammates.

. . . 'Cause they knew my school was considered a ghetto school, so when I played on that soccer team they would joke around with me and kinda set you straight you know, just say things like 'So, any shootings lately? Any guns lately?' just stuff like

that, really stupid. And, I would, like, return the joke or whatever, and I would say, 'What are you talking about?' you know or 'I got one in my bag' you know, just stupid things like that, so that way they realized that I was from that gang school. But one of my good friends is really a good soccer player, and she's the one that really integrated with, you know, my family and kinda understood the whole thing, and she's white. So I just felt—I didn't feel like—I just felt not welcome, but it wasn't a big change for me, because I love the sport so much that I didn't care who I played with, because all I had to do was play with them.

Clearly, Micaela's predominantly white teammates feel comfortable "joking" with her about her experiences in an inner city, gang-affiliated school. This is an excellent example of the power of Micaela's white teammates to construct her and her school in particular ways that situate Micaela on the margins within their shared sport context. Moreover, racially loaded jokes and comments make it incumbent upon Micaela to prove her allegiance to the middle class white context in which she chooses to compete athletically. At times, she accomplishes this by joking with her teammates. Yet as she refuses to take their comments seriously, she also exercises power to resist any real construction of her self or her school as marginal compared to others. A common thread in Rita and Micaela's experiences is the comparison of their experiences to a white, middle class model. It is this white middle class model around which collegiate softball is organized, and within which Latinas may either find support or lose ground in formulating a collegiate softball career.

The racializing of student-athletes also continued away from the softball field when Micaela began attending her predominantly white, upper middle class, academically

prestigious university. Micaela talked about how difficult it was for her to move from her working class roots into an upper middle class collegiate environment. Not unlike how she had to negotiate race relations among her teammates, she was also aware of how she would have to change to be successful at the academically elite university that she chose to attend.

Oh, yeah. It was really was hard for me and I cried and cried, because I am different, and I have changed according to their way, they couldn't change different to my way, I had to change according to their way. It was kinda like, culture shock, you know. I get into a lot of arguments about things that students say about minorities and scholarships – that they shouldn't get scholarships.

Jokes about gang-affiliated schools and comments about the distribution of scholarships were just a couple of examples of the manifestation of racial constructions in collegiate softball. In fact, there were many varied examples of racial difference and inequalities in the experiences of these women in collegiate softball. For example, Julie talked about feeling marginalized in terms of racialized standards of beauty among her teammates. While Julie suggested that the beauty issue was unrelated to race, it may be one of the most obvious examples of an existing hierarchy of desirable people based on socially constructed beliefs about particular types of physical appearance. Julie talked about it this way.

I felt like those who were really pretty on the team were favored. And this has nothing to do with race but it is about appearances. I've never shared this with anyone, but I always thought that because it just seemed like it was that way. As the team evolved into this pretty team, good looking team I just felt like those who were the prettiest on the team – like if you look at a picture of our team,

they're all like white blonde hair, not blonde, but white blonde hair and blue eyes. They're just cute and pretty and boyfriends. If anything, I felt more tension there than of my color.

Carmen experienced tension between herself and two former coaches on her division one team. She came to realize that some of their conflicts may have arisen from stereotyped images of African Americans. This racial construction, like that discussed by Julie above, was manifested in stereotypes about bodies and appearance.

Now that I look back at it, I would describe it as, she kinda, I believe she stereotyped me, and judged me. Because I had a hard time with, not just my body language, my appearance, my—the way I played. The way I moved was kind of, I guess, it was not slow - they thought it was slow. I thought I was moving, you know, fast, but they thought it was slow. And I think she kinda prejudged me, and would get irritated by me right away. . . . Yeah, we have stereotypes to go against, and then we have to prove them wrong. And for me, I don't think I have any more of an attitude than any other real aggressive athlete out there but because, like, I have a look, an eyebrow look, and you know, they think I'm being mean, or something.

A growing number of studies show that collegiate athletics are organized around racial inequalities (Anderson & South, 1993; Green, 1993). Anderson and South (1993) examined the experiences of African American males in collegiate athletics and found that the purported educational and status enhancement opportunities found in sport were not accrued equally across race. Green (1993) reviewed the status of African American women in various levels of sport activity. In terms of collegiate athletic participation, Green (1993) argued that unless academic performance improves drastically in urban

schools, NCAA policies and guidelines that increase academic standards will have a disproportionately negative impact on the number of African American women in division one universities (p. 216). The research by Anderson and South (1993) and Green (1993) suggest that gaining entry to collegiate athletics is not the only hurdle these women must clear. Once inside the institution, these women experienced challenges to their right to be there and heard overt, racially charged messages about Latinas on their campuses.

Despite the marginalization of many Latinas, many also found community and enjoyment among other Latinas in softball contexts. The ability to maintain one's own sense of racial, ethnic and cultural identity was significant for these women. Both Ise and Rita provide examples below as to how one may preserve one's self in the often antagonistic, pervasively white context of collegiate softball. For Ise, this was especially significant when she returned to her alma mater to coach the softball team. Ise talked specifically about a history of exclusion of Latinas from her high school softball team and consequently, what it meant to the Mexican girls in her neighborhood when she became the head coach.

When I coached at my old alma mater it was very big, because when I played, it was all white. When my sisters played it was predominately all white. When I came back to coach then, there was a lot of talk, why is she coaching, and dah, dah, dah, dah. I felt—I live in a little small town called [name of town], and that's all there is there is just Mexicans. Well we go to [the high school] which is in [a different town] and that's all white. So, any Mexicans that we had in that school were from [my hometown]. When I went and coached there I knew a lot of the girls from my

community that were going to high school, and I felt it was encouragement, maybe even some hope. I was just coaching over there at [high school], you know, 'let's go out and play for her', and I got a lot of minorities that wouldn't normally go out and play there because they're intimidated. So, they see one of their own kind in there, they feel a little more at ease, and you know, a little more . . . self respect.

Ise seems to identify with being the only Latina on the softball team. She knows what it would have meant for her to have other Mexicanas on the team. Thus, she expresses pride as she describes the significance of her racial identity in connecting with the Mexican students that she feels have been institutionally and culturally excluded from softball. Thus, her own experiences as an "outsider within" (Collins, 1991) may have made her more sensitive to both the legacy of exclusion and need for meaningful inclusion of Latinas in elite softball. Similarly, Rita talked about the importance of bringing racial and ethnic difference into sport contexts.

I think maybe what happens when you are of color – and it's good that you don't see color and that you feel comfortable in this world that is predominantly white. At the same time, it can make you – 'cause I feel it is important that you embrace your – people who are like you. They may have had some of your experiences and they can understand. A white person can sympathize, but they can't be you and they can't experience who you are. I think that's important that if you are of color that you bring that in.

While several of the women interviewed were lucky enough to have at least one other Latina on their team, across the country this is atypical. Rita refused to leave her racial and ethnic identity "at the door", rather she found support in student groups on campus.

Rita went outside of softball and became involved in African American and Latino/a student groups in order to preserve her sense of self. Others, like Jane may not have been compelled to do the same if they had teammates from diverse racial and ethnic heritages. Jane was fortunate to have several Latinas on her collegiate team with whom she could speak Spanish and simply relate about similar cultural values. She felt there was power in numbers.

It helps to understand it helps with understanding you and you know, and just you ethnically, you know, who you are. There's more than one and then there's five of you saying, you know, "No, this is how we are, and this is the things we believe in. These are our beliefs. These are the things we hold, you know, and cherish."

So, more people, I think, will take it to heart then, than when it is one person.

The mere presence of Latina athletes or coaches of color, however, is seldom enough to erase racial inequalities in collegiate softball contexts. Despite the fact that some of the women interviewed had teammates who were Latina or coaches whom were racial ethnic minorities, this did not challenge the structure of collegiate softball, which naturalizes white middle class ways of life and universalizes Latina identities and cultural heritages.

Drawing on Difference

Latinas are diverse in country of origin, class background, primary language, regional settlement, and race and ethnic identities. For these reasons, Latina experiences of the social world defy any simple, culturally based explanation. Latinas then may experience the same social event in very different ways. Theoretically, some would argue that in current social arrangements race is more salient than ethnicity for situating Latinas in subordinate social positions because for the most part people do not know what ethnicity someone is or what cultural values go with a particular ethnic group (Omi &

Winant, 1994). Despite the fact that ethnic heritage may not elicit the same magnitude of social response as do racial constructions, it is a significant factor shaping opportunities in women's lives. Moreover, census data clearly show that ethnicity has real consequences in the lives of diverse women, as women of different Latina ethnicities are situated in varied positions of privilege and penalty (see chapter four).

The women interviewed here illustrate this in varied accounts of the significance of race and ethnicity in their collegiate softball experiences. For example, Carmen experienced varied attempts by her teammates to construct her as a racialized or ethnic other. Her bi-racial status, however, made her interactions with teammates even more complex. She experienced collegiate softball not only differently than did her white teammates, but also as a distinctly racialized Latina.

I think Latinas can fit into the sports world a lot easier than Blacks. Because the girls on my team that are Latina, they have close relationships with the white players on the team. I think its that added, that extra, me being black. That's why I can tell the difference. 'Cause I even tease them. They'll say something about blacks and I'll say 'I'm Mexican today. I'm not Black today. You're not bothering me.'

In the quote above Carmen illustrates her power to resist the attempts of her teammates to construct her as a singular racialized or ethnic subject. Yet she went on to provide an example of how despite her clever resistance, she is always positioned subject within her softball community. On this she stated the following:

They expect me to be [ethnic]. They approach me. They ask me about things, you know things like that. I would say the Latino players would talk to me more

differently than they would to a white player-just be more comfortable, more themselves. We have more in common than the white players do. And then the white players will watch what they say around you or not tell you certain jokes. Because I'm black and Mexican they don't know which way to go.

Historically, African American women have been carefully constructed, by the media, as marginal women, who are sexually deviant and possess "natural" physical ability (Cahn, 1994; Corbett & Johnson; 1993; Green, Oglesby, Alexander & Franke, 1981; Smith, 1992; Williams, 1994). It has been suggested that "the silence surrounding African American athletes reflects the power of these stereotypes to restrict African American women to the margins of cultural life, occupying a status of distant 'Others'" (Cahn, 1994; p. 127). Similarly, Latinas have often occupied positions on the periphery in various social institutions. For Carmen and Rita, these two racial and ethnic legacies of inequality come together to situate them in subordinate positions relevant to their teammates.

Rita talked about the make-up of her division two team and the limited power of the racial diversity among her teammates. She suggested that the culture of softball outweighs any other cultural elements that might also be present in the sport context.

There were three Latinas on the team when I played. One was White and Mexican, the other was just Mexican and then there was me (African American and Mexican). And, the one that was Irish, she tended to talk to me because she dated Black people and that was the bond between her and I. But the rest of the team, as far as on a social level or them even trying to get to know me, they never did it. It was okay. The team aspects overshadowed the cultural I think – so they were able to get along

with me on those terms. But anything else – I know they watched what they said around me and then the other Latina girls were more or less assimilated into the – ‘cause I would say there’s a whole softball culture. There’s a way we talk and a whole little world of softball. And color a lot of times doesn’t play a factor into it because you’re an athlete, just a softball player. So, you’re able to get past that. But if you go deeper, like into a personal level then its different. For me, it was different. Rita also reflected on the power of the softball culture to constrain relationships between women of color in softball settings.

I don’t think [coaches of color] cross over that and embrace those girls [of color] and try to find out what the issues are for them. Because this [softball] world is so ‘You’re a softball athlete’ they don’t want to go into that because it could ostracize the other girls. But I think there can be a balance. I think it can help the other teammates. Like I said, I don’t think they knew anything about me as a person. I am different and I think the way I was raised, who I was around, my parents and how they brought me up – I could’ve brought something to them. I learned so much about their world just being a part of it, just being in it.

Rita describes a culture of softball that may be organized around particular principles that systematically subordinate Latinas and other women of color. Moreover, the culture of softball itself may perpetuate a hierarchy among student athletes that situates women differently based on race, ethnicity, class, sexuality and gender. Rita’s experience suggests that coaches of color are just as vulnerable to the myth of meritocracy in collegiate athletics as are other coaches. Clearly, what all coaches do and perhaps more importantly what they fail to do in terms of addressing the needs of all of

their athletes fortifies racial, ethnic, class, sexual and gender divisions among their student athletes.

Moreover, women in collegiate softball may come to see themselves as part of a softball culture in which race really does not matter. This may be one way to ease cultural conflict that may occur for Latinas in this pervasively white setting. It is clear that race does matter in the experiences of Latinas in collegiate softball, especially as the pervasiveness of whiteness deraces all women and acts as a veil over real issues of unequal power relationships. One way to continue moving along one's path in collegiate softball is to accept all that goes with it, including a white, middle class perspective on coach-athlete relations. Having grown up Latina and knowing the kind of work she put in to get to division one softball, Monica talked about how her experiences shaped her thinking about recruits.

I have a thing against people who are either black or Mexican that think people owe them something and if they are just doing things thinking you know, I won't take them. If they have the same work ethic, 'Come right on!' But if they think someone owes something to them, and don't have the same work ethic, I'll take the person with the work ethic any day. And they'll say it's discrimination, but I think that's a problem.

Monica's comments intimate that race has no bearing on her recruitment decisions, but clearly the particular work ethic that she describes is based in a White, European and Protestant belief system. In fact, Monica doesn't name or describe the particular work ethic that she values. Perhaps, Monica has been involved in the pervasively white context of collegiate softball so long that she has adopted particular softball cultural values. This is not

uncommon, especially when one wants to succeed in a particular arena. Her commitment to holding athletes of color to an unnamed “white work ethic” may also be a way to gain credentials as a Latina among white leaders in her career field.

Julie suggested that she tries to move around or beyond color lines in her own interactions with people. Rather than seeing people as racially distinct and judging them on a racial basis, Julie wants to see people as “people”. She stated it this way,

I don’t like to look at it in terms of color. I’ve always just put myself sort of as a person. Really, I mean I can’t remember – I’ve probably only been discriminated upon maybe a few times. I don’t know, I’ve always – I’m aware that we are looked upon differently, but I just try to carry on like I’m me, like I’m Julie.

Julie’s words underscore her desire to avoid be racialized by others, more than does it reveal any power to racialize others. Whether or not she has been subjected to it overtly, Julie holds more of an obligation than do her white peers to navigate racial relations in collegiate softball. Finally, Kim talked about how her own sense of being Latina may be different from Latinas who grew up with an extended family close by. Her experiences reflect an institutional value for assimilation over racial-ethnic affiliation. Kim’s family life and cultural values reflect a somewhat distant connection with her Latino/a roots, and unquestioned support for assimilation.

I think it’s different for me because my family was basically my mom, my brother. I mean 90 percent of the time it was just us. My mom didn’t really have a big family so I didn’t really get to see a lot of the culture part. My dad had the big, huge family. They were the ones that had the parties and family-get-togethers and stuff. My dad never really wanted us to be around them. He wasn’t real close with them.

So it was pretty much just us, so we were real assimilated to, well, the area the school I went to was pretty much white dominated. Well, I had a couple of friends who were Hispanic, but they were more with the white friends. I didn't see myself as being different or ever discriminated against.

It is curious that a few of the women interviewed suggested that they had never been discriminated against or had only experienced discrimination a few times in their young lives. I'm not sure how they would define an experience of direct discrimination, but it seems to me that each of the women I interviewed, even the most middle class and most light complected had experienced at least covert acts of discrimination along their paths to collegiate softball. Drawing on difference and rewarding assimilation in contexts of collegiate softball serves to further separate Latinas from their culture of origin, as well as from each other. While Latinas may also connect across other inequalities, as we will see in the next section, the construction of binary racial categories among teammates serves to divide Latinas in terms of proximity to whiteness. This type of division works to enhance the attractiveness of assimilating to the white middle class culture that seems to operate in most collegiate softball settings. In fact, a term that many of the women I interviewed used to describe their proximity to dominant middle class culture was "Americanized". To be Americanized, seemingly a verb, meant to be more assimilated to white middle class culture than were one's parents or family of origin. Sometimes it was spoken as a positive attribute and other times the same word was used to describe some sort of "loss" of one's heritage. Nonetheless, these women had to learn to navigate the racial hierarchy that existed in their particular softball contexts in order to stay on their paths toward a successful collegiate softball career.

Summary

In the preceding section of chapter six, I have analyzed the varied ways that racial inequalities are manifested in the experiences of Latinas in collegiate softball. I began with a discussion of Latinas as outsiders in the dugout, where I suggested that teammates and coaches often hold racial ideologies, and that these ideologies situate Latinas on the margin in softball contexts. I then turned my analytic focus on the ways that racial and ethnic difference among Latinas is drawn in relation to whiteness. The varied experiences of these 27 women suggest that bi-racial Latinas who are White and Latina hold more power among their peers than do Latinas who are African American and Latina. In fact, it is significant that two women who are both Latina and African American provided the most in depth discussions about the salience of race in collegiate athletics. Others were less inclined to discuss the significance of race in their collegiate experiences. It is clear that paths toward collegiate softball as well as decisions about staying involved are shaped by experiences of racial inequalities, and it is incumbent upon Latinas to develop strategies for preserving their racial and ethnic identities.

Homophobia and Compulsory Heterosexuality

Clearly, sport has emerged as one of the most appropriate sites for monitoring the maintenance of the current gender system especially as increasingly direct and public acts of homophobia and compulsory heterosexuality have become the “glue” that holds this system together (Griffin, 1996; 1998; Lenskyj, 1994). Latina experiences of collegiate softball, regardless of individual sexual identities, will be shaped by current social constructions of sexualities. For example, Griffin (1998) found that while all lesbian women face significant consequences in choosing to come out, white women are

privileged in the sense that they may find a home among other white lesbian women. It is imperative to discuss sexuality in the lives of all women, but especially in the lives of Latinas as their sexualities have been constrained in ways that are different from that of white women. The sport of softball is an especially salient symbol of ideological contests as it has been observed as a site for both acceptance and resistance of the traditional “male model” of sport (Birrell & Richter, 1994; Griffin, 1998; Lenskyj, 1994).

In this section I will illustrate the power of ideologies of sexuality to constrain women in sport. It is important to keep in mind that these 27 women were not “stopped” by ideologies of gender or sexuality, yet their experiences are filled with examples of heterosexism and homophobia in their daily interactions with families, fellow students, teammates and coaches. A variety of constraints to athletic accomplishments were present for these women, such as removal of financial support, constant questions about sexuality, and accusations of lesbianism. It is also clear that many of the women interviewed here seemed to prioritize connections with other Latinas over disassociating with lesbian teammates. Thus, Latinas seemed to bridge typical divisions of sexuality.

Managing Sexualities

Among the women with whom I spoke 22 percent identified as gay or lesbian, seven percent as bi-sexual, and 70 percent as straight. Among those who identified as gay, lesbian or bi-sexual, only one was not part former collegiate athlete group. This may be an age effect, which suggests that current athletes who range in age from 19 to 24 years may not be as sexually self-aware as are older women. A less likely explanation would be that this younger cohort is actually predominantly heterosexual. Whatever the explanation for the age effect on sexuality in the present study, it may be a moot point as

heterosexism and homophobia are directed at all women in particular contexts not just those who are actually gay, lesbian or bi-sexual. Regardless of individual sexualities, each of these women experienced a heterosexist and homophobic world of collegiate softball. In fact, compulsory heterosexuality shaped their interactions with teammates, parents and coaches, and at times threatened opportunities for continued involvement in collegiate softball.

For example, Rosalia, a third generation Mexican woman who identified as gay described how her sexuality exacerbated financial difficulties and created gaps in her softball and academic careers just after she started attending junior college.

Yeah, money was a challenge, especially after my mom found out about my girlfriend, and me being gay. I was cut off for about six months, which is another reason that I had to quit school. When I went back to the JC they were not happy about that (the time off) and said 'We're not paying for your education anymore.' So, I was working full time, playing softball and carrying a full load. Thank god I got the scholarship to [the division two school]. And I got a full ride plus some.

Rosalia's experience of being "cut off" financially due to her gay identity and her mother's homophobic response underscores Griffin's (1998) argument that "There are real risks in revealing one's lesbian identity in athletics, and significant social pressures support the hostility and conditional tolerance most lesbians in sport face" (p. 134).

While it was her mother's response to her sexuality that jeopardized Rosalia's career in softball and opportunity to stay in college, it was the socially constructed sexual ideologies that gave meaning to the homophobic response (Griffin, 1998). Thus, even when women receive financial and moral support from parents for sport involvement that

support may be at risk when one's lesbian identity is revealed or in this case discovered.

Marie the youngest of my interviewees who identified as lesbian talked about how her lesbian identity influenced her relationship with her family.

[My mom] sort of in a round about way asked me about it (her mom about her sexuality). And every time, she'll mention it and say-every time she'll say, 'I didn't raise you that way! I didn't raise you that way.' And its like 'It doesn't matter how you raised me. I am what I am.' You know? So, with my mom I kind of feel like she would look at it like that, like I was kind of-I guess in a sense degrading her. Yeah. Yeah. It's more like her and how she was raised and I think she might feel that she failed me or whatever. . . Last year my sister started to kind of suspect me-she was very negative and very harsh about it. So, I know- and I think now she's more willing to you know look at it like an accepting thing, but last year I thin kit was like more of new thing to my family. And I think my family knows, but its kind of 'Don't bring it up' kind of thing.

Marie also alluded to the fact that her more Americanized view of life would continue to make it difficult for her to talk with her mother about her sexuality. At one point she suggested "I'm not like her. I'm very americanized." Marie's reference to her more American as opposed to Honduran view of the world is the only direct reference to the intersection of race, ethnicity and sexuality among these interviewees. Marie, like several other bi-racial Latinas who spoke with me is light complected, speaks English without an accent and in this interviewer's opinion could easily pass as white. Thus, she has no doubt gained entrée to places her mother has not. She realizes she is different from her family already, by virtue of her "Americanized" status, thus a lesbian identity

may further remove her from her family identity, or it may be seen as part and parcel of her “Americanized” ways.

Rosalia reflected on how her current athletes, at the division two university where she is head coach, deal with the lesbian stigma associated with softball.

I think we lose athletes because of [the gay stereotype]. I think that my girls struggle with it. I think that sometimes they go out of their way to prove they are not gay. You can't hide it – if you're a softball player – I don't care if you're straight or not, you can't hide it. I don't know if they know about me or not, but its something that's not discussed. They're very quiet about it. They don't seem to have a problem with [Stacy], and [Melissa] is the other [gay] girl on the team and she's pretty open. They don't seem to have a problem but its not discussed. One of our pitchers has made some remarks, just stupid stuff – but other than that its not discussed.

Although sexuality of individual athletes may not be discussed in mixed company, the management of sexualities and protection of heterosexual space was a significant issue for at least one of Rosalia's current athletes. Sydney, a straight woman, who claims Nicaraguan, German, Mexican and French heritage, and is first generation born in the United States talked about her culture shock when as a freshman on her collegiate team she found herself surrounded by lesbian teammates. She suggested that of fourteen teammates, five of them were straight and the others were lesbian. This was clearly a stressor for Sydney especially when she might have to interact with her teammates away from the softball field.

Yeah, coming to college I knew. But you know what? They were pretty cool. I mean they wouldn't talk about it, I mean openly. I'm sure they're open about it if you ask them about it, but they were pretty cool. And our room assignments - I was really, really scared about road trips, like 'Oh my God, what if I'm going to room with her?' What about - 'No, no. I'm not going to be in her room'. Coach put all the straight people together. There were like four of us, me and my sister and these two other girls, and we all have boyfriends. And they put the other straight girl with the trainer. So, I mean they were pretty good about that.

Although Sydney was able to compete in softball among lesbian and straight women, her softball relationships did not extend far beyond the diamond's boundaries. In fact, in this example her interactions with teammates who are lesbian is something she feels a need to control and manage. Sydney seems satisfied with this homophobic manner of "handling" the diverse sexualities among her teammates. Griffin (1998) argues that the growing popularity of women's athletics has been one reason for an increased backlash against lesbians in sport. Beyond simple accusations, rumors and jokes systematic and institutional attacks on lesbians in sport have become common in collegiate athletic settings (Griffin, 1998; Lenskyj, 1994).

For some Latinas, connecting across sexualities and deflecting accusations of lesbianism are not easily accomplished. In collegiate sport settings, Griffin (1998) found that sexuality was something to be strategically managed by women throughout their athletic careers. Various strategies employed by collegiate athletes included aspects of denial, shame & self-hating, secrecy, cautious pride and liberated pride (Griffin, 1998). Moreover, Griffin (1998) argues that the growing popularity of women's athletics has

been one reason for an increased backlash against lesbians in sport. Beyond simple accusations, rumors and jokes systematic and institutional attacks on lesbians in sport have become common in collegiate athletic settings (Griffin, 1998; Lenskyj, 1994).

Marisol described her current teammates as extremely homophobic toward their openly lesbian coaches. It is likely that she and her teammates may be accused of being lesbian if their coaches are openly lesbian, thus Marisol's teammates may be trying to avoid the accusations.

The team doesn't accept so well how the coaches are. I don't care. I mean I just- 'cause I don't care 'cause that's not my problem if they have a problem with it. 'Cause I'm like lets talk about it [unclear]. So, I called the coaches girlfriend-she has two daughters-and I called them coach's daughters. And they're like-we're at a party '[Marisol], shut up!' And I'm like, 'But it is! Why are you guys trying to hide it?' Let me tell you I got in an argument with like five girls. 'Cause they're open about it. They bring their girlfriends here. Why should I hide it? The team's the only one with the problem. The coaches don't have a problem. They have a girlfriend and they bring 'em. They don't have a problem. And so I got in a discussion with two girls and we got really into it.

Marisol's teammates underscore the several forms of "apology" for athletic prowess identified by Griffin (1998). These include a) silence, b) denial, c) promotion of both heterosexual and heterosexy images, d) preference for heterosexual space, e) preference for male coaches, f) attacks on lesbians, and g) acknowledgement but disassociation from lesbians (p. 66). Ironically, proponents of athletics for women who

engage in this type of divisive political framing of sport buttress male hegemony in sport thus further constraining sporting experiences for all women (Lenskyj, 1994).

Jane spoke of how lesbian stereotypes of softball athletes affected her own gender and sexual identities. Although she was straight, she felt playing softball lead to assumptions that she was gay. Her experience uncovers the work that many female athletes do to prove their credentials (Griffin, 1996; 1998; Lenskyj, 1994) as heterosexual women.

You're the one who has to go around and say, 'it's not true'. You're the one that has to make the effort to prove to people that it's not true. And people aren't going to automatically be like, 'Okay' just because you say so, you know. It's not just you saying, 'No, I'm not', you know. It's you going up and proving, almost, that you can be like anyone else, you can wear a dress, you can look very different, be straight, and you could still play softball. Sometimes I want to dress up for school just to prove that, hey, here I am, look at me.

This is especially interesting given that Jane is a Spanish and Irish woman in her early twenties who in appearance could certainly pass for White. Thus, she probably does not have to work as hard at dealing with ideologies of race or ethnicity. That is not to say that her own particular bi-racial, bi-cultural identity isn't contested on a daily basis, but it is not as "visible" as her softball identity. As she alluded to above, the way she dresses for classes and for social events is a visible sexual marker for her and for others. Often athletes juggle tight schedules for practice, class and games thus, they are typically in athletic attire.

I asked Karin if people assume that she is lesbian due to her status as a softball athlete. She shared the following:

Um, I've only been asked that once and I was... [trailed off]. They questioned my sexuality and it came from a very close friend so that experience was very rough for me. It was really hard and I had a hard time dealing with it. 'Cause I didn't think I, like carried myself in that, you know. I thought that was really weird 'cause back where I live I knew maybe one person [who was gay] and that wasn't even someone [close to me]. I just knew of them, and when I came here [to college] that was a big wake up call for me and then for someone to insinuate that about myself I was like, it was like a ton of bricks dropped on me. That was when I was younger. Now that I'm older, I'd just say 'No' and it would just be water off my back. But dealing with it at a younger age, it was quite a shock to me.

Although for some the sexualizing of female collegiate softball players is painful, Karin's experience seems to have been somewhat liberating. Her immersion into the collegiate softball world seemed to offer a new cultural setting where women were of diverse sexualities. While Karin expressed pain when first confronted with the potential for others to think she was lesbian, she has now seemingly come to accept this phenomenon as part of the softball community she chooses to belong to.

Chavez Leyva (1996) suggested that ethnicity itself may have become a form of sexual control. In much the same way that suspicions about female athletes may scare some women away from sport involvement (Griffin, 1996; 1998), constructions of lesbianism as a pathology contracted from American culture may constrain the sexuality of Latinas. Trujillo (1994) has argued that the mere existence of sexual identity confines Latinas and other women. For example, Ana suggested that one's athletic performance

may be compromised due to social pressures on women not to be too aggressive or manly.

You didn't want to be too aggressive because people might think that you're too much like a boy. You still wanted to, and that's another thing, playing sports you don't get to be a girl really. You know, you have to - what you wear most is sweats and a sweatshirt. How can you? You know, really you live out of your practice clothes so you don't really get to be the dressed up girl or whatever, you know? And being on the field, if you're too aggressive, people are like, 'Whoa, look at that man out there'. There's a lot of different issues you have to deal with when you play.

Ana's comments reveal the power of ideologies of both gender and sexuality in controlling women's bodies and effectively limiting perceived choices about sport involvement. Moreover, her experiences illustrate the role of sport structures in maintaining heterosexual privilege and men's control over women's bodies (Griffin, 1998; Lenskyj, 1994). Connie was also quite articulate about the stereotyping of athletes and the need for women to "move through" those messages.

I find that the stereotype "Oh, you're an athlete, this is the way you're supposed to be. This is the way you're supposed to look." you know...and it's NOT that, its like, 'Okay I'm an athlete, but I'm also a person.' I'm different. I'm different than certain people on my team and this and that. And there is just all these stereotypes that you constantly come through and you just got to challenge it and you just got to break that wall down and that barrier and . . . See the way I look at it is that when I'm on the field I'm an athlete. I'm not saying I'm a girl, I'm not saying

I'm a boy, I'm an athlete. I have the ability, God gave me the ability to be good at what I do. The mannerism-it's an athletic mannerism. It's not a boy thing. It's not a girl thing. Its just that's the way my body does it. Um when I come off of that field I'm [Connie].

The experiences of these women suggest that in collegiate athletics all women learn to manage their own sexualities as well as those of their teammates and coaches. Regardless of one's actual sexuality, the management of public sexualities in the context of women's collegiate softball is institutionalized and buttresses a cultural belief in the deviance of lesbians. Homophobia, heterosexism and compulsory heterosexuality work together in collegiate softball contexts to influence how women display their public selves and interact with others. The result is another form of dividing women in the project of maintaining the current structure of collegiate softball. Yet, in the next section I will illustrate how Latinas may find ways to bridge sexual divides.

Relating Across Sexualities

Within any group there exists diversity on many fronts, sport teams are no exception. Common athletic goals may aid in the bridging of all kinds of cultural gaps. Latinas may be especially situated to connect across difference due to their experiences of multiple marginalization (Cuadraz, 1992) in various social institutions. Interacting across difference may be one aspect of building community in collegiate softball, but it may also offer connections with other Latinas on predominantly white teams. For example, throughout Mickey's first year on a somewhat lesbian identified team, Mickey moved from ignorance and fear to curiosity about her teammate's choices to be with other women in sexual relationships.

I remember last year, we would just sit in hotel rooms and just talk about it. And people would get embarrassed and we'd laugh about it and stuff. But then I was curious so I would be like, 'Well, just shut up. I want to know [unclear statement], really tell me'. So it was really funny. We just got along really, really well last year, and I think it was due to the maturity level we had on our team. I think it was like, we weren't immature about it. Although some of the girls on the team probably think I was immature about it last year, in the fall. But that's because I didn't know any better. And I didn't know it because I wasn't exposed to it.

Later during her junior year at a four-year university, Mickey's relationships with other Latina teammates may have also been a bridge crossing a sexual divide. More specifically, the fact that Mickey was able to communicate with a teammate in Spanish provided a connection between them that differences in sexualities did not break.

[Cynthia] she's an outfielder, she speaks Spanish, and so her and I speak Spanish on the field. Or say we're around a group and I want to say something and I don't want anyone else to hear and I'll tell her (Spanish presumably). You know, just little things like that, so her and I have grown close. And then also she was the one that talked to me about the gay issue and like I asked her questions about 'Well, why would you want to be that...why do people want to be like that?' And 'Why, what attracts them to that lifestyle?' And then I got to thinking last year in the spring, 'Well, they're my teammates. They're friends. They're normal people.

Perhaps being able to relate to [Cynthia] as a Latina sister made her seem all the more human to Mickey. Rather than treat [Cynthia] as an outsider, Mickey connected with her across language, culture and ethnicity. The existence of softball leagues that provide somewhat "safe havens" for lesbian identified social interaction has been documented (Birrell & Richter, 1994; Griffin, 1998; Lenskyj, 1994), although not in collegiate softball. Although Mickey talked about the protective respect of the personal business of teammates that developed around issues of sexuality.

There were some issues in the beginning of this year, with other athletes. 'Cause here, we don't really, the other athletes, the other teams-they really have a bad - I guess we have a bad reputation of that. And I would tell the other athletes who were curious about who was gay and stuff. I was like, 'It doesn't matter. Why do you want to know?' Its like 'If they're gay, they're not gonna' pick up on you, so don't worry about it.' Its just like-to other-we're really open like within our team, but with anybody else, I don't tell anybody's business. And I hope that nobody does because that's our team. Whatever we speak about and talk about and say our opinions and know about other people it should be within the team. And if they wanted other people to know then they'd go tell them. So, we try to keep it among the team and then the other athletes at school, they-we have a bad rep, and so whenever we meet someone and they know we play softball, its like, and I have to tell them 'No, I'm straight.'

For many women, interactions with softball teammates became avenues to explore their beliefs about sexuality, perhaps even examine their own sexualities in relation to their teammates. Despite the continued presence of homophobia, these were

liberating experiences for them as straight women and seemingly for their teammates who were lesbian. Sometimes, women of diverse sexualities, race and class status would collude to resist heterosexist and homophobic constructions of their teammates or themselves.

For example, in a small group interview that included Bugs, JJ, Kim, Terry and myself, we shared several hearty laughs about the jokes athletes and one coach played regarding sexuality. On one occasion Kim was a baserunner and Bugs was the base coach. In an attempt to distract the nearby infielder, Bugs said to Kim “So, are we gonna’ get together after the game for ...” (trailed off, but clearly an invitation for sexual activity). Not only was this public discussion of sexual interaction funny and probably distracting to those that heard it, it also was a form of collaboration between a straight athlete and her openly lesbian coach to undermine conventional beliefs about sexuality and about sport as a site for the expression of the sexual and erotic self (Lenskyj, 1994). This same group of women agreed that sexuality was never a divisive issue on their team, but rather the ability of most teammates to be open about their sexuality was simply an example of the respect and care they shared on that particular team.

Marisol provided another example of the power of playfully resisting hegemonic forms of sexuality. Her respect for and acceptance of lesbian identified teammates was related to her own experiences of marginalization as a woman of color.

Oh, God! All, my whole team [was gay]. I was like the only one that wasn’t on my other team. No, there was like about three of us that weren’t. One time I told one of the girls, I said ‘Stop it! My boyfriend’s gonna’ think you’re flirting with me.’ (laughter) ‘He’s gonna’ get mad.’ ‘Cause she was! (laughter). I don’t care!

Because, being - and this is the worst - I don't care who you are. A minority is a minority. If your black, your gay, your handicapped, anything, you're a minority. And being a minority, why should I be prejudiced of another minority? I know how it is.

It is much too essentialist to suggest that Latinas as a group are better able to cross sexual divides. While some women suggest that being a minority situates them to better understand and show compassion for other minorities, this is a slippery explanation that borders on equating oppressive forces in women's lives. In my own experience, I have known many Latinas who have no issues with sexualities, but I know just as many who are homophobic. What may be operating among Latinas in collegiate softball is a combination of factors including a) previous knowledge of the lesbian and softball connection, b) desire to connect with other Latinas in pervasively white contexts, and c) possession of a non-dominant perspective on femininities and sexualities. In the same way that many Latinas have fallen outside of conventional norms of womanhood, Latinas may also have their own varied, unconventional perspectives on sexualities. This unique perspective may enhance opportunities to connect with other Latinas across sexualities, and may also decrease their feelings of conflict as accusations of lesbianism abound.

Summary

Throughout this chapter I have analyzed class, race and sexuality in the experiences of Latinas in collegiate softball. I have suggested that women take up varied social locations in a web of inequalities and sport is no haven from such stratification. The experiences of the women in the present study illustrate the power of sport structures as well as cultural beliefs to influence women's opportunities for making choices about

elite sport involvement. Moreover, interactions with person about race, class and sexuality influence whether or not women will choose to stay involved in collegiate softball. Additionally, the structure of collegiate softball, which privileges white, middle class, heterosexual women, works to filter out and marginalize working class Latinas.

I have argued that Latinas who qualify for need-based financial aid are at risk for being exploited by the institution of softball precisely because they do show financial need. They are often powerless in their dealings with coaches and as “needy” student-athletes may soon bear the burden of expanding rosters in collegiate softball (Eitzen, 1996a). I have also examined how constructions of sexualities and the structural and cultural conditions from which they emerge influence the experiences of Latinas in collegiate softball. For some women diverse sexualities are part of a liberating experience in sport, while for others accusations of lesbianism are threatening. To be sure, Latinas who make their way to collegiate softball are privileged, but they remain “outsiders within” (Collins, 1991) this unequal athletic structure.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions

In the introduction to this manuscript I suggested that a significant purpose of this research was to examine how a selected group of women made paths to collegiate softball. I also examined how particular social conditions either fortified or undermined the original goals that these women had developed for themselves. In this chapter I reconsider my original queries about the social conditions that shape women's decisions about sport involvement. I begin with a discussion of the frameworks that guided these analyses, a developmental analysis (Gerson, 1985) and multiracial feminism (Baca Zinn and Dill, 1994; 1996). I also lay out the social conditions that seemed to sustain and those that threatened to undermine paths to collegiate softball. The chapter concludes with recommendations for making collegiate softball a more equitable avenue for all women.

A Multiracial and Developmental Feminist Framework

The recent success of the so-called "Title IX babies", like Mia Hamm, Julie Foudy, and other twenty-something elite female athletes have reinvented an image of collegiate athletics as a meritocratic organization in which its participants harmoniously compete for the good of the game. Yet, one look at the U.S. women's world cup soccer team reveals the pervasive whiteness of expanded opportunities for "women" in sport. It is curious that Mexico's team in the same tournament featured several U.S. women who were of Mexican heritage, yet there were no visible Latinas on the starting squad of the U.S. team (Hispanic Magazine, 1999). Moreover, despite the recent prominence of Olympic pitcher, Lisa Fernandez, collegiate softball, like soccer, is pervasively white. In

fact white women make up a disproportionately high number of student athletes across the nation (NCAA, 1997), receive more athletic related financial aid than do women of color (Coakley & Pacey, 1984), and reap more benefits from participation in sport as compared to African American girls and women (Picou & Hwang, 1982; Picou, McCarter, & Howell, 1985).

It is precisely these social realities that come together to shape the paths of the women interviewed for the present research. Applying both a multiracial feminist analysis (Baca Zinn and Dill, 1994; 1996) and developmental analysis (Gerson, 1985) has provided a broad lens through which to see how this particular group of Latinas navigated the various social conditions that they each inherited. Throughout these analyses I have consistently articulated the developmental analysis of paths. For example, relying on Gerson's (1985) concept of "baseline orientations", I have shown that the majority of the women interviewed had early orientations toward sport. These early orientations, again following Gerson's (1985) framework, were later subjected to a variety of social conditions that either supported or undermined opportunities for goal attainment. For instance, despite holding early expectations for involvement in elite softball, each of these women had to respond to and navigate a host of social conditions particular to her own social location. The application of Gerson's (1985) analytic logic to the experiences of this select group of women made it possible to illustrate the influence of varied social conditions in the lives of women.

In order to get at the multiplicity of social inequalities in the lives of the women interviewed, a multiracial feminist framework (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1994; 1996) was applied in concert with the developmental framework (Gerson, 1985). While the focus of

these analyses has been on paths toward collegiate softball, a significant piece of these analyses lay in how these women experienced their individual paths as racialized, classed and sexualized subjects. Multiracial feminism (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1994; 1996) provided the lens through which to analyze experiences of overt and covert racial hierarchies, class stratification, and heterosexist practices that occurred along paths toward collegiate softball. This brand of feminism suggests that a) gender equity has limitations for these women precisely because their gender identities are constantly mediated by racial, ethnic, class and sexual identities, and b) intersecting forms of inequality produce both oppression and opportunity for these women as they navigate the elite world of collegiate softball. Moreover, it has become increasingly clear that the most direct paths to division one softball require participation in the financially elite ranks of organized youth softball. As this structure becomes increasingly rigid and elitist, it is imperative that we come to understand it from individuals who enter and experience it from marginalized locations. Multiracial feminism recognizes the significance of marginalized vantage points and suggests that these are locations from which new, more comprehensive knowledge may be gleaned (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996).

Ultimately, these two analytic frameworks come together in this work via their commitment to analyzing women's lives as diverse lives. It is seemingly from different commitments, but both of these frameworks suggest that the category "women" can not be universalized. Multiracial feminism suggests that women are diverse and continually involved in a process of testing, refining and reshaping broader categories of race, class, gender and sexuality in their own image (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996, p. 327). Similarly, Gerson (1985) suggests that all women encounter a variety of social conditions that may

either constrain or augment their opportunities to strive for a particular goal. Perhaps, most important to the intermingling of these analytic framework is their recognition of women's agency. Despite encountering multiple forms of inequality, each of these women exercised agency and created viable paths toward collegiate softball. Through the application of multiracial feminism (Baca Zinn and Dill, 1996) and a developmental analysis (Gerson, 1985), this diversity is acknowledged and relied upon to clarify commonalties and differences in the experiences of this select group of women.

Social Conditions that Sustained Paths To Collegiate Softball

What are the social conditions that sustained these women as they made paths toward collegiate softball? Clearly, each of them faced shifting social conditions and structural inequalities along the way, and yet they did not stray far from their paths. It seems that several conditions worked to sustain these women along their paths. The significant sustaining social conditions identified here are a) developing a baseline orientation for sport, b) accessing elite organized sport structures, and c) obtaining familial support. I will discuss each of these sustaining social conditions in the following section.

Baseline Orientations for Sport

In considering baseline orientations, it is important to note that the majority of the women who participated in the present research were born after Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act (1972) had legislated that any educational institution receiving public money must provide equal opportunities for educational success among it's diverse students. Because athletics are considered part of the educational mission of many schools, Title IX became the law through which women began to assert their right

to athletics related resources, including athletic scholarships for college. As a cohort, the women interviewed for this research were structurally privileged as compared to earlier cohorts of women. In real-life terms, despite the slowness of compliance to Title IX, these women were among the first cohort of beneficiaries of this significant social structural change. Thus, their chances for developing baseline orientations for sport may have been increased, although it is hard to know for sure. Moreover, the encouragement and support received by these women from a variety of socializing agents at relatively early ages was significant to the development of baselines for sport.

It is also interesting to note the temporal variety in the development of baseline orientations for sport. Current collegiate athletes as compared to former collegiate athletes were more likely to have established a baseline for sport involvement at an early age, typically by age seven, while some reported not getting started until their early teen years. Although, more important than age, how parents, siblings and significant others interacted with these young women about sport was integral to the development of baseline orientations for sport. As Gerson (1985) suggested these baseline orientations are merely early goals or expectations that will surely be tested as women move toward adulthood and encounter a variety of social conditions. A model of baseline orientations is shown in appendix M.

Accessing Elite Organized Sport Structures

ASA softball has become the premier site for the promotion and recruitment of potential collegiate softball athletes. ASA softball is a sophisticated, nationwide organization of softball teams ranging in age from about ten to adult. ASA softball tournaments and teams are not easily accessed by all young girls, thus, it becomes a

major factor influencing the decisions that young women make about collegiate softball. A division one athlete interviewed for this study suggested that playing travel ball is not so much an option as it is a requirement for softball athletes who hope to play collegiate ball. When I asked her if she had played travel ball she responded,

Yeah! You have to! ASA, and I also played travel soccer. You have to in order to make it to this level.

Connie's emphatic response underscores the salience of travel ball for those young women who desire to make it onto the roster of one of the nation's top ranked softball teams. In fact, more than two thirds (67%) of the women interviewed reported regular participation in ASA summer softball leagues throughout their high school years. Among the remaining 33 percent, half of these women reported some participation in ASA summer softball, and despite having breaks in the action these women benefited from increased visibility on elite teams, increased competitive level of play, and association with other women who were making their way to collegiate softball. In all, nearly 80 percent of the women interviewed had some level of involvement with ASA summer softball prior to, during and/or after their collegiate careers.

The prominence of ASA softball in the collegiate recruitment process may make it difficult for any athlete to move directly to collegiate softball without having competed in ASA summer softball tournaments. In fact, a recent report from ASA boasted that 80 percent of the 1999 pool of division one softball athletes were recruited from ASA venues (Abell, 1999). Participation in ASA is itself a privileged experience, as doing so requires financial resources. In some cases, those women who were unable to pay the fees and travel costs associated with ASA softball either played intermittently or were

“sponsored” due to their superior skill. Thus, in many instances Latinas who experience financial disadvantage must perform better than their white, middle class peers in order to earn a spot on the roster of an ASA traveling team. Moreover, until getting involved in elite ASA softball, many of these women had participated on teams that were predominantly Latina, but ASA teams were often predominantly white.

Obtaining Familial Support

Among the 27 women who participated in the present study, many recalled having to gain parental support for initial and continued involvement in sport. Yet, contrary to conventional wisdom, Latino/a families did not generally hold negative sentiment for sport. More accurately, the ambivalence that many women experienced in their families came out of a history of exclusion from middle class structures of organized sport and higher education. Thus, all women had to make the case for initial involvement, some more vehemently than others. But, even after initial consent was gained, those women who came from working class families especially had to make the case for continued involvement. Bugs talked about her experience educating her father about the financial benefits of playing softball in college. Mickey discussed how her mother’s financial concerns were assuaged when she learned about Mickey’s softball-related financial resources for attending college.

Perhaps more to the point, once these women gained the support of their families they had it in full. Parents were at games: home and away. Parents made vacation and travel plans to accommodate summer softball tournaments. Parents located youth sport leagues when none were available nearby. Parents, especially mothers even practiced softball skills with their daughters. One interviewee told about her struggles with

standardized tests. Realizing that her score on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) would influence her choices for higher education and collegiate softball, she and her mother developed a routine for studying. There are several examples of parental support received by these 27 women. What is most significant is not that they sometimes had to request support for sport involvement, but that each of these women enjoyed varied types of support from a parent or other significant adult. This support seemed to sustain them along their paths.

Social Conditions that Rerouted Paths To Collegiate Softball

Several social conditions nearly pushed these women away from their paths. It is difficult to analyze conditions that rerouted paths when each of the women interviewed here eventually made their way to some level of collegiate softball. Yet, these women alluded to many social conditions that were constraining forces in their decision-making and in their experiences of collegiate softball. It is imperative to begin to identify those conditions that may negatively impact women's decisions about sport involvement. Among the women interviewed here, the social conditions that caused the most significant constraint or detours were a) multiple inequalities, b) educational dislocation and gatekeeping, and c) exploitation of financial need.

Multiple Inequalities in Sport Contexts

Beliefs about race held by coaches and teammates often marginalize Latinas in softball contexts and influence decisions about continued involvement in collegiate softball. For example, conversations among teammates in predominantly white team contexts often included constructions of neighborhoods, schools and or people as racial outsiders. In Micaela's case, her teammates joked about her enrollment in a "gang school".

While such comments seem like idle banter, they are powerful statements that draw racial lines between the one or two Latinas and their typically white teammates and coaches. Such statements take on even more power as they are often uttered in the safety of middle class white neighborhoods to which the women I interviewed often had to travel in order to compete at an elite level.

Data also suggested that bi-racial Latinas who are white and Latina hold more power among their peers than do Latinas who are African American and Latina. In fact, it is significant that two women who are both Latina and African American provided the most in depth discussions about the salience of race in collegiate athletics. In describing their own experiences they suggested that a) they relate better with Latina teammates as compared to white teammates, b) they sense that white teammates are careful about what they say around them, and c) they have at times felt racially stereotyped by coaches. Feelings of difference in terms of physical appearance, style of interaction, coach behavior and interpersonal contact outside of softball were experienced by several of the women interviewed. Several women suggested that coaches did not make any effort to address the obvious issues that stratified student athletes.

Heterosexist structures and pervasive messages about appropriate sexualities also had varied influences on these women as they made decisions about collegiate softball. For some women diverse sexualities were part of a liberating experience in sport, while for others accusations of lesbianism were threatening. For several of the women interviewed interactions with lesbian identified Latina teammates became avenues to explore their beliefs about sexuality, perhaps even examine their own sexualities in relation to their teammates. Precisely because Latinas have been presumed to fall outside

of conventional norms of womanhood, Latinas may also have their own varied, unconventional perspectives on sexualities. This unique perspective may have enhanced opportunities to connect with other Latinas across sexualities, and may also have decreased their feelings of conflict as accusations of lesbianism abounded.

As Cuadraz (1992) argued, “Educational institutions do not reduce inequalities, but accentuate them, especially as socialization into and through higher education may simply be a continuance of the socialization received by youth in their middle and upper class homes” (p.32). Cuadraz (1992) argued that although scholarship women were “pushed to the margins, they were really insiders to the very social structure that reproduced such inequalities. In fact, these women were in a unique position to experience the contradictions of being inside in an outside way” (p. 32). These data illustrate how paths toward collegiate softball are shaped by experiences of multiple inequalities. It is also apparent that in the absence of any commitment to social equity in collegiate softball, it remained wholly incumbent upon this selected group of Latinas to develop strategies for safely interacting across class, sexual, racial and ethnic divides.

Educational Dislocation and Gatekeeping

Several of the women interviewed expressed feelings of marginality in the classroom and suggested that softball was the only thing that kept them going to school. In some ways softball exacerbated their struggles within educational settings and in other ways softball became a much-needed link to the academic institution enhancing chances for success. This discomfort in school settings resulted in poor attendance and poor academic records for some women, effectively reducing their chances of acceptance to many colleges. Picou, McCarter and Howell (1985) examined student achievement

beyond high school and found that white men benefited most from athletic involvement in terms of educational attainment and eventual employment opportunities. They also found a striking negative effect for sport involvement in the educational attainment and eventual employment opportunities among black women. These data suggest that educational and athletic achievements have different consequences for different people. Women of color may be socially and structurally situated in such a way that sport participation may actually hamper their attempts at educational and employment progress. Much of this may be seen among the women in the present study as they struggled to balance achievement in academic and athletic realms while navigating an elitist educational system that contested their presence in various ways.

One way that the presence of Latinas was contested was by academic counselors who seemed to assume that these young women were not interested in college. While there were varied reasons why many of these women did not access the typical collegiate and athletic recruitment structures, academic counseling was a significant one. One woman suggested that her high school counselors never asked her about college or about her career goals. She felt that they had made faulty assumptions about her desire and ability to go on to college. Even those young women who received useful information from academic counselors were at a loss when it came to learning about and completing the required NCAA eligibility forms. For example, Lucy performed well in school and had clear collegiate goals, but her academic counselor's knew very little about collegiate athletic eligibility. She had to research the process herself to make sure she was eligible to compete in NCAA athletics. For several of these women, disinterested and incomplete academic counseling resulted in yet another detour in their paths to collegiate softball.

A related detour for some of the women interviewed was enrollment in community college. Some of the women interviewed suggested that low or no SAT scores, financial constraints and previous positive contact with community college coaches lead them to enroll in a local community college following graduation from high school. Thus, while not the direct path that many women wish to take to division one or two collegiate softball, many of the women interviewed successfully transferred to a four-year university in their junior year. This runs contrary to research that suggests that community colleges often act as holding grounds for Latinas rather than springboards to four-year universities (Nora & Rendon, 1994). Despite this unusually high transfer rate among Latinas, the fact remains that community college was a detour to a more direct route toward division one and two collegiate softball.

Exploitation of Financial Need

The limited availability of athletics related financial aid creates tension among teammates and predisposes Latinas to exploitation in an athletic system where most student-athletes expect to receive payment for their athletic participation. Latinas who receive both athletics related aid and “need-based” aid often experience a backlash from teammates who receive less institutional financial support. One woman described her experiences as having to prove that she was not at college to “free load”, that indeed she paid every bit of her living expenses and college costs with the small amount of financial aid that she received. Additionally, Latinas are at risk for being exploited by the institution of softball precisely because they do show financial need. At many schools, compliance to gender equity legislation has resulted in the expansion of team rosters without an equal expansion in scholarship moneys. Thus, Latinas who qualify for need-

based aid may automatically receive only need-based aid, leaving more athletics dollars to be spread out among their teammates who do not qualify for need-based aid. The hidden consequences of such practices are a) Latinas will be disproportionately enrolled in need-based, remedial type financial aid programs in which they are subjected to monitoring of their social and academic adjustment to college, b) Latinas will receive little or no financial recognition for the athletic talent that they bring to their respective programs, and c) competition among Latinas for limited spots in collegiate softball will increase.

Summary

In the preceding discussion I have laid out what I see as the social conditions that may sustain and those that may reroute paths to collegiate softball. I have suggested that a) developing a baseline orientation for sport, b) accessing elite organized sport structures, and c) obtaining familial support were each significant sustaining social conditions. In contrast, I have suggested that a) multiple inequalities, b) educational dislocation and gatekeeping, and c) exploitation of financial need may undermine paths to collegiate softball. I will now turn to an emerging typology of paths to collegiate softball.

A Typology of Paths to Collegiate Softball

It ought to be clear by now that even among this abbreviated and select group of women, paths to collegiate softball were divergent. Relevant to the sustaining and undermining social conditions discussed earlier, a typology of paths has emerged from these data. It is with respect to the previously discussed social conditions as overarching conditions that I now illustrate a more discreet typology of paths. I have identified three

distinguishable paths that were traveled by the women who made up this select group of athletes. The typology includes a) direct paths to division one, b) direct paths to division two, and c) detours through community college. I suggested earlier that these paths are “discreet”, however, the more I attempt to articulate them as discreet paths to collegiate softball, the more clear it is that while particular social conditions may shape all paths, individuals navigate their own paths. Thus, they are really quite unique in shape. At the same time, my goal here is to illustrate the social conditions that manifest themselves in particular direct or indirect paths to collegiate softball.

Direct Paths to Divisions One (DDI)

One would think that women who reported direct support from parents and high access to organized youth sport would make up the group that made direct paths to division one collegiate softball. Indeed, the 12 women (44% of total) who began their collegiate careers in division one participated in organized youth sport leagues from an early age and as a group were the most consistently involved in ASA travel ball. These women were Carmen, Micaela, Lucy, Connie, Jane, Karen, Nicole, Julie, Alma, Miranda, Monica and Christina. Parental education was the highest among this group, with 63 percent of parents attending and/or graduating from college, 29 percent completing high school, and eight percent completing less than 12 years of formal education. Three parents held advanced degrees, effectively increasing their insight to the collegiate social structure. Interestingly, 33 percent of mother’s did not work outside of the home while 66 percent did. This may partially explain the ability of mothers to transport their daughters to youth leagues outside of their immediate community, as well as the ability of families to pay for involvement in elite youth sport leagues. Among this group of 12

women were at least three who were academically confident and elite, and several who were the most elite collegiate and sanctioned amateur softball athletes in the nation.

The distinguishing characteristics of this group of women were a) consistent participation in ASA travel ball, b) post-high school educational attainment of parents, c) mother's participation in the labor force, d) mother's commitment to accessing sport resources, e) elite academic or athletic talent, and e) receipt of financial aid and scholarship money.

Direct Paths to Division Two (DDII)

Six of the 27 women interviewed (22%) made direct paths from high school to division two collegiate softball. These women were Sydney, Josie, Rita, Bugs, JJ and Kim. Division two athletic programs are often smaller and less visible than division one programs, making them less inviting to the most elite athletes. They may provide less athletic related aid, and rely on other forms of "need-based" financial aid to fund their student-athletes. At least three of these women received Educational Opportunity Program funding, and all of them received partial athletic scholarships as well. The availability of funding was significant for these women in maintaining their paths toward collegiate softball. Various social conditions shaped individual financial need including parental divorce, additional siblings in college, and limited family income.

Among the parents of these women 58 percent had attended and/or graduated from college, 17 percent completed high school, and 25 percent had completed less than 12 years of formal education. Also among this group 83 percent of mothers were employed, 17 percent did not work outside of the home. This increase in mother's employment over the division one group reflects the relationship between educational

attainment and income potential. As a group the parents of the division two women were less formally educated, perhaps creating an increased need for dual-parent incomes.

Beyond demographic characteristics, this group is unique in that nearly all of these women suggested that being successful in k-12 educational settings was a constant struggle. For instance, Sydney talked about working extra hard just to earn passing grades, while JJ talked about feeling uncomfortable in her socially stratified school environment. Moreover, several of these women indicated that softball was the link that kept them attending and eventually completing high school. Softball also became the initial reason some of these women went on to college. This is especially significant to note as a possible indication of how women may learn to exploit the same collegiate athletic system that will surely exploit them.

The characteristics that illustrate this particular collegiate softball path are a) participation in ASA travel ball, b) limited post-high school educational attainment of parents, c) mother's increased participation in the labor force, d) academic difficulties, e) negative experiences in educational settings, and e) receipt of financial aid and scholarship money.

Detours Through Community Colleges (IDII)

Eight (30%) of the women interviewed began their collegiate careers in community colleges. These women were Melissa, Marie, Ise, Marisol, Mickey, Gloria, Yolanda and Rosalia. All, but two of these women had successfully transferred to a four-year university and division one or two softball program at the time of the interviews. The two who had not yet transferred, were just beginning their second year at the community college. What is incredibly common among this group of women is the

educational attainment of parents. While six percent of parents had attended some college, a whopping 81 percent had only completed high school, and 13 percent had completed less than 12 years of formal education. Thus, among the women who began their collegiate careers at community college, a full 94 percent of parents had no experience with higher education. Not surprisingly, this group also showed the highest employment level among mothers, with a full 88 percent in the labor force, most likely out of family financial need.

It is in this group of women that conflicts with academic counselor's were identified, family and household transitions were acknowledged, breaks in educational goals were experienced, and older siblings also had attended community college. What is remarkable about this group of women is their resiliency and perseverance. Despite this educational detour, seventy five percent of these eight women successfully transferred to a four-year university and either a division one or two softball program.

The distinguishing characteristics of this particular collegiate softball path are a) late or limited participation in ASA travel ball, b) limited educational attainment of parents, c) mother's increased participation in the labor force, d) academic difficulties, e) negative experiences with academic counseling and guidance, and f) limited financial resources.

Summary

In this section I have described somewhat discreet paths to collegiate softball. I have illustrated the factors that make up a) direct paths to division one, b) direct paths to division two, and c) detours through community college. While a typology makes these data seem more discreet than they actually are, it is a helpful tool in examining the real

consequences of social conditions. In the typology, particular social conditions are more clearly articulated as influences in the choices women make about sport involvement. For example, parental educational attainment bears out as the most significant distinguishing characteristic, especially as it is clearly related to other important factors, such as parent occupation and opportunity to participate in elite organized youth sport leagues. A model of these divergent paths appears in appendix N.

Recommendations for Sport Leaders

At this point in the manuscript I am compelled to articulate my beliefs about what Eitzen (1999) so adeptly refers to as “the duality of sport” (p. 8). Eitzen (1999) suggests that while sport is magical, captivating and compelling, it also reproduces many negative aspects of current social arrangements. He further suggests that “understanding sport must precede any effort to change it for the better” (p. 8). I too believe in the value of many different forms of sport and am committed to making meaningful sport experiences available to all women, not just those who are athletically and financially elite. At the same time it is painfully apparent that all levels of sport are becoming increasingly privatized and elitist in structure (Coakley, 1998), and thus, exclusionary in practice. But, as a critical theorist, I take heart in a belief that sport experiences and sport structures are constructed by people and as such are changeable. It is with these contradictions and a critical framework that I provide the following recommendations for enhancing opportunities and experiences in collegiate softball. I will make recommendations in the following categories a) families and communities, b) secondary schools, c) colleges and universities.

Families and Communities

Family members as youth sport volunteers and as socializing agents for young girls and women need to be included in decision-making about organized youth sport leagues. Beyond the inclusion of families in the development, delivery and evaluation of organized youth sport leagues, they also ought to be included in the recruitment process. Coaches, academic counselors and other educational staff must make meaningful efforts to inform and educate parents about opportunities for collegiate athletic involvement. To increase effectiveness of such projects, parents of current or former collegiate athletes ought to be employed as peer-educators. This may be especially helpful in cases where student-athletes are the first in their families to attend college, English is not the primary language spoken at home, and parents are locked into lower blue collar employment. Offering convenient, community-based, community facilitated educational sessions about accessing collegiate softball will surely increase opportunities for Latinas to make more direct paths toward division one softball.

Secondary Schools

Teachers, administrators and coaches in middle and high school must attend to the needs of diverse students. It is imperative that administrators promote a climate of success for all students in an environment that advocates for all students. This may be accomplished by promoting cross-cultural awareness in all academic subjects. For example, a discussion of the Mayan and Aztec pyramids may enhance a lesson in physics, social studies, history, art, and even physical education. Including racial and ethnic minority groups in the day-to-day curriculum may enhance student feelings of belonging in the classroom. Moreover, all school personnel need to clearly articulate

expectations of success to all students, but especially to those who have inherited a legacy of educational dislocation. Finally, all students and parents ought to be thoroughly counseled on how to access a four-year college education, including academic requirements, financial resources, collegiate athletics requirements, and community college opportunities. Yes, this task is rightfully placed in the hands of secondary school personnel, as they have early opportunities to set all students up for success.

In terms of school-based athletics, coaches, teachers and administrators ought to collaborate to encourage participation from a broad and diverse range of students. Student-athletes ought to be consulted about the form and purpose of school-based athletics, especially in this era of the declining significance of school sports. Where possible, schools ought to offer both recreational sport activities and elite, competitive activities for students. All students ought to be fully educated about opportunities for sport involvement in college, including both recreational and highly competitive forms of sport. Sport ought to be seen as a site for transforming racial relations, class conflicts, and ideologies about sexualities.

Colleges and Universities

Collegiate coaches hold a great deal of power in the lives of their student-athletes. They ought to use that power in ethical, student-centered ways. Two things that are most obvious from these interviews are that a) coaches ought to communicate about more than softball with their athletes, and b) coaches ought to become role models in the development of cross-cultural competence. It is clear from the interviews here that coaches fail to serve their student-athletes when they avoid dealing with issues of race, ethnicity, class and or sexuality on their teams. The burden of racial harmony should not

fall on the shoulders of the few women of color who have made their way into collegiate softball. All coaches in collegiate softball ought to collaborate in creating safe spaces for diverse women to come together in an empowering athletically elite experience. Coaches also ought to make time to talk with their student-athletes about academic goals, family situations, and experiences across campus. Clearly, not all coaches have the interpersonal skills to communicate effectively about things other than softball. In these cases, an assistant coach or other staff member ought to have this type of communication as their primary responsibility.

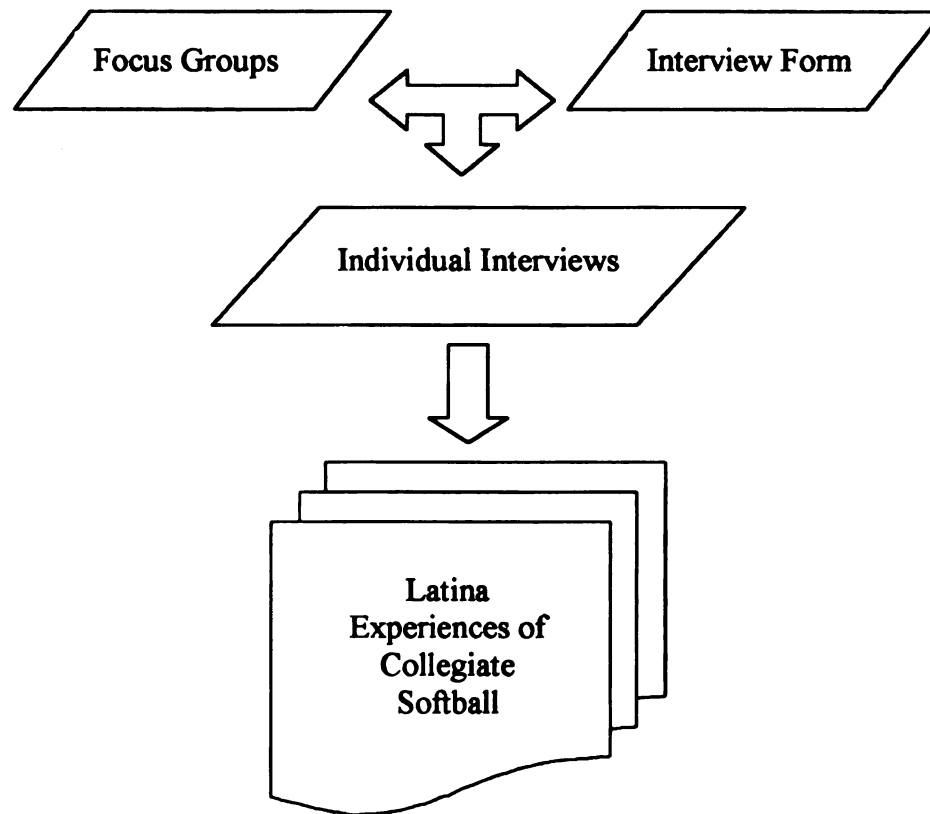
Coaches also ought to set examples as persons who are committed to increasing their cross-cultural competence. That is, coaches ought to respectfully ask about the lives of student-athletes, assistant coaches, and other staff members in order to learn about and come to value different ways of life. This should not be seen as counter to the team-building and cohesiveness desired for successful teamwork, but should be included as a significant aspect of it. A particularly important way to establish one's program as one that values cross-cultural competence is to identify, guide, and promote student-athletes of color into leadership roles within softball programs. A growing number of Latinas are earning positions as assistant coaches in elite collegiate softball programs, but it remains to be seen if these women will soon move into head coaching positions. Establishing a caucus for women of color within the Collegiate Softball Coaches Association may be another way to promote leadership opportunities for Latinas and others. Certainly, there is room for creativity in the project of making collegiate softball more equitable for *all* women.

Summary

In this chapter I have articulated what I believe to be the most significant social conditions in the experiences of the 27 women who so graciously shared their stories with me. I have maintained a focus on pathways and suggested that the early expectations of these women were subjected to a host of both fortifying and undermining social conditions as they moved toward adulthood. To further illustrate the influence of social conditions on the choices women make about sport involvement, I have delineated a typology of paths that these women traveled. I have also suggested that families, schools and universities ought to do more to ensure high quality sport experiences for all girls and women, not just the most athletically and financially elite.

It is not enough that record numbers of girls and women participate in sport. We must continue to examine collegiate athletic structures and ask “At what cost do such opportunities become available?”, and “To whom do the benefits of current social arrangements accrue?”, and finally “How can we make collegiate softball a more socially equitable site for all women?”

APPENDIX A
Diagram of Research Design



APPENDIX B

Former Collegiate Athlete Demographic Questionnaire

Please respond to every item completely and in a way that best represents what is true for you today. Blank lines have been left on some items so that you may write in your own most appropriate response. The information provided by you will be used to write a brief biographical statement about you (your name will not be used) for inclusion in the report of findings.

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Age

- ☐ 20-24 ☐ 25-29 ☐ 30-34 ☐ 35-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 50 & over

Latino/a Ethnicity

- ☐ Mexican ☐ Cuban ☐ Puerto Rican ☐ El Salvadoran ☐ _____

If different from above, please write in how you self-identify in terms of racial-ethnic heritage? (e.g., Mexican, Mexican-American, Latina, etc.)

Family generational status in the United States (e.g., my maternal grandmother was born and raised in the U.S. This makes 3 generations of my maternal family that have resided in the U.S.)

- Maternal ☐ 1 generation ☐ 2 generations ☐ 3 or more generations
Paternal ☐ 1 generation ☐ 2 generations ☐ 3 or more generations

Individual Annual Income

- ☐ 9,999 or less ☐ 10K to 14,999 ☐ 15K to 19,999 ☐ 20K to 24,999
☐ 25K to 29,999
☐ 30K to 39,999 ☐ 40K to 49,999 ☐ 50K to 59,999 ☐ 60K or more

How do you self-identify in terms of social-economic class?

- ☐ Lower Class ☐ Middle Class ☐ Upper Class ☐ _____

Sexuality

How do you self-identify in terms of sexual preference?

- ☐ Straight ☐ Gay ☐ Lesbian ☐ Bi-sexual ☐ Lesbiana ☐ _____

Highest Grade Completed

- ☐ H.S. + 1-2 yrs. Coll. ☐ H.S. + 3-4 yrs. Coll. ☐ H.S. + 5 or more yrs. Coll.

Highest Degree Earned

- ☐ Associate's ☐ Bachelor's ☐ Master's
☐ Doctoral ☐ Vocational ☐ _____

Current Occupation (please write in)

1. _____ 2. _____

FAMILY / NEIGHBORHOOD BACKGROUND

Mother's Race/Ethnicity (check all that apply)

- ☐ Mexican ☐ Puerto Rican ☐ El Salvadoran ☐ _____

Father's Race/Ethnicity (check all that apply)

- ☐ Mexican ☐ Puerto Rican ☐ El Salvadoran ☐ _____

Parents Highest Grade Completed

Mother ☐ 8th grade or less ☐ 9th - 10th grade ☐ 12th grade/GED
☐ H.S. + 1-2 yrs. Coll. ☐ H.S. + 3-4 yrs. Coll. ☐ H.S. + 5 or more yrs. Coll.

Father ☐ 8th grade or less ☐ 9th - 10th grade ☐ 12th grade/GED
☐ H.S. + 1-2 yrs. Coll. ☐ H.S. + 3-4 yrs. Coll. ☐ H.S. + 5 or more yrs. Coll.

Parents Occupation (please write in the most current)

Mother _____ Father _____

How would you describe the neighborhood in which you grew up? (Check all that apply)

☐ Predominantly Latino/a ☐ Predominantly White ☐ Mixed race/ethnicity
☐ Lower Economic Class ☐ Middle Economic Class ☐ Upper Economic Class
☐ Blue Collar Workers ☐ White Collar Workers ☐ Single Parent families
☐ Female heads of household ☐ Dual Parent families ☐ Parks/Playgrounds in walking dist.
☐ _____ ☐ _____

Of the girls in your high school that graduated the same year as you did, roughly what percentage went . . .

to work full time _____% away to a 4 yr. College/Univ. _____%
to a local 4 yr. College/Univ. _____% to a Community College _____%
to a vocational/trade school _____% on to collegiate athletics _____%

ATHLETICS BACKGROUND

High School Participation

Which sports did you play in high school?

☐ Softball ☐ Basketball ☐ Volleyball ☐ Track/Field ☐ Golf
☐ X-Country ☐ Swimming ☐ Tennis ☐ _____ ☐ _____

On these teams, were your teammates predominantly . . .

☐ White ☐ Latina ☐ African American ☐ Asian ☐ Native American ☐ Other

College Participation

Which sport(s) did you play as an intercollegiate athlete?

☐ Softball ☐ _____ ☐ _____

At what level did you compete in collegiate athletics?

☐ Community College ☐ Division I ☐ Division II ☐ Division III

On these teams, were your teammates predominantly . . .

☐ White ☐ Latina ☐ African American ☐ Asian ☐ Native American ☐ Other

Current Participation

If you currently (in the past year) participate in organized sport(s), list the sports below.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

At what level do you currently compete in these sports?

☐ Community Recreation ☐ Professional ☐ Sanctioned Amateur ☐ _____

On these teams, are your teammates predominantly . . .

☐ White ☐ Latina ☐ African American ☐ Asian ☐ Native American ☐ Other

Fictitious Name _____

Real Name _____

APPENDIX C

Latinas in Sport Background Questionnaire (II)

Please respond to every item completely and in a way that best represents what is true for you today. Blank lines have been left on some items so that you may write in your own most appropriate response. The information you provide will be used by the researcher to write a brief biographical statement about you (your name will not be used) for inclusion in the written report of findings.

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Age

☐ 20-24 ☐ 25-29 ☐ 30-34 ☐ 35-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 50 and over

Latino/a Ethnicity

☐ Mexican ☐ Cuban ☐ Puerto Rican ☐ El Salvadoran ☐ _____

If different from above, please write in how you self-identify in terms of racial-ethnic heritage? (e.g., Mexican, Mexican-American, Latina, etc.) _____

Family generational status in the United States (e.g., my maternal grandmother was born and raised in the U.S. This makes 3 generations of my maternal family that have resided in the U.S.)

Maternal ☐ 1 generation ☐ 2 generations ☐ 3 or more generations
 Paternal ☐ 1 generation ☐ 2 generations ☐ 3 or more generations

How do you self-identify in terms of sexuality? (e.g., straight, bi-sexual, lesbian, etc.) _____

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Individual Annual Income (if you are employed)

☐ 9,999 or less ☐ 10K to 14,999 ☐ 15K to 19,999 ☐ 20K to 24,999
☐ 25K to 29,999

Individual Annual Athletic Related Scholarship Funding

☐ Full ☐ Partial Amount \$ _____

Other Financial Aid/Resources (please list the source and the amount received annually)

Source _____	Amount \$ _____
Source _____	Amount \$ _____
Source _____	Amount \$ _____

How do you self-identify in terms of social-economic class?

☐ Lower Class ☐ Middle Class ☐ Upper Class ☐ _____
EDUCATION/CAREER

Highest Grade Completed

☐ H.S. + 1 yr. college ☐ H.S. + 2 yrs. college ☐ H.S. + 3 or more yrs. college

Highest Degree You Plan to Complete

<input type="checkbox"/> Associate's	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's	<input type="checkbox"/> Vocational
<input type="checkbox"/> Master's	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

Future Occupation/Career Choice (top 2 choices) 1. _____ 2. _____

Fictitious Name _____

Real Name _____

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Mother's Race/Ethnicity (check all that apply)

- ☐ White ☐ Black ☐ Eastern European ☐ Asian ☐ Latino/a
☐ Mexican ☐ Puerto Rican ☐ El Salvadoran ☐ _____

Father's Race/Ethnicity (check all that apply)

- ☐ White ☐ Black ☐ Eastern European ☐ Asian ☐ Latino/a
☐ Mexican ☐ Puerto Rican ☐ El Salvadoran ☐ _____

Parents Highest Grade Completed

- Mother ☐ 8th grade or less ☐ 9th - 10th grade ☐ 12th grade/GED
 ☐ H.S. + 2 yrs. ☐ H.S. + 4 yrs. ☐ H.S. + 5 or more yrs.

- Father ☐ 8th grade or less ☐ 9th - 10th grade ☐ 12th grade/GED
 ☐ H.S. + 2 yrs. ☐ H.S. + 4 yrs. ☐ H.S. + 5 or more yrs.

Parents Occupation (please write in the most current)

Mother _____ Father _____

How would you describe the neighborhood in which you grew up? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Predominantly Latino/a ☐ Predominantly White ☐ Mixed race/ethnicity
☐ Lower Economic Class ☐ Middle Economic Class ☐ Upper Economic Class
☐ Blue Collar Workers ☐ White Collar Workers ☐ Single Parent families
☐ Female heads of household ☐ Dual Parent families ☐ Parks/Playgrounds nearby

Of the girls in your high school that graduated the same year as you did, roughly what percentage went . . .

- to work full time _____% away to a 4 yr. College/Univ. _____%
to a local 4 yr. College/Univ. _____% to a Community College _____%
to a vocational/trade school _____% on to collegiate athletics _____%

ATHLETICS BACKGROUND

High School Participation

Which sports did you compete in at your high school?

- ☐ Softball ☐ Basketball ☐ Volleyball ☐ Soccer ☐ _____

On these teams, were your teammates predominantly . . .

- ☐ White ☐ Latina ☐ African American ☐ Asian ☐ Native Amer. ☐ Other

College Participation

Which sport(s) do you participate in as an intercollegiate athlete?

- ☐ Softball ☐ Basketball ☐ Volleyball ☐ Soccer ☐ _____

At what level did you compete in collegiate athletics?

- ☐ Community College ☐ Division I ☐ Division II ☐ Division III

On these teams, are your teammates predominantly . . .

- ☐ White ☐ Latina ☐ African American ☐ Asian ☐ Native Amer. ☐ Other

APPENDIX D

Focus Group Interview - Moderator's Guide

Introduction/Warm-up

- Welcome
- Purpose
- Type of information sought
- Guidelines
- Make people comfortable

Clarification of Terms

- Sport versus Sports
- Race, Ethnicity, Class, Gender
- Latinas

Easy/Non-Threatening questions

1. Tell us your name, where you played college ball, and what you are doing now.
2. How and when did you first become involved in sports?
3. Additionally, please tell us how you became so involved in softball.

The more difficult questions

1. What personal challenges did you face along the way to collegiate softball?
Are there examples in your own experiences of challenges based on race, class, gender, sexual preference, family values, general social constraints . . . ?
2. Of the challenges mentioned, are there some that you think are faced by Latinas today? Why?
4. What were the conditions that helped you to make it to collegiate softball?
Did particular conditions/support systems exist that helped you "make it"?
Can you relate an experience where support systems were instrumental in your "making it" to collegiate softball?
Were families, friends, teammates, coaches, teachers, others particularly supportive?
5. Are there particular statuses that go with being a collegiate softball player?
Were there social identities/statuses placed upon you due to your participation in collegiate sport/softball?
To what extent did these statuses have underlying racial-ethnic, class, or gender components to them?
6. In a brief statement, what does it mean to be Latina in collegiate softball today?

Wrap up

- Identify the major themes
- Organize major themes
- Final comments

Participant Check

- How does each member perceive selected issues (rank order card)

Closing Statements

- Required anonymity from all, for all
- Remaining questions?
- Thank you!

APPENDIX E

Individual Interview Schedule

Purpose: To gather detailed information regarding paths to collegiate sport, interpersonal relationships, consequences for involvement in sport, and constraints/augmentations to participation.

Questions

Path to Collegiate Athletics

Tell me about how you initially became involved in sports?

(did family members also play?)

Tell me about High school?

Tell me about Travel Ball?

Tell me how you came to be at this particular college?

Why did you choose to play softball, rather than other sports?

Challenges

Along the way, did you encounter challenges to your desire to play softball?

How were these challenges manifested?

Will you provide one or two examples?

Do you continue to receive challenges to your athletic involvement?

What form do these challenges now take?

Support Systems/Persons

Along the way, were there experiences, resources, people who facilitate or helped you to increase your opportunities to make it in softball?

What specific form did this take?

Do you continue to receive support, resources, and or people who augment your opportunities in softball?

What form do these take on now?

Interpersonal Relationships in Collegiate Softball

Are there particular issues that bring teammates together or divide teammates? What are they? (E.g., sexuality, scholarship money, ethnicity, race, language, etc.)

Do relationships typically work on and off the field? How so?

Consequences for Sport Involvement

To what extent have you faced positive and negative consequences for your involvement in sports?

Will you share a couple of examples with me?

Why do you suppose these consequences existed for you?

Benefits for Sport Involvement

To what extent have you received benefits for your involvement in sports?

Are there examples you would like to share with me?

Why do you suppose you received these benefits?

Why do you participate in sport? In softball?

Would you recommend that other women/Latinas participate in collegiate level sport? In softball? Why or Why not?

What does it mean to be Latina in collegiate athletics/softball today?

APPENDIX F

Informed Consent

You are invited to participate in a study being conducted by Kathy Jamieson as part of the requirements for the doctoral degree in Physical Education at Michigan State University. The study is specifically focused on the various paths to collegiate softball taken by Latinas. You will be asked to participate in an interactive, small group discussion of your experiences in sport and your thoughts on the current climate for Latinas in collegiate softball.

The small group discussion will include 4-8 participants and will last approximately ninety minutes. Prior to the interactive interview, you will be asked to complete a survey of individual background data regarding age, ethnicity, athletic experience, and other demographic information. During the interview, you will be asked to discuss how you became involved in sport, what you believe it is like for Latinas in collegiate sport today, and your most memorable moments in collegiate softball. Throughout the interactive group interview, your verbal responses will be heard and possibly commented upon by other interview participants. Additionally, the interviewer may observe you while in an organized collegiate softball setting.

Kathy Jamieson will hold all written and verbal responses in strict confidence, and all participants will remain anonymous in any report of the research findings. All information that you choose to share in the interview will be recorded by written notes and by audiotape. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may cease participation at any time without penalty. After completion of the study, an executive summary of the results will be available to you upon request.

I am sure you will be a valuable contributor to the group, and I would like to include you in the study. You may indicate your voluntary agreement to participate in the focus group interview by completing and returning the information. Your questions about this study are important and may be directed to Kathy Jamieson at (714) 639-9964 or by e-mail at: jamieso6@pilot.msu.edu

Thank you for your support of this research endeavor.

Participant Consent

I have read the information about the study on Latinas in fast-pitch softball, and agree to participate in a group interview. My signature below indicates that I freely choose to participate in this study.

Name:	_____	Signature	_____
Address	_____	City, State, Zip	_____
Phone	_____	E-mail	_____

Appendix G

Focus Group Invitation to Participants

December 2, 1997

Dear Ms.

*Did you know that Latinas make up roughly six percent of all female students on NCAA * affiliated college campuses, but account for less than three percent of all female student-athletes?*

You may also find it interesting to note that despite gains in collegiate sport opportunities for women, Latinas, Asian, Native American, African American and lower income women remain disproportionately under-represented in collegiate athletics. However, this phenomenon is difficult to understand because few research efforts have placed Latinas or other women of color at the center of analysis.

You have been identified as one of a relatively small number of Latinas currently involved in fastpitch softball in the state of California. I am writing to invite you to take part in a study aimed at understanding the varied experiences of Latinas in collegiate level sport, particularly softball. Your participation in this study will provide insight to the various paths that Latinas take to make it in collegiate sport, and will shed some light on inequalities that persist in this era of gender equity in women's sports.

Latinas who have played at least one year of collegiate level fast pitch softball, in any division, from 1988 to the present are eligible to participate in the study. Part of the study will include a one to two hour interview with a group of 6-10 Latina softball athletes, such as yourself. Another phase of the study will include an individual interview with the researcher that will last approximately one hour. This research is tentatively scheduled for November and January of the 1997/98 school year.

I am sure you will be a valuable contributor to the interviews. To be considered for participation in the present study, please complete the interest card below, detach it, place it in the envelope provided, and drop it in the mail by **Friday, December 19, 1997**.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns regarding this research.

Sincerely,

Kathy Jamieson

* The NAIA and NJCAA have not yet made these data available.

✂ Cut here ✂ Cut here ✂

Interest Card

☐ **YES!** I am interested in participating in the study on Latinas in sport. I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that I may cease participation at any time. Please contact me at the location indicated below with further details about the interviews.

Name: _____ College/Univ. _____
Address _____ City, State, Zip _____
Phone _____ E-mail _____

♥ Do you know others who may be eligible to participate in this study? Please list names on reverse.

APPENDIX H

Letter to Coaches of Current Athletes

December 2, 1997

Dear Coach,

Several of your student athletes have been identified as potential participants in a study regarding women of Hispanic heritage in collegiate softball. This research is part of my doctoral degree program at Michigan State University in the Department of Physical Education and Exercise Science. I hope to gain your support for inclusion of your student-athletes in the study.

I myself am from California and am a product of the California State University system, where I was also an athlete. In fact, as a student-athlete in 1983, I was the only Latina on my team. In Southern California, that is significantly disproportionate to the large number of Latinas in the state overall. My questions stem from a curiosity about why I got involved in collegiate sport and so many other Latinas did not. Given your experience, you may have some guesses of your own as to why Latinas participate in sport at disproportionately lower rates than do many other women.

Participants in the study will be asked to participate in one individual interview, and one focus group discussion (6-10 people per group) about experiences in collegiate sport. The interviews are tentatively scheduled for November and January of the 97/98 academic year, and will take place in California. Any student-athlete of Hispanic heritage, who has played at least one year of collegiate fastpitch softball in any division, from 1988 to the present is eligible to participate.

Enclosed*, please find one letter for each student-athlete identified as a potential participant in this study. The letter simply outlines the research, and requests a response by Friday, December 19, 1997. I would appreciate it if you would distribute the letters to your student-athletes as soon as possible, so that they may decide whether or not to participate.

Please contact me if you would like additional information about the study, or if you know of former student-athletes that I should invite to participate in the study.

Sincerely,

Kathy Jamieson

* If none of your current student-athletes were identified as eligible, no letters have been enclosed. However, a request for help locating former student-athletes is enclosed.

– PLEASE HELP –

I am trying to locate an address, phone, e-mail, smoke signal, whatever will work for the former student-athletes listed below. I would like to invite them to participate in the study on Latinas in sport.

If you know how I may contact them please provide that information in the table below. Or, if you prefer, you may provide my personal information to these former student-athletes and let them contact me.

Either way, I assure that any information provided will be used solely for the purpose of this research project.

Thanks very much for your support!



cut here • drop in mail



Name	Yrs. Played	Address	Phone	E-mail

APPENDIX I

Current Athlete Invitation to Participants

December 2, 1997

Dear

Did you know that Latinas make up roughly six percent of all female students on NCAA affiliated college campuses, but account for less than three percent of all female student-athletes?*

You may also find it interesting to note that despite gains in collegiate sport opportunities for women, Latinas, Asian, Native American, African American and lower income women remain disproportionately under-represented in collegiate athletics. However, this phenomenon is difficult to understand because few research efforts have placed Latinas or other women of color at the center of analysis.

You have been identified as one of a relatively small number of Latinas currently involved in fast pitch softball in the state of California. I am writing to invite you to take part in a study aimed at understanding the varied experiences of Latinas in collegiate level sport, particularly softball. Your participation in this study will provide insight to the various paths that Latinas take to make it in collegiate sport, and will shed some light on inequalities that persist in this era of gender equity in women's sports.

Latinas who have played at least one year of collegiate level fast pitch softball and currently compete in any division are eligible to participate in the study. You will be asked to participate in an individual interview with the researcher that will last approximately one hour. This research is tentatively scheduled for November and January of the 1997/98 school year.




I am sure you will be a valuable contributor to the interviews. To be considered for participation in the present study, please complete the interest card below, detach it, place it in the envelope provided, and drop it in the mail by **Friday, December 19, 1997**.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns regarding this research.

Sincerely,

Kathy Jamieson

* The NAIA and NJCAA have not yet made these data available.

	Cut here		Cut here	
Interest Card				
<input type="checkbox"/> YES! I am interested in participating in the study on Latinas in sport. I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that I may cease participation at any time.				
Please contact me at the location indicated below with further details about the interviews.				
Name:	_____	College/Univ.	_____	
Address	_____	City, State, Zip	_____	
Phone	_____	E-mail	_____	

 Do you know others who may be eligible to participate in this study? Please list names on reverse.

APPENDIX J

Informed Consent – Current Collegiate Athletes

You are invited to participate in a study being conducted by Kathy Jamieson as part of the requirements for the doctoral degree in Physical Education at Michigan State University. The study is specifically focused on the various paths to collegiate softball taken by Latinas. You will be asked to participate in an individual interview regarding your experiences along the way to collegiate softball.

The interview will last approximately sixty minutes and will be conducted at a mutually agreed upon location. As part of the interview, you will be asked to complete a survey of individual background data regarding age, ethnicity, athletic experience, and other demographic information. During the interview, you will be asked to discuss how you became involved in sport, what you believe it is like for Latinas in collegiate sport today, and your most significant experiences in collegiate softball. Additionally, the interviewer may observe you in a group setting while you are participating in organized collegiate softball activities.

All information that you choose to share in the interview will be recorded by written notes and by audiotape. Kathy Jamieson will hold all written and verbal responses in strict confidence, and all participants will remain anonymous in any report of the research findings. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may cease participation at any time without penalty. After completion of the study, an executive summary of the results will be available to you upon request.

I am sure you will be a valuable contributor to the group, and I would like to include you in the study. You may indicate your voluntary agreement to participate in the focus group interview by completing the consent form below. Your questions about this study are important and may be directed to Kathy Jamieson at (714) 639-9964 or by e-mail at: jamieso6@pilot.msu.edu

Thank you for your support of this research endeavor.

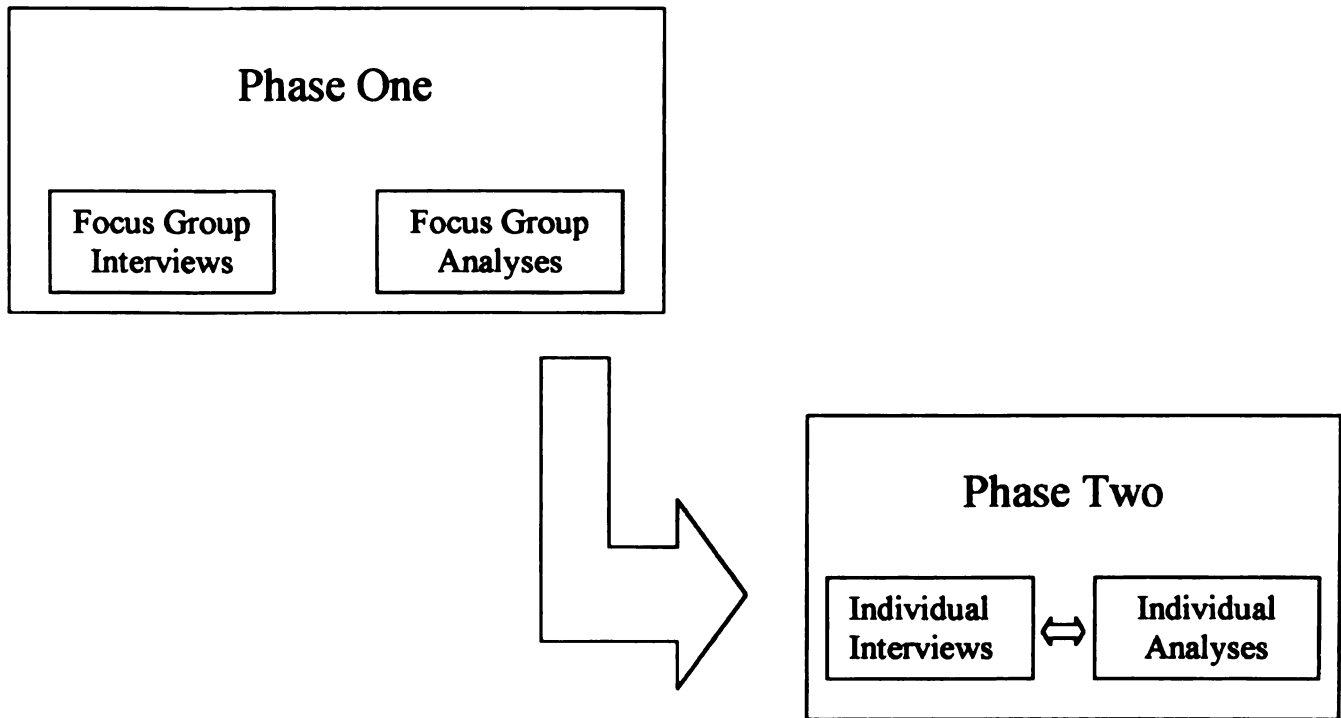
Participant Consent

I have read the information about the study on Latinas in fast-pitch softball, and agree to participate in an individual interview and possible observation. My signature below indicates that I freely choose to participate in this study.

Name:	_____	Signature	_____
Address	_____	City, State, Zip	_____
Phone	_____	E-mail	_____

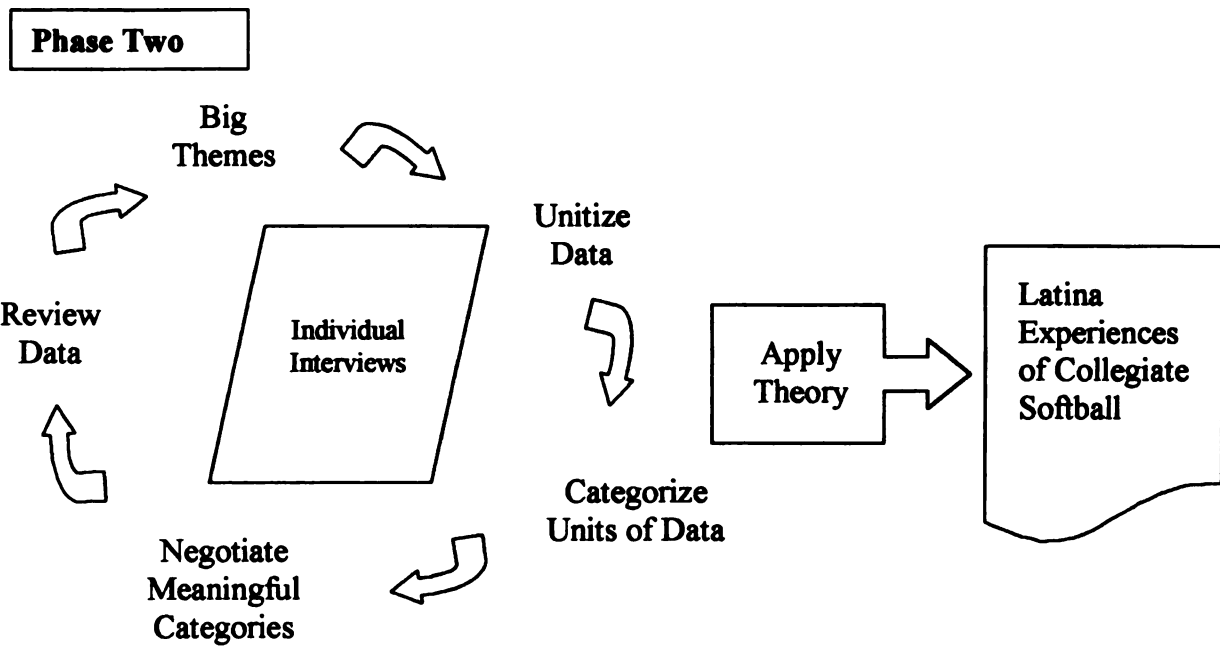
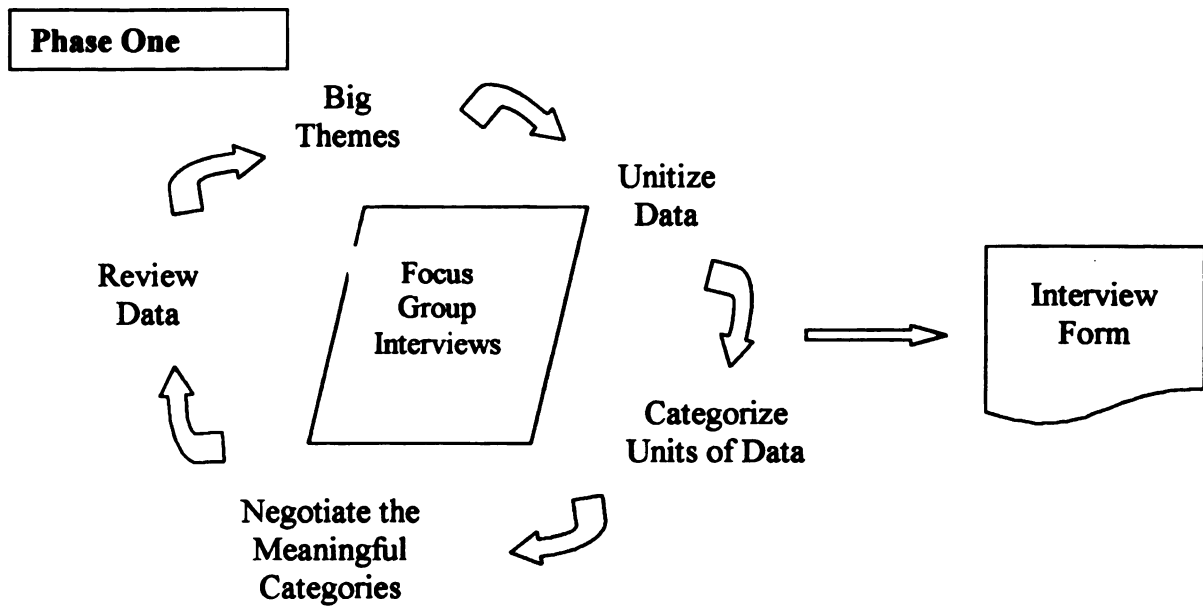
APPENDIX K

Diagram of Data Collection



APPENDIX L

Diagram of Data Analyses



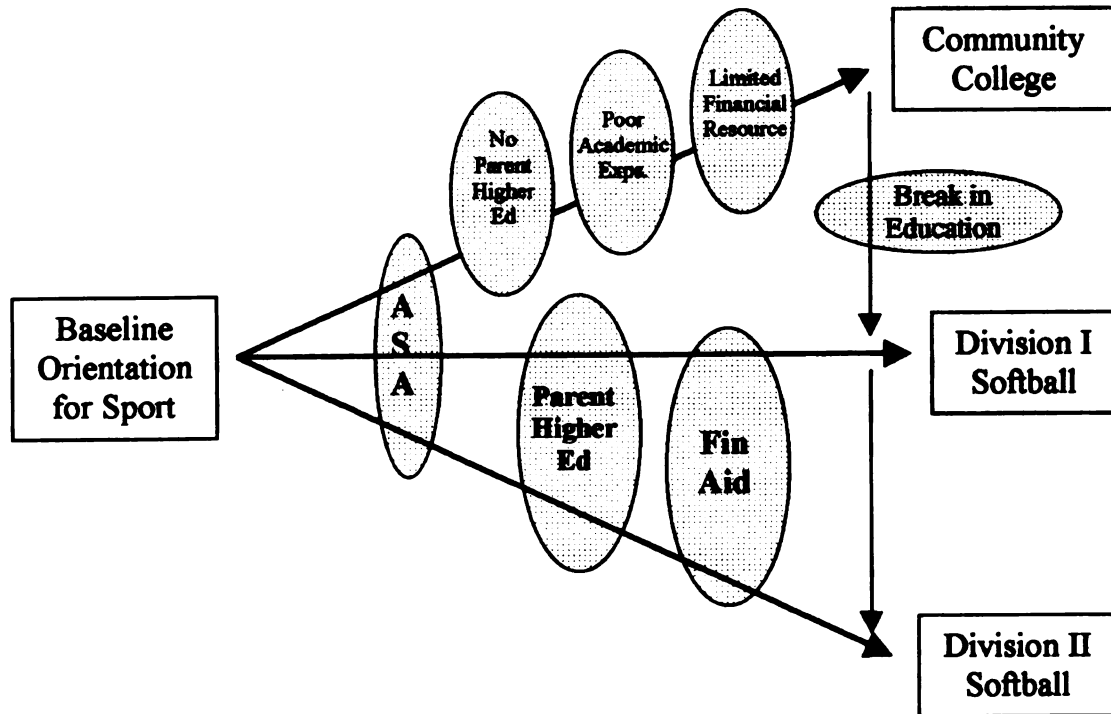
APPENDIX M

A Model of Baseline Orientations



APPENDIX N

A Typology of Paths to Collegiate Softball



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