

ADULT WOMEN'S LEARN TO PLAY HOCKEY EXPERIENCES: A CASE STUDY

DAINA PIDWERBESKI

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Abstract

The purpose of this research project was to examine the experiences of women enrolled in the Adult Learn-to-Play Hockey (ALTPH) program in Toronto, Ontario. The focus of this case study is to identify the barriers to participation in hockey and the ALTPH program, as well as the facilitators to participation in the ALTPH program. Using qualitative research methods, including semi-structured interviews, participant observation and autoethnographic methods, the research project gained in-depth insight to the lived experiences of women enrolled in the ALTPH program. Participants consisted of 12 adult women who attended the ALTPH program in the Fall of 2014, nine of whom were interviewed. In addition, this project includes an autoethnographic component, as the principal investigator was enrolled in the program. Findings indicate that barriers for earlier participation in hockey were *lack of opportunities, familial obligations and influences, inconvenient time and location logistics* and *access to equipment*. Facilitators that were identified are *family that plays, comfortable and friendly program environment, prior skating experience, social class* and *individual desire*. Lastly, participants emphasized the importance of enjoyment and fun, while simultaneously improving their hockey skills. This project contributes to the knowledge on women and hockey, helps address the gap in our understanding on adult women and novice hockey participation, and provides insight into the how stereotypes may shape women's sport participation across the lifespan.

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“Here’s to strong women. May we know them. May we be them. May we raise them.”

- Unknown, Amnesty International.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Prologue

They arrive one after another, each carrying or pulling a bag that is large enough to fit an adult human inside, plus room to spare. The bag is packed full of items that are required for what they are about to do. As they walk into the private rooms, they position their sticks against the wall, put their bag down and take their place on the bench. They are about to partake in something powerful, and with each move, they are one step closer to their time to shine. Opening the bag and beginning to arm their bodies is an individual experience, yet collectively taking place. With each piece of equipment, they are transforming into a new self: from lawyer, wife, banker, mom, businesswoman, and sister, to warrior. Each warrior knows what it takes to be in that room, doing what they are about to do and there is an excitement and a solemnity in the air that is palpable. But there is also laughter and chatter that fill the locker room, and the joy spills out on to the ice. At first, they are strangers coming together; but in sharing successes and failures, they are now a team. There will be competition surely, and frustration likely, but there will also be joy, community and respect, for they are now a women's hockey team.

Introduction

The first documented women's hockey game occurred in 1892, in Ottawa, Ontario, two years before the donation of the much regarded Stanley Cup to men's hockey (hockeycanada.ca, 2013). Despite its long history, women's hockey in Canada continues to receive less interest from media than men's hockey. Outside the Olympics, one is hard pressed to find media coverage. Although recently SportsNet has started broadcasting playoff games and special events

for the Canadian Women's Hockey League (CWHL), this contract is only until 2018 (Sportsnet.ca, 2014). Regular season games will still not be televised. This lack of coverage is surprising and unfortunate, as girls' and women's participation in hockey are growing. The most up-to-date statistics show that the number of female participants has exploded from 8,146 in 1990 to 85,624 in 2010 (Hockeycanada.ca, 2015). Even the adult learn to play hockey (ALTPH) programs continue to see increased enrolment. Moreover, at the time of writing, there is a waiting list to register for women's hockey in the league that offers the ALTPH program.

Women's hockey is largely the same as men's hockey with one significant difference: intentional body checking is prohibited. However, this rule is subjective and left open to interpretation by on ice officials. Proponents for the game often cite this difference as positive, since the players must then focus on skill (Theberge, 2003) and finesse, instead of brute force. Though there is technically no intentional body checking permitted in the game, there is plenty of physical contact including pushing, shoving, bumping, hitting, and many other forms of physicality that may or may not result in a penalty. Another difference is that women's hockey requires the use of cages, metal mesh attached to the helmet that protects the players' faces. There is no known published research that examines the social or cultural rationale or implications for this requirement. One could infer a connection between a woman's worth being measured by her beauty and the cage therefore protects a woman hockey player's most 'valuable' asset, her beauty, and reassures others of her femininity, despite engaging in a traditionally masculine activity. Indeed, the connection between gender and hockey is even more striking with respect to masculinity. Some scholars suggest that hockey, as it is traditionally defined, is a space which celebrates attributes that are integral to the bond between sport and men. Specifically, sport reproduces and reinforces dominant cultural ideals about gender (Dionigi,

2009). In the case of masculinity, one attribute said to be essential to sport and for men is aggression (Theberge, 2003). With regards to the dominant cultural ideals for hockey, this varies, but it is often accepted that men are naturally better hockey players because of their size, strength and aggression (Theberge, 1998).

After the first documented game in 1892, women's hockey continued to make ground until the Great Depression when the first intercollegiate league was dissolved in 1933. From this date forward, it is difficult to find information on women's hockey until 1967 at which time a tournament was held with 22 women's teams participating. This revitalization of women's hockey may have been a result of second wave feminism in the late 1960s. This tournament continued for the following thirty years, with over 200 teams participating in 1997. It is unknown however why the tournament ended after this time. Perhaps it lost interest and participation to the World Women's Hockey Championship which began in 1990. At this time, the Canadian team won gold. Eight years later, women's hockey was introduced to the Olympic stage. The game has since continued to see an increase in participation (hockeycanada, 2013). Despite these advances in women's hockey and the large number of girls and women across Canada who were playing hockey, they faced adversity, being criticized for playing aggressively, and lacking financial and fan support (Adams, 2011). This adversity is still seen today.

I faced challenges to my participation in hockey, albeit on a smaller scale. I was not enrolled in hockey as a child, and instead played many other non-contact sports. Recently, family members questioned me as to why I would want to play hockey in the ALTPH program. I was also warned that hockey is for boys and I would get injured. My grandmother, who often recalls a time in which girls did not do much of what we do today, was particularly disproving. She was socialized to believe the gender and sport stereotypes that often impact the choices and

availability of certain sports for women. Upon discovering the ALTPH program, I was immediately curious about the participants. I needed to know more about these women. Thus, the study was guided by two research questions. The first research question being, what are the barriers and facilitators, if any, to participants', in this case adult women, prior hockey exposure. The second question is what are the lived experiences of women enrolled in the ALTPH program?

This study furthers our understanding of the ways in which participation in confrontational team sport can simultaneously reproduce but also resist dominant notions about gender, specifically femininity. Furthermore, the context of this particular case study being an ALTPH program presents insight into unique experiences and provides a new picture of women in sport that has yet to be examined since most research regarding women and hockey thus far has focused on more elite levels of play (e.g., Theberge, 1998, 2003). This study also helps fill the gap in knowledge regarding older women's participation in sport, as there is limited literature published that examines this unique experience (Dionigi, 2009).

Thesis Overview

The second chapter of this thesis provides a review of existing literature pertaining to women's hockey experiences, focusing on barriers and facilitators to their participation in sport. The chapter examines various sociocultural factors influencing women's participation in sport. Moreover, it elaborates on the following relevant areas: contextual factors, barriers, physicality and its development, ageing, women and sport, and being a good mother and wife. In Chapter Three, I discuss the theoretical frameworks that influenced this study. The fourth chapter outlines the methodology that is employed in this study, including participant recruitment, data collection and analysis, and lastly ethical considerations and procedures. The results from the

data collection are discussed in Chapter Five. This includes a case description and key findings derived from interviews, observations and autoethnographic fieldwork. In Chapter Six, I analyze and discuss the findings in relation to the existing literature, and highlight findings that shed light on our understanding of stereotypes pertaining to gender operate across the lifespan, and the role of the family sport culture in hindering and facilitating participation in hockey. I also offer suggestions or implications for future research.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

The following review begins with an exploration of women and sport, women and hockey and ageing and sport participation, and ends with a discussion of the intersecting sociocultural factors, be they barriers or facilitators, that influence women's sport and active leisure participation. Active leisure is defined as physical activity that occurs in one's leisure time (Miller, Miller, Brown and Hansen, 2001), such as engaging in sport or other forms of exercise. For the review, I searched research databases such as Sport Discus, Scopus, Scholar's Portal and Sociological Abstracts. Key search terms included feminist theory and sport, gender and sport, social class and sport, women and hockey, ageing and sport participation, and novice female hockey participation. The literature searches did not yield any results for women beginning their hockey career as adults. In addition, many of the relevant studies were dated. Therefore, it is clear that there was a gap in our understanding of women's experiences in hockey, particularly novice players.

The sociological study of gender and sport had long been criticized for focusing exclusively on women and femininity, though the term gender is all-inclusive, and a subsequent shift occurred to be inclusive of all genders and how the gendering process affects all people (Hall, 2002). For instance, there is increasing recognition of how transgender identities can shape sporting experiences. Transgender, as defined by Vidal-Ortiz (2008), “ refers to people who generally refuse to take the gender binary as a given” (p. 435). Alternatively, Sykes (2009) uses the term ‘queer bodies’ to include those who identity as a sexual minority, gender minority, and those who have a physical disability. In her study, Sykes (2009) examined the impact heterosexism and ableism had on the sport participation of those who identify as queer— it was found that when her participants were younger, many faced discrimination based on their

identity, which in turn negatively impacted their sporting experiences. The discrimination faced by participants may have acted as a barrier to their sport participation. In contrast, Travers and Deri (2011) found that lesbian softball leagues offered trans participants a positive experience due to their emphasis on inclusivity, and they suggest that such leagues could offer some insight into the inclusion of transgender people in mainstream sporting leagues.

For the purpose of this study, the following discussion focuses on women and sport. It is integral that it is clearly stated that this section discusses women and sports, as forgoing the term ‘women’ has historically meant male sports (Hargreaves, 1994). Jennifer Hargreaves is a critical contributor to the body of knowledge on gender and sport. Her book, *Sporting females: Critical issues in the history and sociology of women’s sports* (1994), provides groundbreaking discussion on feminist theory and sport, as well as a thorough history of women and sport. For example, in the 19th century, women did not receive the same accolades and opportunities from sporting experiences as men did. It was still heavily believed that sport was for men and boys, relying on the biological, or more specifically, reproductive differences between men and women to justify the exclusion of women from traditional sporting culture. Moreover, medical professionals solidified these beliefs by producing ideas that reproduction and menstruation required all of women’s attention and energy, and that to participate in any other activities, including sport, was to risk the reproduction of healthy children (Hargreaves, 1994).

The shift in this thinking, according to Hargreaves (1994), coincides with the feminist movement in the early 20th century, during which time women’s sport participation quickly increased among middle to upper class women. Even medical professionals were shifting their beliefs surrounding women and their sport participation. This can be seen with the production of “medical gymnastics” (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 48) prescribed to women with the belief that women

can also benefit from physical activity. Nevertheless, conventional attire at the time limited women's full participation in sport because it was often extremely restrictive, as in the case of wearing a corset, or a full, heavy dress. Through long struggle and resistance, women began participating in sport more actively. Tennis was a site for women to thrive and to be seen as athletically capable, albeit still inferior to their male partners.

The rapid increase in women's sport participation is partially attributed to the development of physical education for girls. This is said to be due to the increase in well-trained teachers and the demand for better educational opportunities for girls (Hargreaves, 1994). The aforementioned advances led to schools developing physical activity curriculum that included things such as gymnastics, calisthenics, netball, tennis, swimming, dancing, and hockey. Women's slow increase in participation in sport aligns with the second wave of feminism in the late 1960's, which was characterized as women's liberation and activism (Hall, 1996). Along with these developments, our understanding of gender and sport has also evolved from static categories of analysis to socially constructed phenomenon (Birrell, 1988).

Moreover, what were once used to exclude women from sport, namely, the physical differences between men and women, are part of a broader social construction of identities closely linked to the maintenance of patriarchy. This shoring up of patriarchy can be seen in hockey, a sport that is traditionally male dominated and where men continue to be more celebrated and revered. Hockey is socially constructed as a male sport, and is a sport that serves to reproduce traditional gender stereotypes (Theberge, 1987). Traditional gender stereotypes hold that women should be soft, timid and shy (Malszecki & Cavar, 2005; Woolum, 1998); they certainly should not be engaging in contact sports. Women do, however, participate in these and other such activities that go against these norms. Some literature has investigated various areas

in which women experience contact sport, or confrontational team sports. The implications of this research and the gendered experiences are discussed in the subsequent section.

Physicality and its Development

Girls' self-confidence and physicality are also connected to the social construction of gender identity. Theberge (2003) examines the relationship between gender, physicality, and embodiment among adolescent girls. She writes that women's lack of trust in their bodies could be due to what Iris Young (1990) defines as "modalities of feminine bodily comportment" (p. 146). Young (1990) sees these modalities as prescriptions for movement given to girls by their social encounters characterized by timidity, hesitancy, and uncertainty. One of the most important settings for the development of these prescriptions of physical movement is the sport setting (Theberge, 2003) and have implications for boys' and girls' experience of their physicality. Coakley and Pike (2001), for example, found that boys have greater self-confidence and are more willing to test their sport abilities than girls, thus laying the groundwork for women's lack of trust in their bodies. This finding echoes Young's (1990) discussion of modalities of feminine bodily comportment. Moreover, girls in Theberge's (2003) study were less likely to see sport as part of their transition into adulthood than boys. The above findings suggest that boys may be more likely to see the sport arena as a place to grow and thrive, whereas girls' experiences may have limited those opportunities to have those feelings. This difference could have profound effects in the case of hockey, where some girls may be forced to play in boy's leagues if there are not many opportunities for girl's hockey in their nearby areas (Theberge, 2003). Not only would boys be praised for and have had numerous opportunities to develop their physicality, self-confidence, and trust in their bodies, hockey, like other sports, is a space that is founded on and reproduces the belief of the gender binary that separate players by a

categorical status, girl or boy. Differences in physicality then would only serve to reinforce this binary, and vice versa.

Though Nancy Theberge's (1987; 1998; 2003) work largely focuses on elite or more skilled hockey players who, unlike many other girls, were able to develop their self-confidence and physicality in the hockey arena, themes found in her research are still relevant for understanding the gendered hockey experience that women encounter, irrespective of level of play. Some feminist scholars believe that women need not participate in the sport as it is modeled by men and insist that women's hockey must remain an alternate form (Whitson, 1994). Whitson (1994) also questions the ability for hockey, as it is currently played, to be empowering for girls and women. The suggested alternate form does not focus on attributes associated with men's hockey, such as aggression (Theberge, 2005). In contrast, Theberge (2005) acknowledges that positive effects from participating in confrontational sports do occur, such as development of physical strength and competency. One such study by Theberge (2003) found that contact sports have the potential to be a significant source of women's empowerment, as these sports allow for direct physical opposition of opponents. Similarly, when discussing the physicality of her hockey experiences with body checking, a participant in an earlier study by Theberge (1997) states:

I've always been a stronger player. I've always had the satisfaction of being on top of people...it's hard to describe. How can I say it? It's just knowing that the other player is helpless. She can't do anything. She's totally out of the play. You've just won...I mean it's great satisfaction. (p. 73)

This view, specifically, the positive effects from participation in confrontational sports, is a position that I share and have experienced through playing hockey.¹ The question, though, of the place of intentional physicality is a complicated one and one that exists in men's hockey as well as women's. Mixed feelings regarding the place of body checking in women's hockey are described in Theberge's (2003) work, as some women feel it is a part of the game and should be allowed, whereas others feel that the pure form of hockey does not include that particular form of physicality. For example, one participant in Theberge's (1997) study explains:

I prefer it without. Maybe just because I've always played without. You know the women's game being a bit different from the men's game, it may actually be better without it. I like to think of it as more of a finesse game. And I don't know if any body contact has any part in it, really if it would enhance it in any way. I mean I think maybe the reason for having the body contact in the men's game is possibly just to make it more exciting to watch. I don't know. It's hard to say when you haven't really played that much (p. 74).

These mixed feelings towards body checking in women's hockey could speak to how beliefs regarding gender and femininity have been internalized. The above quote highlights a belief that the women's game should be about finesse and not strength or force like those seen in men's hockey. It is believed that women commonly use this as an explanation of the differences between men's and women's hockey, due to the internalized belief that women could not play at the same strength and speed as men, and therefore must define hockey in different terms. The internalization of such beliefs has been shown to act as a barrier to girls' participation in team sports (Wetton, Radley, Jones & Pierce, 2013). The previous findings highlight various

¹ Interestingly, the rules of women's hockey attempt to eliminate this source of satisfaction and empowerment through confrontation by prohibiting intentional body checking.

experiences young women have had with sport, but what are the physical activity experiences of women as they age? The following section examines the relationship between the ageing female body and athletics.

Ageing, Women and Sport

Girls' past experiences with sport likely has a strong impact on their future relationship with sport (Young, 1990). As the previous section demonstrated negative experiences resulted in decreased participation, in addition to the strong influence of gender stereotypes having a negative affect on adolescent girls sport participation (Wetton, et al., 2013), therefore, these previous experiences may limit the opportunities adult women may seek. On the other hand, adult women may be able to exercise agency and negotiate the barriers that young girls face, more successfully. For example, Litchfield and Dionigi (2012) found striking similarities across the lifespan in their study of older field hockey players aged 32-52, as well as Masters Athletes aged 55-90, and what sport means to them. They found that regardless of age, sexuality, childcare, family obligations and type of sport, these women expressed common meanings and sporting experiences. The similar themes that emerged included identity management by resisting existing stereotypes, empowerment and a sense of community or inclusivity. These themes were connected; for example, identity management via sport was related to the resistance of social norms and stereotypes, which in turn has the potential to lead to feelings of empowerment. As Grant (2001) explains, a "sense of self worth, identity and empowerment" (p. 795) can be found through the process of modifying and acclimatizing to your ageing body by way of participation in sport. One participant in Litchfield and Dionigi (2012) explained that she was known as a mother or her husband's wife, and it was only on the hockey field when she found her own identity. With regards to resistance of social norms, non-traditional sport

participation can “challenge restrictive social roles” (Litchfield & Dionigi, 2012, p. 9) when it is viewed as a choice, with control and self-determination in mind, or in other words, an exercise in agency.

Not only was identity management through sport said to empower women, it also was found to contribute to a sense of community. This sense of community can be described as a feeling that one belongs, especially to a group of like-minded women. Participants believed that the community was fostered by “the chance for all women to play sport, regardless of their ethnicity, age, socio-economic status, colour, (dis)able-bodied-ness and sexuality” (Litchfield & Dionigi, 2012, p. 28). These feelings are of particular importance because women are more likely to rely on other women for support with regards to their participation in non-traditional activities (Gill, 2007; Kluge 2002). A sense of community can also be found through situational circumstances and paradigm shifts in marriage culture that provide more freedom, such as, fewer familial, and work obligations. While these circumstances can be isolating, Litchfield and Dionigi, (2012) found them to be contributing factors to a new sense of community.

This sense of community and involvement in sport may not have been experienced by past generations of women. As Tulle (2007) explains, from the 1920s to the 1960s, “women were excluded from running more than 400 metres” and the reasoning was “reproductive interference” (p. 334). This explanation is also offered up by Litchfield and Dionigi (2012) who state that today’s middle aged and older women grew up during a time in which women and girls were not encouraged to be physically active (see also Pfister, 2012). The result is a paradox in which some physically active older women who have transcended the barriers of social norms compare themselves to those who conform to more traditional social norms. One such example is a participant in Dionigi’s (2010) study who explained that she feels powerful while puffing her

chest out and saying “my grandma runs half marathons, and everybody else says, oh no, my grandma’s in a nursing home” (p. 400). Since sport is traditionally associated with youthfulness, masculinity and domination (Theberge 2003; Dionigi 2010), this participant frames her own physical activity as a form of domination or superiority over the less active grandmother; nevertheless, this construction of the active older woman both resists and reproduces traditional stereotypes.

Similarly, in *Late to the Line*, Kitty Porterfield (1999) details her experiences starting participating in sport, more specifically competitive rowing, at the age of 44, explaining that she “grew up in a time when most young women were taught that sweating and head-to-head struggle were boy stuff” (p. 51). This is further evidence of Litchfield and Dionigi’s (2012) statement that women and girls were not encouraged to participate in physical activity and sport in the past. In a particularly poignant story, Porterfield, being an adult with no concept of physical exertion, competition and pushing herself to her mental and physical limits, recounts how this changed when she stepped off the sidelines (where she would cheer on her children) and got in the boat herself. Though there were circumstances that would prevent her from reaching her full athletic potential, such as a new job, illness and a family business, for as she explains “[s]port in grown up life cannot always claim top priority” (p. 55); however, Porterfield saw advantages to being an older athlete:

Coming to sport late in life has penalties too. You know from the beginning that you will never make it to the Olympics. It is easy to regret the years lost, the skill and speed that you will never attain. It is easy to mourn the opportunities missed, the friends you did not meet, the lessons you could have learned much younger, the games from which you were shut out. But there are consolations. There is a sparkle, a sheer delight, that master

women athletes of my generation have that our ageing male collegiate rowers miss. For us it is all new. For us it can only get better. We do not watch our records fading in the distant past. We have no time to sit around and tell old war stories. We cannot wait to get on with it. We want to have fun. Our bodies are our new toys. We have to let loose. We want glory in the challenge. (Porterfield, 1999, p. 56)

In the above quote, Porterfield focuses on the positive aspects of being an older woman athlete. Not only did Porterfield (1999) highlight some key features of being an older, upper class, able bodied, athlete, but she also touched on her experiences as a mother and wife. Her participation in rowing did not increase until her children were adults; this may be a familiar narrative for women with children (Miller & Brown, 2005).

In addition to the reproduction of narrow ideas about gender, sport also celebrates youthfulness and therefore can exclude older adults from participation. For example, swimmers and gymnasts must enter the Masters competitions, which are designated for older athletes, at the ages of 25 and 22 respectively, as they are considered to be 'past' their peak performance age (Litchfield & Dionigi, 2012). Likewise, in other sports, athletes' competitive playing career could be over in their earlier twenties. Sport, nonetheless, is an important part of the lives of active older adults. For instance, Dionigi (2010) found, through in-depth interviews and observations of older sportswomen participating in a variety of sports ranging from team to individual, that these women resisted traditional stereotypes of ageing and gender. In addition, due to the increasing ageing population, there are more opportunities to participate in sport (Baker, Fraser-Thomas, Dionigi & Horton, 2009). Indeed, because of the increase in sport participation among older adults, these participants are shifting what it means to be middle aged or old (Baker, et al., 2009).

The previous section provided a broad discussion of women and sport, followed by a more specific focus on the implications of age. Though gender, class and age individually impact women's participation in hockey and other sports, they are interconnected. All of the previously mentioned categories of analysis work together to constrain and/or facilitate women's participation in sport. The following section examines how the intersection of these categories of analysis, or contextual factors, may impact a woman's sport participation. Each subsequent section further details the additional literature that has specific relevance to this study.

Contextual Factors

To gain a fuller understanding of how the social, cultural, financial, familial, and individual barriers and facilitators of women's physical activity participation impact women, it is important to contextualize and analyze the determinants of active leisure participation and how they are interconnected (Brown, Brown, Miller & Hansen, 2001, p. 132). I define contextual factors as interrelated elements that may impact one's sport involvement and vary from person to person. For example, Brown, et al., (2001) examined factors that impacted women's amount of physical activity. They labeled their participants' engagement in physical activity that was not work related, as active leisure. Active leisure is a broad term that encompasses all types of physical activity or exercise during a woman's leisure or recreation time. For instance, recreational hockey can be considered a form of active leisure because it is a physical activity and those who participate in it generally do so in their leisure time. Brown, et al., (2001) found significant links between socioeconomic status, partner support, and household norms (according to gender stereotypes), and physical activity levels of women. Specifically, women that ranked high on both socioeconomic status and partner support were more likely to engage in organized

sports compared to women who considered themselves to have a lower socioeconomic status and lower perceived partner support.

Type of sports participation, amount of opportunities to play sport, and the meaning of sport participation are also dependent upon class (Scheerder, Vanreusel & Taks, 2005). For instance, Scheerder, et al., (2005) examined adults' sport participation during leisure time in relation to their sociocultural background. The results of this study showed that social class is one of the most significant factors that affect sport participation among adults. Specifically, people from higher classes are more likely to participate in organized sport and to participate more frequently (Schreeder, et al., 2005). These findings echo those of Brown et al., (2001), who observed that lower socioeconomic status can impede sport participation. This relationship between social class and sport participation has remained relatively constant since the 1970s (Scheerder, et al., 2005; Little, 2014). Beamish (1990) demonstrates that regardless of government policy intervention, socioeconomic status is also a consistent predictor of which Canadians will become a successful high-performance athlete. In his study, Beamish found that the athletes on Canada's national teams were more often from upper class groups and it was much less common to see a national athlete from lower income groups (1990). In fact, study after study has found that parents' or household income, affects children's participation in sport (e.g., Yang, Telama & Laaksa, 1996; Kantomma, et al., 2007; Holt, Kingsley, Tink & Scherer, 2011; Clark, 2008). Most recently, the *Environment Scan 2010: Trends and Issues in Canada and in Sport* report shows that participation in organized sport decreases as household income decreases. Not surprisingly, Jarvie (2011) states that the relationship between sport and social class is such that it is possible to identify social classes based on their sport engagement. For example, soccer participation is far less costly compared to hockey (sirc.ca, 2010). Clearly, sport

can act as a symbol of the division between classes, and as an area that helps to maintain social divisions (Jarvie, 2011).

Social class can also affect women's sport participation in particular. The study by Little (2005) titled *Gender, Class and Sporting Opportunity: Working-class Women and Sport in Early Twentieth-Century Australia*, is particularly relevant to this current study. Little (2005) aimed to fill the gap in knowledge about women's sport experiences as affected by class, which he claims has been largely ignored. Little's (2005) findings show that working class women had numerous barriers to sport participation, in contrast to middle and upper class women. Some of the barriers faced by working class women were lack of time, energy and financial resources to participate in sport. Those women that could not afford to attend private schools, where sport was more readily available, or afford leisure time, lost out on the opportunity to play sport. Another factor that negatively impacted lower or working class women's participation in sport was the reality that many quit school, married and had children at earlier ages than middle class women. Though Little's (2005) study is more historical in nature, it provides insight into poor, working-class women's sport participation that is frequently disregarded in literature. Furthermore, the impact of social class may be even more critical when intersecting with age and gender, as many older women rely on government pensions or are on fixed incomes. How the relationship between age, gender and social class affects sport participation has had limited investigation in the literature.

Though extensive research has examined the links between socioeconomic status and physical activity levels (Brown, et al., 2001; Miller & Brown, 2005; Clark, 2008; Little, 2014, Moore, et al., 1991), more needs to be done to examine the relationship between sport and other interconnected contextual factors, as there may be other elements in women's lives influencing their sport participation. For example, "[n]o time' is by far the most reported constraint in

previous studies that have examined barriers to leisure participation...However, very few studies have explored this response further” (Brown & Brown, 2001, p. 140). Indeed, the lack of time may be closely related to other contextual factors like household norms (e.g., unequal division of domestic labour) or illustrate how gender and/or class may intersect to limit women’s time. Other common constraints cited for lack of participation in active leisure time are lack of money, poor health, and unemployment. This was especially true for women who had full time work in the home, compared to women employed outside the home (Brown, et al., 2001). On the other hand, women who are employed outside the home often experience the double day phenomenon, which is working a full day, then coming home to engage in domestic labour (Firestone & Shelton, 1994). They may view their time to be constrained as well, but in different ways.

When examining the relationships between active leisure participation, partner support and socioeconomic status, results are mixed (Miller, et al., 2001). For example, women with minimal barriers to physically active leisure time, (i.e., they have high-perceived partner support and high socioeconomic status), continue to feel guilt when taking time for themselves. These negative feelings may subsequently limit participation. This finding may illustrate how gender norms and stereotypes can negatively impact a woman’s participation in active leisure to a larger extent than partner support and high socioeconomic status. Conversely, some women considered to have multiple barriers to physically active leisure time, (i.e., low partner support and low socioeconomic status), maintained that “they made time rather than have time for independent physical activity” (Miller & Brown, p. 2005). This individual characteristic that ensures some women maintain their participation in active leisure could speak to how women are socialized to think of their own time in gendered ways (i.e., should be allocated to the care of others), or to think of health as one’s individual responsibility (i.e., healthism) (Devis-Devis, 2006). Though

some sport psychologists may consider this a case of individual motivation (Baker et al., 2009; Koivula, 1999), I believe that some women may be able to exercise their agency – the ability to make choices and resist oppression (Creswell, 2013) – despite constraining contextual factors, and successfully participate in sport; whereas those who did not participate in sport despite having low perceived barriers, may not be able to successfully exercise their agency due to other unknown structural barriers.

Brown and Miller (2005) also found differences in type of active leisure associated with high socioeconomic status and high partner support compared to those with low partner support and socioeconomic status. The study found that women who rated themselves as high for both factors participated in organized activities, such as team sports and sports that have a high financial cost, whereas women who rated themselves low on the above factors participated in less organized activities (Dionigi, 2010) with potential lower cost. As hockey is an organized activity that has a high financial cost, it was expected that the participants of the study, would reproduce these findings and were likely to have middle to high socioeconomic status as well as high partner support.

In addition to socioeconomic status and partner support, other types of factors that may affect a woman's participation in the ALTPH program include changing definitions of ageing and marriage. Pfister (2012) shows, for instance, that increasing divorce rates and sex differences in ageing may have an effect on sport participation. More specifically, the changing culture surrounding the meaning of marriage allows for couples to choose divorce or remarriage if they wish; this combined with the fact that men have a lower life expectancy, 78.3 years of age compared to 83.0 years of age for women (StatsCan, 2012), may allow women to redefine their lives, and therefore, have more time for sport participation (Pfister, 2012). Similarly, the

definition of ageing is evolving from fragility and dependence to the inclusion and an expectation of an active lifestyle long into Canadians' golden years (Pfister, 2012). The expectation of the ageing body to remain active speaks to the pervasiveness of healthism. Healthism is a discourse that views the body as a machine and believes that through discipline and effort by the individual a healthy body can be achieved (Devis-Devis, 2006). The 'right' way to age, therefore, is to remain physically active, disease-free, and eat well. The social factors that limit one's ability to be an active senior or to age well, are not considered. Certainly, active living is important for adults and seniors (e.g., Hartvigsen, Christensen & Kaare, 2007) and has many psychological benefits (Berger, 2006). However, this is a biomedical view of health that does not recognize that that perceived social support is the largest predictor of an active lifestyle (Stahl et al., 2001)) finding. It is imperative to examine the social and cultural factors that may shape sport participation, most especially for women. As Pfister (2012) states:

Gender and age can be understood as processes of social construction and institutions that structure our lives because they are embedded in the family and the workplace, in law and religion, in science and the media, in language, sexuality and culture, including sport. In these domains, intersecting gender- and age-related norms, ideals and 'scripts' are produced which influence thinking and behaviour as well as perceptions, interpretations and judgments, for example about culturally acceptable physical activities. At the same time, gender and age are intertwined with identities inscribed in bodies and displayed and negotiated in interactions (p. 371).

In this regard, the scripts written for women, both young and old, may be edited and re-written by participating in traditionally masculine sporting activities such as hockey. A common script for women is the notion of being a good mother and wife. How women in hockey negotiate common

scripts pre-written for them while participating in a male dominated arena has yet to be examined in depth by a case study format. This negotiation may shape and even hinder women's participation. These scripts may manifest in women's participation in hockey as barriers, particularly in the form as stereotypes. These potential barriers to women's participation in hockey specifically and sports generally are explored in the following section.

Barriers to Participation

To understand why adult women are enrolling in the ALTPH program, when most minor hockey leagues begin their programming at a level called Initiation, for children six years and under (Hockeycanada.2015), it is important to consider the barriers that may have prevented these women from participating in hockey earlier in life. One explanation may be the lack of opportunities for girls' hockey which may be related to the late inclusion of women's hockey in the Olympics in 1998 (Theberge, 2003). The comparatively short history of women's hockey stands in sharp contrast to men's hockey, which was first entered into the Olympics in 1920 (Olympic.org, 2014; NHL.com, 2014). As children, adult women may have either joined boy's leagues because of this lack of girls' hockey teams (Theberge, 2003). Even now, though participation among girls is increasing, there continues to be a relative lack of girl's hockey teams. Furthermore, the fact that in the 1980s, a girl won the right to play on a boy's hockey team created a divide in the women's hockey world (Theberge, 1998). The Ontario Women's Hockey Association (OWHA) believe this result contributed to the struggle that women's hockey faces, as more skilled players join boys' teams and leave fewer resources for and talent among girls' teams. Moreover, the OWHA also believe the right to play on boys' teams may have slowed the growth of the women's game by leading to an increase in dropout rates for girls due to unpleasant mixed gender hockey experiences (Theberge, 1998). For example, in Theberge's

(1998) study, one woman explained that she quit the boys' hockey team because male teammates' parents complained that she was faster than her male teammates and this was a negative experience (Theberge, 1998). Conversely, some women expressed their gratitude for having the opportunity to play with boys, as it made them more skilled players. Nevertheless, the slow growth of women's hockey and resultant lack of opportunities have undoubtedly had an effect on the experiences of women in hockey and could help to explain why women did not pursue the sport as children.

The slow growth of women's hockey may also be attributed to gender and sport stereotypes, as it has been demonstrated by Theberge (1998) that, in the case of hockey, many female players have internalized the ideologies that men and boys are naturally more skilled in hockey or sport in general than women and girls. In other words, women may follow a specific script that is written for their lives, based on their gender and age, that does not include the successful playing of hockey. Even though their very existence is evidence of 'leaky hegemony,' a so-called chink in the armor of the dominant group that allows the subordinated to remain somewhat uncontrolled (Birrell & Cole, 1986 as cited in Theberge, 1998), some women hockey players in Theberge's (1998) study maintained they were naturally less skilled than male hockey players. This can be seen in Theberge's (1998) interviews with women who played on The Blades, a competitive women's hockey team in Canada:

It's the same game of hockey but I don't like it when people compare us to the male hockey programs. We're not the same. We're not as strong physically. We're not as fast. It's our game...It's a different type of game. It's just totally, entirely different and it's because of the nature of our physical builds. You can't just have the two playing together;

that's why to me they're separate. We don't have and we'll never have the size and the strength to be able to compete at that level. (p. 187)

This player emphasizes differences in physical ability and does not consider these differences as a result of the social construction of gender whereby traits and behaviours are not the result of an innate, biological difference between females and males but rather interactions between them. She also does not recognize how she has internalized beliefs that may perpetuate the view of women being the second sex (Pfister, 2012) in sports. However, another woman in the study did acknowledge that men's superiority in hockey could be a result of better opportunities and resources. This woman even stated that playing with boys gave her an advantage when entering the women's hockey world due to the disparity in resources (Theberge, 1998) such as coaching, practice hours, equipment, and funding in girls' leagues.

In addition to the Theberge's (1998) study that acknowledged the impact gender and sport stereotypes have on girls' sport participation, Wetton, Radley, Jones and Pearce (2013) examined barriers to team sport participation that girls encounter. Girls' early experiences in sport may have particularly salient implications for participation in team sport, more specifically hockey, as an adult. In their study of adolescent girls, Wetton et al., (2013) found four categories of barriers to their participation in a school team sport: internal factors, teachers, existing stereotypes, and other hobbies. The researchers found internal factors, such as girls' expression of embarrassment and a self-perceived lack of sporting ability, were major barriers to their team sport participation. Participants were often embarrassed by their teacher's actions. For example, participants stated that "the teacher embarrassed me and my friend in front of everyone...making us feel lower" and "people who are better, they praise them more, with people who are not very good they just criticize them constantly by having a go at them" (Wetton, et al., 2013, p. 3). Not surprisingly,

teachers were the second barrier identified in the study, as they contributed to negative experiences of the girls, which led to the participants' lowered rates of self-confidence. Moreover, the adolescent girls in the study expressed knowledge of existing stereotypes, the third barrier to team sport participation, regarding the participation in team sports being a gendered activity. One participant stated, "the stereotype will be that boys will always be better than girls because that's what people think," while another participant continued on to say, "sport is seen as a manly thing to do...they [the media] don't see it as a girl thing" (Wetton, et al., 2013, p. 3). The acknowledgement by adolescent girls of existing sport and gender stereotypes demonstrates how pervasive these social ideologies can be, as well as the potential effect on girls' sporting participation by internalizing the stereotypes. Lastly, adolescent girls in the study expressed the fact that they participated in other hobbies such as cooking, which limited their time for team sport participation. The citing of other (gendered) hobbies as a barrier to team sport participation hints at the possible impact of having internalized stereotypes regarding girls' participation in sports. These findings are similar to those found in other studies examining barriers to adolescent girls' sport participation (e.g., Kimm, Glyn, McMahon, Voorhees, Striegel-Moore & Daniels, 2006). Though the aforementioned studies examined adolescent girls' barriers to team sport participation, the findings could apply to adult women's experiences in two ways. First, adult women may have experienced the same barriers when they were adolescents in school, and second, some of these barriers may not evolve or change significantly as women age.

Just as the participants in the Wetton, et al, (2013) study cited dominant gender ideals as a barrier to their team sport participation, the two aforementioned ways in which hockey participation is affected by the social construction of gender could speak to the pervasiveness of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is a dynamic power system that refers to the

relationships between men and men, as well as men and women themselves (Donaldson, 1993; Dworkin & Wachs, 2009). Those men who conform to hegemonic masculinity dominate men who do not conform to this idealized version of what a man is. Hegemonic masculinity works in tandem with an idealized version of femininity, one that focuses on timidity, softness, beauty, and maternal duties. This unequal power relationship solidifies men's dominance and women's subordination. Moreover, those males associated with hegemonic masculinity, demonstrating traits such as aggressiveness, domination, heterosexuality and toughness receive societal privileges (Kimmel, 1994; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). These societal privileges can often manifest in sport, resulting in activities fitting within hegemonic masculinity, and males who participate in these activities, being valued over women and activities viewed as feminine (Kimmel, 1994).

Though the very involvement of women in hockey is a resistance to hegemonic masculinity, women's hockey experiences continue to be framed within its paradigm. The extent to which a woman's personal life ascribes to such ideals as hegemonic femininity may be one factor that affects her participation in sports. Just as hegemonic masculinity is related to women's subordination, it is also connected to women's experiences with sport and physical activity. Hegemonic masculinity ensures women are soft and timid, characteristics that are in direct opposition of those commonly required in contact sport. This notion also works to maintain that women are the main caregivers of children and families. The following section discusses the potential effects of being a mother as well as a wife on women's sport experiences.

Being a Good Mother and Wife

In a study by Miller and Brown (2005) on factors that affect involvement in active leisure of heterosexual mothers of young children, they found that women are less active than men in

their leisure time. Moreover, women with young children are less active than women without children. This lack of participation in active leisure is thought to be associated with a social condition known as ethic of care (Miller & Brown, 2005). Ethic of care is a notion that was initially considered by Gilligan (1985) to be an innate component to women's moral development. The notion of ethic of care encompasses the ideas that mothers should be self-sacrificing, and accessible to children, partners, and other family members at all times, leading to negative effects on their own well-being. In other words, the ethic of care is a type of 'script' that influence women's behavior. As Brown and Brown (2001) explain, there are certain interactions that constrain women's, but more specifically, mothers' leisure time:

The fact that mothers have no time for active leisure due to commitments to young children and housework is indicative of a situation whereby the *practical* demands of childcare and the *ideologies* associated with motherhood are powerful influences on the way women prioritize their use of time (p. 140).

The discussion of practical demands versus ideologies as influences on time is echoed by the fact that it is common that women forfeit their own leisure activities when embarking on certain life journeys that include marriage and becoming a mother. The study done by Miller and Brown (2005) is of particular importance to the research project, as adult women must negotiate the gendered stereotypes, behaviours, and responsibilities that often come with being an adult female, whether they have no children, young children or adult children.

In contrast, Miller and Brown (2005) suggest that men do not sacrifice their own leisure time during these same life stages. The difference in sacrificed leisure time could reflect various sociocultural factors that shape gender roles and expectations. One influencer that may reproduce the ideologies surrounding motherhood is media. For example, Miller and Brown's (2005)

analysis of media representations of women in leisure activities indicates that they are shown engaging in work duties, not their own leisure. In other words, their roles with regard to leisure involve work duties, such as serving the needs of children or husbands or carpooling children to sport games. Hence, the media reproduce the notion that women's involvement in leisure is limited to work duties, not leisure for the sake of leisure. When women are depicted by various media sources being involved in leisure, they are serving the needs of their family, therefore sacrificing their own leisure time. Such media representations reproduce ideas about what it means to be a 'good' mother, specifically, the emphasis on self-sacrifice, which is at the heart of ethic of care (Miller & Brown 2005).

Even when women with young children were resisting the traditional stereotypes of being a good mother by making time for their own active leisure pursuits, they may do so within the ethic of care framework. In a study done by Miller and Brown (2005), it was demonstrated that women did carve out time for their individual activities, but they framed their involvement as necessary for them to be able to fulfill their roles as mothers and wives more effectively. This can be seen as a variation of the social construction of being a good mother, and not necessarily outside the realms of traditional gender roles and expectations. It has simply been repositioned. This reframing can be described as an:

Updated ideal of motherhood where the responsibility to the well-being of the family encompassed taking time out, seeing individual health as one component of the overall health of the family unit including providing better parent skills, and being an active role model (Miller and Brown, 2005, p. 414).

Viewing mothers' participation in sport and active leisure as an updated version of ideal motherhood is not necessarily a positive shift. This view still infers that mothers' participation in physical activity is part of their duties as a mother.

This literature review examined a brief history of women and sport, followed by a discussion of the potential barriers to women's participation in sport, both past and present. These barriers included the effects of socioeconomic status, being a mother and gendered and ageing stereotypes. The literature review highlights many studies examining various facets of the experiences of a female athlete; however there is still opportunity for further research to be done. While each study helps us better understand the complex matrix of factors that shape the experiences of women in sport, none of the studies reviewed examine precisely the experiences that are the focus of this project. A key feature that seems to be missing is how the participants' sport experience affect their own state of mind, family, and other varying aspects of life. Just as Porterfield (1999) was able to divulge aspects of her life story, both past and present, and provide a fuller picture of what rowing meant to her, this project aimed to create clear images of what the ALTPH program means to the participants; but with the added benefit of a highlighting a number of women's stories and experiences. The following chapter details the theoretical framework and philosophical assumptions that have informed this study.

Chapter Three: Theory and Framework

There are a variety of philosophical and theoretical frameworks that may guide researchers in their study. Embedded within these frameworks are the researchers' assumptions, beliefs, and biases. Philosophical assumptions are created via our life experiences, and often appear in the early stages of a study. This particular study is grounded within an epistemological assumption that participants' prior experiences and beliefs shape their current experiences. In doing so, I aimed to collect subjective evidence that is based on individual views (Creswell, 2013). Key components of this epistemological assumption are the insider status of the researcher and the relationship that one is able to foster with those being researched, as well as relying on quotes as evidence, and spending time in the field. Along with this epistemological assumption, theoretical frameworks are used as guidelines to design the study and as lenses to view and analyze the results.

The first theoretical framework in which this study is grounded is feminist theory. Sport is a gendered activity, often one that encourages and celebrates traits deemed masculine; therefore it is integral to this study that feminist theories are considered. Susan Birrell is a sport sociologist who has done seminal work in the area of feminist theory and sport. I relied on her work, in addition to that of John W. Creswell, to guide this project. Feminist theory considers women's diverse experiences and situations to be impacted by gender and those institutions that frame those situations. In other words, as Creswell (2013) states, "feminist researchers see gender as a basic organizing principle that shapes the conditions of their lives" (p. 29). In addition, a recurring theme in many feminist studies is patriarchal domination (Creswell, 2013). Thus, the main purpose of feminist theory within sport sociology is to "theorize about gender

relations within our patriarchal society as they are evidenced by, played out in, and reproduced through sport and other body practices” (Birrell, 2000, p. 61).

Using feminist theory within a sporting context requires a comprehensive understanding of what sport is according to this theory. Specifically, Cole (1993) states that “the study of sport from a feminist standpoint [...] recognizes ‘sport’ as a discursive construct that organizes multiple practices...that intersect with and produce multiple bodies...[and is] embedded in normalizing technologies...and consumer culture” (p. 78). By using this feminist definition of sport, it alerts us to the social and political sphere within which sport operates, and the agendas therein. The feminist perspective within the study of sport can also offer insight as to how sport can be powerful for women through the use of their bodies (Cole, 1993). Traditional female characteristics emphasize softness and subordination (Hill Collins, 1993), both physically and emotionally, while sport often requires the use of the body in aggressive manners. Furthermore, through participation in sport, one develops stronger, more defined muscles—a hard body that contradicts what is often seen as female (Rousell & Griffet, 2000). Using these tenets, feminist theory in sport has been successful in guiding researchers’ efforts to showcase women’s valuable and varied experiences in sport. Dr. Nancy Theberge is an example of a scholar whose work embodies feminist theory for sport. By studying sport, often hockey and women’s empowerment, Theberge applied feminist theories to sport studies. She gave her female participants a voice and often examined their sporting experiences in ways that questioned hegemony, while preserving sport’s ability to challenge traditional stereotypes. In addition, Jennifer Hargreaves (1994) examines women’s sporting experiences from the 19th century until the 1990’s. By taking a feminist approach, Hargreaves was able to make a strong contribution to sport sociology in the 1990’s, which was still centred mostly on elite and male experiences. She

believed ethnographic research placed women at the heart of data analysis. I looked to both Therberge's and Hargreaves' work for guidance on how to use feminist theories for sport studies.

The second theoretical framework that guides this project is social constructivism, particularly as it relates to gender. Therefore, in this research project gender is a socially constructed phenomenon. As Hill Collins (1993) discusses, social construction contributes to the development of traits that are seen as stereotypically masculine and feminine. Moreover, masculinity and femininity are often constructed in opposition to one another, and thus, this project takes a relational analysis. The social constructivist framework fits well with this study's main epistemological assumption, in that it relies on the belief that subjective experiences and meanings are impacted by the social and historical context in which the participant views them. This framework also takes into account the individual participants' lives and the varying cultural norms that each may experience. By utilizing this framework, the researcher is able to position herself within the research and acknowledge that her own assumptions inform the research (Creswell, 2013).

In addition, Michael Messner's (2007) multilevel approach to analyzing gender was adopted. This approach, which is comprised of three levels, the interactional level, the structural context and the cultural symbol, provided a tool to examine how the ALTPH participants performed and experienced gender. At the interactional level gender is something that we do, in that, "it is situationally constructed through the performances of active agents" (p. 16). Moreover, the structural and cultural levels provide a contextual analysis, without which the performances of gender could be viewed natural, inevitable acts of free agents. As Messner (2007) states, though there are three distinct levels, each level is interconnected and allow for full

analysis of the performances of gender as well as the structural and cultural contexts that enable those performances.

My work in this research project is grounded in the previously mentioned theories, feminist and social constructivist. Further, Pfister's (2012) notion of scripts fits well with this project. These scripts, as previously stated, "are produced which influence thinking and behaviour as well as perceptions, interpretations and judgments, for example about culturally acceptable physical activities" (p. 371). The notion of scripts can help explain how gender shapes our experiences by acknowledging that throughout our lifetime, beliefs and behaviours are influenced by what is deemed acceptable based on our age, gender, race and other categories of analysis, and how they intersect, although analyzing race was beyond the scope of this project. These scripts, or prophecies, can be re-written by women to resist or reject traditional roles for as Pfister (2012) states, "although the gendered scripts of society offer few attractive roles and ideals for ageing women, women increasingly reject traditional roles and even write new scripts which add sport and sporting performance to the 'normal biographies' of old women" (p. 381). I believe the participants of this study are re-writing their own scripts by participating in a traditionally, young and or male sport.

This chapter discussed the theoretical approach that was used in the undertaking of this project, including the main epistemological assumption. In addition to being grounded in feminist theory for sport and social constructivism, the idea of scripts that are written based on one's age and gender, to influence our beliefs and behaviours provided one lens to examine the data through.

Chapter Four: Methodology

The objective of the study was to explore the experiences of women enrolled in an Adult Learn to Play Hockey program located in Toronto, Ontario. Moreover, this qualitative case study aimed to describe both the barriers and facilitators affecting the participation of the women who were enrolled in the program. The following chapter describes the study design, program participants and recruitment, trustworthiness of results, data collection and analysis, as well as review ethical policies and informed consent procedures taken in this research project.

Study Design

Qualitative research can be used to study a vast array of topics and encompass numerous methods. The key objectives of qualitative research are:

1. Studying the meaning of people's lives, under real-world conditions;
2. Representing the views and perspectives of the people [...] in a study;
3. Covering the contextual conditions within which people live;
4. Contributing insights into existing or emerging concepts that may help explain human social behaviour; and
5. Striving to use multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on a single source alone (Yin, 2011, p. 7-8).

Although quantitative research can demonstrate 'the what,' qualitative research is the gold standard for explaining the 'how' and 'why.'

Within qualitative research, there are multiple approaches a researcher can take according to their study topic and aims. Some possible qualitative research approaches are, narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study research. Case studies have the ability to describe in detail how a culture-sharing group interacts and negotiates members' distinctive experiences. Moreover, case studies vary from other approaches in that the researcher often selects the case prior to developing the research questions, allowing for the questions to be asked with regards to that particular case study (Maxwell, 2013). A qualitative case study method was

employed in order to gain in depth insights into the real life setting (Yin, 2003) and experiences of women participating in an ALTPH program in Toronto, Canada. This method was chosen because, as Creswell (2013) states, the case study approach is useful when studying a program, and is useful for developing in-depth description, analysis and understanding of a case. In addition, case studies are appropriate methodologies for a study when one of the aims of the research project is to investigate contextual circumstances, as they are relevant to the case or phenomenon being examined (Yin, 2003). Furthermore, a case study is suitable because this study involves looking into the participants' past, rather than focusing solely on their current experiences as an ALTPH participant. More specifically, the project took the form of an instrumental case study, (Stake, 1995, as cited in Creswell, 2013) in that it attempted to understand women's reasons for participating in the ALTPH program. In an instrumental case study, the case is examined in depth; however it is also used to increase understanding of a particular issue that is often secondary to the case being examined (Baxter & Jack, 2008). For this study, I examined the case in detail and used the case to understand the broader journey of the participants and sport, not just what was limited to the ALTPH program's sessions. Since women's ALTPH programs are uncommon, it was expected that the women enrolled would share some characteristics as well as have unique experiences. As per the case study approach, I collected data using multiple methods, including one-on-one, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with participants, participant observation, as well as an autoethnographic component.

Semi-structured interviews entail creating an interview guide, based on the research questions and objectives, as well as preparing probes that can be used if the participants have difficulty responding to a question. Questions are purposely created to be open ended, in that they allow for broad answers and interpretation by the participant. The benefits of semi-

structured interviews include the allowance for interviewers to probe the interviewee in a direction that is beyond the prepared interview guide (Berg, 2004). For example, when a response differed from those of other participants, or was surprising, I was able to probe in a direction that is not exactly as prescribed. Thus, a tentative interview guide (see Appendix A) was followed. Interviews took place at convenient times and locations for the participants to allow for maximum participation (Liu, 2008) and were 60 to 90 minutes (with one exception being 20 minutes) in duration to avoid fatigue. The interviews were digitally recorded, then transcribed immediately. Field notes, on various topics such as participant body language, how I felt during the interview, and location, were taken during the interview. In addition, I also took notes on the interview experience immediately after the interview, which included, but was not limited to, the participants' body language and anything that may have been a magnified moment, an "episode of heightened importance" (Hoschild, 1994 as cited in Messner, 2007, p. 12), which Messner (2007) explains "offers a window into the social construction of reality" (p. 13). As there are multiple sources of data, the data collected from interviews are the main focus and data collected via the additional aforementioned methods act as support or supplemental data. The rationale for this decision is grounded in the lack of studies focusing on novice women's experiences in hockey, with an emphasis on their own perspectives. Moreover, Lather (1991) says the aim of feminist research is to "correct both the invisibility and distortion of female experience..." (as cited in Creswell, 2013, p. 29), therefore having the participants' interviews be the main data source may offer some clarity of their experiences. Again, in accordance with feminist theory, it is imperative that participants' voices be the 'loudest' source of data.

In addition to in-depth semi-structured interviews, data were also collected via participant observation and autoethnography. I was enrolled in the ALTPH program for the complete

duration of the 12 week program as an active participant, making observations, and reflecting upon my experiences as an ALTPH participant. More specifically, I began making observations upon arrival at the arena and continued during the drills and activities of the program. Mental notes were taken during the program sessions and were recorded on a computer, once I was done each weekly session. It was difficult to balance my participant and research identities; however, participants were aware of my immersion as a participant and researcher and were free to engage in conversations as they chose. This led to most conversations while I was a participant being focused on my research. Upon departure from the arena, participant observation ceased. I had insider status and this aided in building a rapport with participants. In addition, it allowed for limited resistance to having women share their experiences in the program.

Auto-ethnographies allow for the researcher to be immersed in the study and to explore and describe various experiences and events that occur in their natural setting (Berg, 1998). Moreover, the auto-ethnographic approach is an appropriate method to use when the study is framed within feminist theory, as Creswell (2013) states, “In feminist research approaches, the goals are to establish collaborative and nonexploitative relationships, to place the researcher within the study so as to avoid objectification” (p. 29). The auto-ethnographic methods that were employed included participant observations, as well as drawing upon personal experiences as a participant immersed in the setting. As I was a participant immersed in the environment with the other study participants, I had insider status that assisted in establishing cooperative “nonexploitative relationships” (Creswell, 2013, p. 29). I experienced many of the same joys and pains as the participants and did not need to observe them from a distant vantage point, which enabled me to collect rich data, in addition to lessening the power imbalance between me and the research participants. The fact that I attended all 12 sessions of the program allowed for generous

amounts of discussion about issues that were of importance to the participants as well as it allowed for participants to provide additional information to me with ease. For example, on a few occasions after I interviewed participants, they approached me during ALTPH sessions to express their feelings about the interviews, all of which were positive, and offer clarification for statements they felt they were not clear about during the interview. Participants did not need to reach out to me by phone, or email on their own accord, as I was at the program everyday, which contributed to my accessibility. There was full disclosure to all the ALTPH program participants about who I was and what I was doing at the program, Because participants were aware that I was also a researcher and will be studying the program, it gave participants the knowledge and opportunity to choose how they interacted with me if they were uncomfortable. This full disclosure also contributed to the nonexploitative study To collect and retain these insider experiences I crafted memos on a computer when I finished each weekly practice. These memos entailed descriptions of events that were of interest, interactions between the coach and the players, and discussions amongst players to which I was privy. Auto-ethnographies can prove extremely significant in bridging the gap between researchers and participants because this method provides an insider view to aid in explaining lived experiences of those being studied (Berg, 1998). A key consideration of the insider perspective is that researchers must be reflexive and aware that they are biased and how they interpret the data may differ from an outsider perspective. However, the advantages of having an auto-ethnographic component outweigh the disadvantages, as Dorken and Giles (2011) found in *From Ribbon to Wrist Shot: An Autoethnography of (A) Typical Feminine Sport Development*. Using auto-ethnographic methods in their study provided extremely useful data sources when examining women's real life experiences in typically masculine sport domains, compared to existing theory and literature on

the topic. In addition, Kitty Porterfield's (1999) *Late To the Line*, offered an insightful, firsthand look into her experiences becoming an athlete later in life, which involved the transition from supportive, non-athlete mother to competitive rower, highlighting the role that children can play in a mother's athletic endeavours. Auto-ethnographies have the ability to provide a voice for the researcher, which in turn offers deeper insight into the case being studied as the researcher is fully immersed as a participant. This immersion provides an important sight line, for as Scott (1991) states, "[s]eeing is the origin of knowing. Writing is reproduction, transmission –the communication of knowledge gained through (visual, visceral) experience" (p. 776). Her words serve as a reminder of the immense potential for auto-ethnographies to contribute to various bodies of knowledge.

Participants and Recruitment

Participants for the study included adult women aged 18-50, enrolled in the Adult Learn to Play Hockey program in Toronto, Canada. It was expected that the wide age range would provide diverse data on the various life stages women experience. There was a maximum of 25 participants in the ALTPH program in one session, though no formal maximum capacity is known. Not all participants attended each week of the program; there was an average of 15 participants each week. Two women did not sign participant observation waivers and were excluded from all observations. Interviews were conducted with nine participants. Participants were recruited via various methods, including using personal contacts, snowball sampling and purposeful sampling. Snowball sampling is defined as an approach where the researcher and participants "[identify] cases of interest from people who know people, who know what cases are information-rich" (Creswell, 2013 p. 156). Purposeful sampling is selecting participants due to their ability to purposely inform the research questions. This strategy was employed throughout

the recruitment process, as this is a case study with targeted participants. The selection criteria for purposeful sampling were that the participant must be enrolled in and have attended a minimum of 25% of the ALTPH program. Due to the fact that I conducted interviews as the program progressed owing to time constraints, it was not plausible to ensure participants attend 100% of the program session dates. A drawback of this type of purposeful sampling is that the voices of those women who are not able to overcome barriers and attend the program are not heard. Potential participants were given a brief description of the study as well as its requirements and my contact information if they are interested in participating. A recruitment flyer (see Appendix B) was distributed to potential participants containing study and contact information. Lastly, snowball recruitment methods involved asking the ALTPH participants to inform others that partake in the program of the study and how to become involved. There was no compensation for participants who agreed to be involved in the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

Most interviews ranged from 40 to 90 minutes, with the exception of one interview being 20 minutes. This short duration of the 20 minute interview was due to the participant's concise responses to interview questions. This participant did not offer additional information or elaborate on her experiences to the same degree as other participants. Initially, I intended to conduct interviews with six participants as this number was suggested by Creswell (2013) to allow for sufficient data for identification of case themes, as well as comparison between participants within this particular case. However, as this study was also employing an auto-ethnographic framework, and a central objective of this method is to make clear the inner workings and experiences of the culture sharing group, additional interviews were conducted because the inner workings of women enrolled in the ALTPH program were not clear with only

six interviews (Creswell, 2013). Moreover, participants of the ALTPH program were overwhelmingly supportive and forthcoming. There was more interest than expected and a total of nine interviews were conducted.

Interviews were held at the mid point of the program to ensure participants had experienced most aspects of the program and for timely data collection. The interviews took place in locations determined by participants, including three interviews being held at the arena at which ALTPH sessions are held, before or after practice, and six in private rooms at various coffee shops. Interview questions were open-ended, using probes when the participant needed clarification on the question. However, if probes were used this impacted the direction of the interview. The semi-structured interview guide was designed to gain insight into the physical activity history of the participant, family participation, as well as current barriers facilitators to physical activity. Data were recorded using an audio recorder and subsequently transcribed verbatim by the researcher and a trained graduate student. Filler words such as ‘ah’ and ‘umm’ were included in the transcripts; however for clarity they are omitted in quotations in the Results and Discussion chapters.

During the interview, I took notes describing context or body language, such as facial expressions, emotions, and tone that could not be detected by an audio recorder. The data collected from interviews with participants were then analyzed, coded, recoded, and major themes were identified. Data were analyzed by first listening to the recorded interview, then listening to the recording for a second time while simultaneously reading the transcripts. Transcripts were read on average five times each. Data were initially coded utilizing no more than 30 categories of information, which were then recoded, combined and reduced to nine themes or families of codes (Creswell, 2013). Data were coded by pulling key words from each

line, using the language of the participants. In addition, codes were deliberately sought out that fit within feminist theory— such as words related to power, patriarchy and exclusively female experiences. Codes that were assigned to each line were then compared to each other and related codes were grouped together. This process was repeated until there was a manageable amount of codes. As Creswell (2013) discusses, data analysis within a qualitative framework often takes the form of a spiral. Data are continuously and simultaneously collected, analyzed, and reported, as they are not differentiated stages. Emerging themes were reconnected back to the original research questions and existing literature, as well as compared to other interviews, utilizing the constant comparative method – taking data and comparing it to themes or categories that are emerging (Creswell, 2013). Participant observation data, in the form of field notes, which are made at the location of the study or memos which could be any writings related to the study, not necessarily at the location of the research, were recorded following each weekly session of the program. Notes were then analyzed, coded, combined into themes and compared to existing data and literature, again using the constant comparative method (Creswell, 2013). In addition, concept maps were utilized when analyzing data and assisted the thematic analysis of codes. A concept map is a visual representation of what is going on in the study (Maxwell, 2013). They are useful in the brainstorming phase for data organization and preliminary analysis. Concept maps not only clearly highlight key components of a research project, but also the relationship between key findings (Maxwell, 2013). In addition, Maxwell (2013) states that there is no single correct concept map for a study; it can be reworked to show various aspects of the study. Concept maps were used within this study to visualize the data as they were collected, to show themes in the data, key components of those themes, and how they are related. Data are

represented in the Results and Discussion chapters as an in-depth analysis of the barriers and facilitators to these women's hockey participation as well as, in the ALTPH program.

Rigour

Qualitative researchers must demonstrate that their studies have undertaken methods considered reliable and valid (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Nevertheless, these notions have been criticized to be strongly positivistic, used more appropriately in quantitative research, rather than qualitative studies. This is where the concept of rigour comes into play. Rigour is defined as using appropriate and sufficient theoretical constructs, samples, contexts, data collection and analysis and time in the field (Tracy, 2010). This study met the above criteria by employing a small case study method, which allowed for rich in-depth analysis of the participants and their experiences that other study methods may not be capable of capturing. In addition, using the appropriate theoretical frameworks, which were feminist theory, social constructivism and an epistemological assumption, also enhanced the rigour. I spent sufficient time in the field, as there were a total of 24 hours spent in the field and approximately 9.5 hours interviewing participants. Moreover, trustworthiness of this study was also demonstrated by the use of multiple data collection methods including interviews, observation, and autoethnography.

Reflexivity also enhances rigour and is an integral concept in qualitative research. According to Creswell (2013), reflexivity is the act of making the researcher's position in relation to the study topic unambiguous. This requires the researcher to engage in two distinct activities. Specifically, the first activity is a discussion of the researcher's experiences involving the study topic and the second is a discussion of how the aforementioned experiences may impact the research. Researchers must think through and discuss their past experiences and how their past experiences or position may impact the interpretation of the phenomenon being studied. As I

have been a participant of the ALTPH program for two previous sessions, as well as the principal investigator for case study, the act of reflexivity proved to be an invaluable activity. I am a proponent for this program, and needed to remain aware of my views and how they may have impacted my collection and interpretation of data, whether it be in the interview process or in fieldwork, or the ways in which I may reproduce cultural norms associated with the ALTPH program. The journey I went on with this project started out with the assumptions that the feat of learning hockey was difficult, that hockey was gendered, classed and that it is not fair that women have a had fewer opportunities to play hockey. These assumptions have shaped the project and how I view the participants. In addition, since I created the research and interview questions and, while they are semi-structured, I used probes that provided me with the power to direct the discussions. Qualitative research is not based on eliminating biases. Rather, it is necessary to acknowledge that they exist and consider how they may shape the research (Creswell, 2013).

Though the fundamental axiology of qualitative research does not align with the notion of validity, various measures to ensure rigour of collected data are employed by qualitative research, specifically, triangulation and crystallization. Whether a researcher chooses triangulation or crystallization depends on their philosophical assumptions, and study design. Triangulation, as Tracy (2010) states, is grounded within an approach that “aims to rid research of subjective biases...the concept assumes a single reality to be true” (p 843). This study employed crystallization – a process that “encourages researchers to gather multiple types of data and employ various methods... and numerous theoretical frameworks” (Tracy, 2010, p. 844). Tracy (2010) provides researchers with eight measures, worthy topic, rich rigour, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethical and meaningful coherence, for exceptional qualitative

research with the fourth characteristic, credibility (or validity), being characterized as the use of crystallization. Crystallization is a method by which qualitative research increases its credibility, a term that is akin to the notions of reliability, consistency, replicability and accuracy in quantitative research. Crystallization, which is an approach that is relatively common in studies using (auto)ethnography (Ellingson, 2008), is in line with my goals to describe the complex, in-depth experiences of women enrolled in ALTPH and not to provide one single story or truth.

Ethics and Informed Consent

The study was conducted in accordance with the policies and regulations set out under the York University Graduate Student Human Participants Research Protocol. The research project was reviewed and approved by the research ethics board and complied with all ethical, confidentiality and consent regulations. All participants were required to sign two copies of the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix C and D), one for their own records and one copy for my records, which specified that their participation was voluntary, described the purpose of the research, what was required of the participants, any anticipated risks, and confidentiality and withdrawal procedures. No participants were interviewed by telephone or via the Internet. All except two participants of the ALTPH program signed Participant Observation Informed Consent forms (Appendix D), allowing me to observe the ALTPH program sessions.

This study was considered low risk and it was not anticipated that any problems would arise from the interviews or observations; however, if any issues did arise, it was outlined that interviewees would have been immediately brought to the attention of my supervisor, Dr. Yuka Nakamura, so that the appropriate actions could have been taken. All data that were collected, in the form of audio files, transcripts and field notes, remained confidential and were made available

to the participants, as requested. No participants wished to review statements within their transcripts.

This chapter described the methodological approach of this study. Specifically, this project is a qualitative, instrumental case study design, using semi-structured interviews, participant observations and auto-ethnographic field notes. It also described the participant recruitment process and how many participants that were involved in the study. In addition, it outlined the data analysis process taken. Lastly, this chapter discussed the issues of rigour, ethics and informed consent.

Chapter Five: Results

Findings from this case study yielded five facilitators for the women's participation in the ALTPH program. Facilitators are defined as factors that positively impact participants' hockey involvement, more specifically the circumstances that help these women participate in the ALTPH program. In addition, four factors were found that acted as barriers to ALTPH participation. Barriers are circumstances that impede these women's ALTPH and hockey participation. Each of the barriers were particular to varying stages in the participants' lives; therefore, the women could experience barriers to hockey participation throughout their lives, past, present and future. This chapter begins with a profile of each of the interviewees, describes these results in greater detail, and highlights the experiences of women enrolled in the ALTPH program.

There were 12 women in the ALTPH program who were observed throughout the duration of the program and nine participants were interviewed. All of the women who were interviewed had post-secondary education, and they were between the ages of 28 and 50 years old. They had unique experiences and arrived at the ALTPH program in different ways. All women who were interviewed were assumed to be Caucasian, as they were never asked to self-identify their ethnicity. Those participants who were not interviewed but consented to participant observation had slightly different characteristics than interviewees. Of the five women who were not interviewed, I estimated that one was approximately 18 years old, another was in her early twenties, and the remaining three were in their forties. Of the 12 participants who were observed, all but one appeared to be Caucasian, though, again, they were never asked to self-identify as race as a category of analysis was beyond the scope of this project. The observation of participants

served to supplement the interviews, provide context and visualization for a clearer insight and description of the ALTPH program.

Participant Profiles

Christy²

Christy is 28 years old, and an allied healthcare worker working in clinical settings. She has been active in recreational sport for the majority of her life. Christy is in a committed long-term relationship, has no children, and describes her financial status as middle-class. Christy occasionally plays shinny with her boyfriend. Christy also plays in an orchestra. Christy's father played hockey, though she never attended his games and did not experience playing hockey through him.

Lisa

Lisa is 43. She is currently in the early stages of starting her second career. Lisa has a Master's degree in counseling and after working in a financial sector, she has moved to a job more related to her education. She is married and currently navigating re-entering the workforce after raising three daughters, all of whom play hockey. Lisa moved to Toronto from out of province recently and describes her financial status as "comfortable." Lisa's brother played hockey as a child, but she did not. Instead, Lisa participated in horseback riding on the farm where she grew up.

Bonnie

Bonnie works at a university in environmental policy and technology and is the sole income earner for her household. She says she is passionate about her job. Bonnie is 42 years

² All names are pseudonyms.

old, married and the mother of two children who play hockey. Bonnie has been active in sport throughout her life, playing competitive volleyball in her adolescence.

Trish

Trish works in the marketing department at a bank. She is 48 years old, single, and has dogs that she describes are her ‘children.’ Trish grew up attending Toronto Maple Leaf games as her father had season tickets, in addition to attending her brother’s hockey games as a child. She also participates in CrossFit weekly, which is a gym that provides intense strength and conditioning workouts. She claims that she is a couch potato but she also works very hard at staying active.

Kara

Kara is 38 years old and the owner of a small business consulting firm. She has a degree in mechanical engineering and was a competitive gymnast. Kara attributes her participation in competitive gymnastics to her mother, who was a coach. Kara is married, and the mother of two children, one of whom plays hockey. Kara describes her financial status as affluent.

Nicole

Nicole is a lawyer. She has played competitive sport throughout her life and was a goalie in hockey for six years until she was injured and could no longer continue. She is an only child and her parents were not hockey fans. Nicole and her partner have no children. She is 46 years old and describes her financial status as comfortable.

Melissa

Melissa is 50 years old. She was hired to work at a bank when she graduated from university and has been employed there since. Melissa is divorced, has two children who play

hockey, and describes her financial status as middle class. She was a competitive Highland dancer as a child. When she was younger, Melissa attended her brother's hockey games.

Kathleen

Kathleen works in wealth management and financial planning. She is a mother of two, divorced from her first husband, and now has a common-law spouse. It was not until Kathleen was in her early twenties that she began participating in physical activity, as she was never active in sport as a child or adolescent. She currently participates in cycling in addition to the ALTPH program. She describes her financial status as middle class. Kathleen strongly disliked the game of hockey as a child, as she perceived it to be an exclusive sport. But now, after beginning her participation in the ALTPH program, she is newly enamored with the game of hockey.

Larissa

Larissa works part time as a marketing consultant. She chose to cut her work hours down to limit the amount of time her and her husband's daughter spent in daycare. She has one daughter who is five years of age and plays hockey. As a child, Larissa attended her brother's hockey games with her family. Larissa is 44 years old, participates in spin and yoga classes. Larissa describes her financial status as comfortable.

In general, most women were physically active for the majority of their lives, engaging in sports such as volleyball, dance, figure skating, water polo, cycling, rowing, and CrossFit. Though most of these women had always been active and remained so, only one identified herself as an athlete. For example, Bonnie described her experience with and relationship to sport by saying "I was a pretty active and athletic kid. And all throughout high school I played competitive team sports;" however, she also claimed that "I always kept up personal fitness and running off and on. Not a *huge athlete*" (emphasis added). This dismissive attitude towards her

own athletic identity and competency was a common narrative among the interviewees and reflects how the study participants did not identify with the category of ‘athlete,’ which is socially constructed as young and male (Theberge, 2003). In contrast to the above profiles, I am a single, 26 year old female, who does not have any children and would consider myself to be a part of the lower middle class. The variances between myself and the other participants offer a differing lens through which to view the data. The implications of these variations are that the interview guides that I created may have led discussion in ways that participants did not think about. It also may have led to data being interpreted in a specific way, which is exclusive to my circumstances and life experiences thus far. However, this is part of the point of qualitative case study research, to acknowledge your bias and not aim to provide broad sweeping generalizations, yet in depth accounts of the participants’ experiences from a particular vantage point. In addition to my personal history impacting my view of the program, such as being a competitive athlete, having no children and being 26 years old, I entered the ALTPH with positive views about the program. Since I attended the ALTPH program occasionally in the previous year, I had prior positive experiences. But I also knew that the participants’ stories were important as, like me, they had yet to access hockey in their lives, they had probably faced barriers, or negative experiences to earlier hockey engagement. The following section provides a detailed description of the experience of participating in the ALTPH program, followed by the barriers and facilitators for the participants’ hockey and ALTPH participation.

First Day and ALTPH Atmosphere

Arriving to the arena on the first day of the ALTPH program, there were only about five women in the locker room, we smiled cordially at one another, yet did not engage in much conversation. I was surprised at the age of the women as well, most looked to be in their late 30s

to mid 40s. This was surprising as I attended a couple of program sessions the year before and the participants' age was much higher. There were women in their 60s learning in the ALTPH program last year and I began to wonder where they were this year. Before I could finish my thought, the woman who was already changed beside me, asked if I had come to this program before. She also shared that she was simultaneously nervous and excited. I was too. The small talk served to ease our nerves. A few children waited in the hallway, presumably for their mothers to emerge donning their newly acquired hockey equipment. We waddled from the locker room, into the hall, through double doors and cautiously stepped onto the ice. There was no coach, so we each skated around, taking in the sensation of our shin guards on our knees, our thick padded hockey pants, and our hard chest protectors while we skated. It was still alien to me, the way the equipment made us move our bodies, and it seemed painfully obvious some of us were a little uncomfortable. Inexplicably, the coach never came that day, and the few of us with some skating experience led the drills for the day. This set a tone that continued for the remaining 11 weeks of the program; we often teased our coach about that fateful day, which ultimately brought us all closer and eased us into what would be a frustrating but joyful, exhausting and exhilarating experience in the ALTPH program.

I felt pride each week that I attended the program, and so too did the other participants. They often said it feels good to be here and expressed self-satisfaction. We were proud of ourselves for lacing up and attempting something new and challenging. I would come home after the sessions, shower, and immediately tell my friends and family what I had accomplished that week. Mostly they were small skills, such as lifting the puck to the height of the plexi-glass above the boards, successfully completing a stick handling drill or scoring a goal. Many of the women in the program had an audience that witnessed their accomplishments on a weekly basis.

Sometimes it was their children and husbands, and sometimes it was their parents or boyfriends. On a few occasions when a participant scored or executed a drill with particular finesse, you could hear screams of excitement and praise, “Yay Mommy! Go Mom!” When this did happen, I always looked at the face of the woman who had just made her children proud, and unsurprisingly she was beaming. Exhausted or not, she looked elated. During each session the word ‘sorry’ could be heard multiple times, whether it was for an accidental bump or a pass that was off, but the instances steadily decreased, as we felt more confident on the ice.

On one particularly interesting day of the ALTPH program, I arrived at the arena and the parking lots were full, so I parked at the back of the building and was walking with my bag and stick when I noticed that I had cut off a conga line of young men, teenaged boys dressed in their best suits. They were stepping off of a coach bus met with a small crowd of fans waiting patiently for autographs. I wondered briefly who they were, until I entered the building and heard the excited chatter of staff and realized it was the Canadian National Junior Men’s Team and I knew we would have an audience today. The locker room was aflutter, with nerves, excitement, envy, and embarrassment and when we made our way to the arena, the boys were there. They were playing a game after our session and spent the hour watching us and warming up. I felt slightly saddened by the fact that these boys were treated like stars and at such a young age, they were already immensely more skilled than I could ever hope to be. Just as Porterfield (1999) discussed, it was easy to be sullen by the games I had not played and skills I had not gained by coming to this sport in my twenties, rather than a young child. Nonetheless, as the team disappeared into their own locker room and arena filled with eager fans, we continued with our drills and scrimmage, with slightly more nerves and giggling than usual that day. Though the fans were certainly there to watch the Junior team, they ended up catching a glimpse of our

scrimmage, though there was not any indication of how they felt about this. I wondered if they were surprised to see adult women learning hockey and also if they thought it was admirable or just humorous. Indeed, our pre-game show provided a change of pace for fans who were probably more accustomed to younger, male players.

The coach organized a few social events that consisted of lunch and beer after our practice and this further united the group. The socials served as a space to chat about who we were and why we were in the program. We often joked about not recognizing each other outside of our equipment. As the session was coming to an end, we decided to pitch in to buy our coach a gift to show our appreciation for her. The gift was even hockey themed: Wayne Gretzky's wine, a hockey sock toque, and various other gift cards. We each signed the card and promised to stay in touch and to see each other next season.

ALTPH, Barriers and Facilitators

The following section highlights the barriers and facilitators for earlier hockey and ALTPH involvement. A concept map was utilized in the data analysis process to provide a clearer visualization of the core themes that were found. As Daley (2004) states, concept maps can be used to not only plan and outline a research project, but also to assist in data analysis. Since qualitative research produces an immense quantity of data, concept maps can assist in reducing the data to more a manageable form for the researcher. I have included this visualization of the themes for both the barriers and facilitators in following pages. The terms 'barriers' and 'facilitators' are commonly used in sport and disability studies (Shields & Sinot, 2014; Kirby, Levin & Inchley, 2013; Rosenkranz, Kolt, Brown & Berentson-Shaw, 2013; Yungblut, Schinke & McGannon, 2012), often referring to physical barriers and specific people as facilitators. For the purpose of this study, the terms refer to the conditions that help/motivate

or that hinder the participants' engagement in the ALTPH program and hockey earlier in life.

After listing each barrier and facilitator, each individual theme is broken down into smaller, more specific families of themes that emerged from the interviews.

The barriers that were discovered in this project are discussed chronologically. Specifically, some barriers were discussed as impediments to hockey participation in earlier life. Past barriers include a lack of opportunity for girls' hockey as a child, and having young children. On the other hand, current barriers are time and location logistics of the program, equipment and familial obligations. Moreover, each theme did not have an equal impact on participants. For example, limited or no opportunities and familial obligations and influences were more salient than inconvenient time and location logistics and access to equipment as barriers for some participants. This was evident from the interviews as participants spent more time discussing these factors and it was their immediate answer to why they had not learned hockey earlier in life. For facilitators, family members who play hockey, prior skating experience, and comfortable/friendly learning environment were more salient than social class and individual desire. In all of the concept maps that follow, varying font sizes are utilized to convey the salience of the theme.

Concept Maps

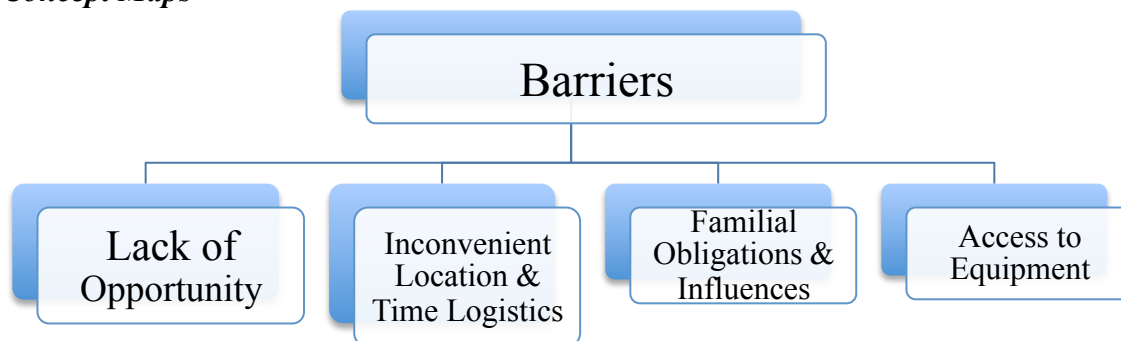


Figure 1. Barriers Concept Map

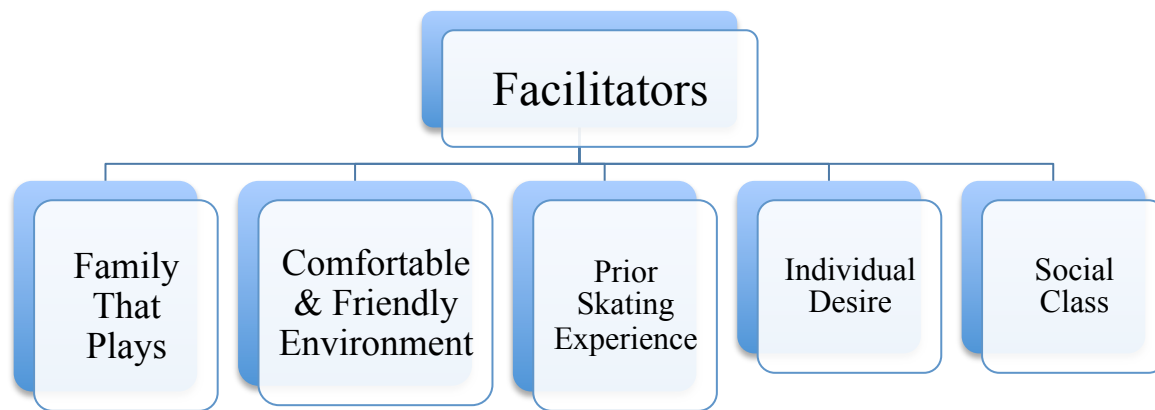


Figure 2. Facilitators Concept Map

The main research question of the study is what were the barriers, if any, participants faced in learning hockey earlier in life? Data from interviews proved most valuable in answering this question. The four themes that emerged were *lack of opportunity*, *familial obligations*, *time and location* and lastly, *access to equipment*. The following section goes into further detail regarding each of the four main barriers.

Lack of Opportunity

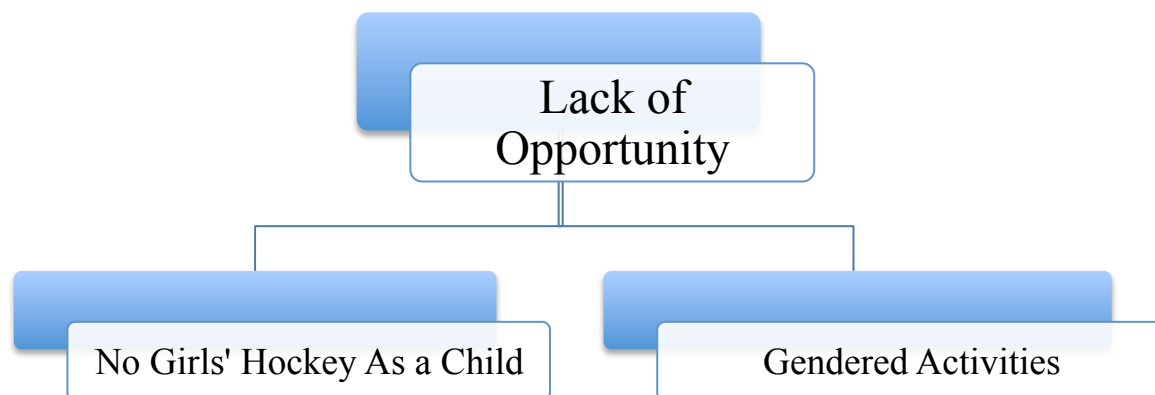


Figure 3. Lack of Opportunity Concept Map

Lack of opportunity was cited by many participants as the main reason they had not experienced hockey earlier in life. The most common explanation for the lack of opportunity was the fact that no girl's hockey existed: the opportunity simply was not there. The scripts that were

socially constructed for females during the years in which the participants grew up did not include participating in hockey. Since many of the women are in their late 30s and 40s, the fact that they had no occasion to play as a young child is not surprising, as girl's hockey is still a growing sport and would likely have still been in the developing stages 25-35 years ago. One participant explained her reason for participating in gymnastics and instead of hockey as a young child by saying that "in B.C., no girls played hockey. Like in the early '80s. And again, I mean I did gymnastics because my mom volunteered [as a coach]" (Kara). Another participant's experience echoed this lack of opportunity. She said "hockey wasn't available to me as a girl, a kid in a small town" (Lisa). Likewise, in the case of Trish, "my brother always played hockey, and when I was growing up they didn't have hockey for girls" (Trish). The first barrier these women encountered was the fact that there was no opportunity for girls' hockey when they were children. This was cited almost exclusively as the main reason for not having experienced hockey earlier in life.

Though girl's hockey teams existed when the participants were children, they were far less common than boys. This is not surprising as Hockey Canada's timeline for female hockey does not have any data from the 1930s to 1967 (hockeycanada.ca, 2014), suggesting that perhaps women's hockey was receiving little attention, or that it was not considered necessary or important to collect data on women's hockey participation. Even if opportunities were available, gendered ideas of appropriate activities for girls may have still limited their chance to play hockey. Many women stated that when they were young, girls simply did not play hockey, as can be seen in the following quotation from Melissa: "My brother played rep soccer and rep hockey. But we had lighter activities like Girl Guides, dance... There was no girls' hockey." This narrative was continuously repeated as more participants described similar experiences as

children. I have already mentioned how Kara felt that when she was growing up, “no girls played hockey.”(Kara). Likewise, Lisa stated that “My brother played hockey, I took music lessons...” Opportunities in childhood are likely shaped by parents, as they would be enrolling and paying for extracurricular programs. Thus, the lack of hockey experiences may be impacted by interviewees’ parents’ views about gender and hockey or sport in general. Perhaps they had internalized the gendering of sports. Specifically, many sports are labeled appropriate for only one gender. For instances, if we imagine a boxer, who do we see? If we imagine a figure skater, who do we see? It is not known for certain whether participants’ parents did in fact internalize sporting gender stereotypes, which are an (assumed) association between the generalized characteristics of a group and the individual members of that group (McGarty, 2002; Kurylo, 2012), as they were not interviewed; however, the fact remains that girls’ hockey opportunities were available to most participants when they were children and their parents chose to enroll them in other activities. In addition, possible internalization of gender and sport stereotypes could have made hockey even more inaccessible to many girls. The participants’ citing lack of opportunity as the main reason they had yet to play hockey prior to their ALTPH involvement, while also saying their brothers did play the sport, is a clear example of how gender was a key organizing principle in the participants’ lives (Creswell, 2013). It would seem that these women did not play hockey because they are female, and gendered stereotypes regarding appropriate activities.

Just as these women described barriers to participation in hockey as a child, there was also mention of hockey participation, or lack thereof, as an adolescent. Melissa stated that it was not until her last year of high school that there was an opportunity to play hockey. She did not play hockey at that time but stated “I had a friend who in my last year of high school was finally able

to play hockey and she was *so excited* about it” (emphasis added). Melissa, discussing her own past experience with sport, then stated that the only reason she was able to play on the high school field hockey team was because she had the social support of a couple of friends who played the sport. In other words, if she did not have friends who participated, she would not have participated. Like Melissa, during adolescence, it was more common for participants’ to engage in activities other than hockey. Many women engaged in other competitive sports such as soccer, water polo, volleyball, and gymnastics. There is not one definitive reason why these women did not take up hockey as a teen, but the barriers discussed in this chapter, being lack of opportunity, and sport and gender stereotypes internalized by participants and their parents, are some possible explanations. Moreover, since it is most common to start playing hockey at the young ages of four or five, it is not surprising that participants did not discuss any hockey experiences in their adolescence. They may have felt that it was already too late.

Connected to the participants’ early experiences of the gendering of sport is how they have continued to reproduce gendered scripts for the ALTPH program. One noteworthy observation that occurred each week of the program was that the participants would gear up (put on all their equipment) and walk from the change room through a series of doors into the rink, wearing their purses over their shoulders. They would then put their bags behind the bench. I, however, only brought my purse to the bench twice. After that I re-wrote my identity as what I see as a proper hockey player and I left my valuables hidden in my hockey bag in the locker room. There were many jokes and discussions about this occurrence and its meaning. Participants laughed and entertained the idea of ‘making it big’ with their invention a “hockey purse,” one that was designed specifically to bring on the bench. They would market it to female hockey players and it would loosely resemble a spike bag that track athletes use. The logical explanation for

bringing a purse on to the bench is that the change rooms were not locked and participants worried about the opportunity for theft to occur. However, the sight of a hockey player, geared up for what looks like a battle, wearing a purse, highlights the duality of the participants' lives. The fact this sight seemed contradictory speaks to the internalization of what it means to be a hockey player. I only brought my purse to the bench twice because I believed a 'proper' or 'real' hockey player does not bring a purse to the bench and that script did not need to be re-written. Therefore, after two weeks of the program I began to leave my valuables hidden in my hockey bag in the locker room. Consequently, I may have been reproducing ideas about who and what a hockey player is. My identification as an athlete, the internalization of who a hockey player is and the feeling of embarrassment for being an adult novice hockey player all contributed to my decision to leave my purse behind. Hockey players, regardless of gender, traditionally do not carry their valuables in a bag onto the bench. Indeed, their value and all they require, is situated within and on their bodies, and the stick in their hands. It should be noted that most men do not bring a bag or personal belongings onto the bench. While the women are playing hockey and resisting many existing sport and gender stereotypes, they are still conforming to gender norms. It can also highlight the reality that this is a group of novice hockey players who are still learning the norms of this particular sport, as the participants were not aware that most established hockey teams bring a lock for the change room door to avoid this issue.

Familial Obligations and Influences

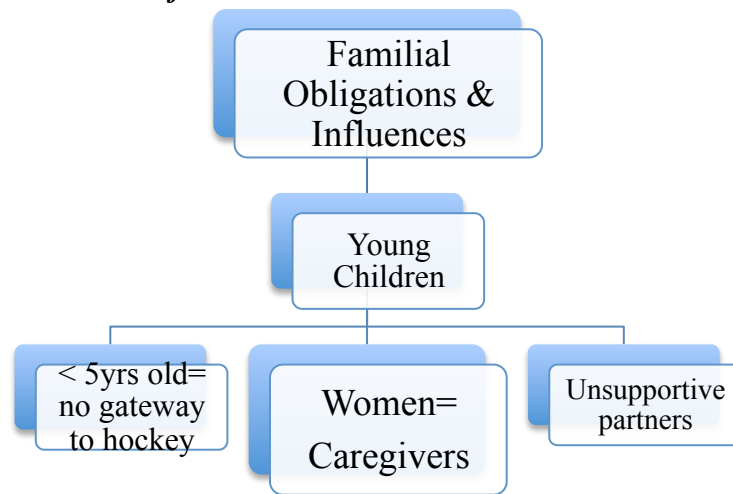


Figure 4. Familial Obligations and Influences Concept Map

The second theme that emerged as a barrier to hockey participation earlier in life was *familial obligations and influences*. Women cited having young children as another past barrier to participation in the ALTPH program earlier in life. This barrier is particularly interesting as it speaks to the impact of intersecting oppressions (Hill Collins, 1993). Having young children can act as a barrier to participation in different ways. First, women are most often the caretakers of young children, as seen in Dionigi's (2010) work, even to the detriment of their own health and wellbeing. Women explicitly stated having young children was a barrier to their participation in the ALTPH program in the past. Second, Dionigi (2010) found that mothers often experience guilt when leaving their children for personal reasons because these women have internalized the idea that mothers should be accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to be a good mother (Dionigi, 2010). The impact of this barrier is demonstrated very clearly by Lisa, who stated that "when the kids were really small I never had the time, so now I'm getting my life back and able to do stuff." Not only did having small children act as a barrier for some of the participants because they were the main caregivers, children younger than five years old often do not play hockey, therefore they cannot be a gateway to their mothers' hockey participation. Specifically,

many of the participants' children played hockey within the same league that runs the ALTPH program, and thus, these women learned about the program by attending their children's games or practices and being approached by the league convener or seeing advertisements. However, it is not until having children old enough to play that women were aware of the ALTPH program. Otherwise, caring for young children served as a barrier to their participation.

Not only did participants say they did not have the time for their own leisure when their children were small, but some admitted to relinquishing their leisure time on their own accord. Melissa stated, for example that "Then kids came along, so I dropped my stuff. Really wrong decision and really lots written about it, but not in my age, and I...kind of followed my parents' way" (Melissa). This was a fascinating moment in which the participant's tone changed and it felt like a very intimate exchange. Melissa acknowledged that she is aware of this ethic of care discourse—for mothers to sacrifice their own time for their families – yet it was not something that was questioned. In other words, it was what most mothers were doing and were expected to do. Certainly, it seems that her parents had modeled this approach. Her admission to giving up her own activities when her children were young and then her subsequent acknowledgement of the negative implications that can have, felt layered with pride in taking care of her children and regret for losing herself in that process. She showed these emotions by changing her body position in the interview, such as lifting her chin and smiling when she said she gave up her personal time for her children, then lowering her body and head when she referred to it being the wrong choice. For most participants, the traditional script written for adult women with children was reproduced, and negatively affected their hockey participation. For the three interview participants who did not have children, familial obligations and influences did not play as salient a role in preventing them from participating in the ALTPH sooner in their adult years.

Related to the barrier of having young children is the reality that unsupportive spouses can have a negative effect on women's participation in sport. Unsupportive spouses were a negative familial influence for some women in the program, though less salient than having young children. One participant described her past experiences with physical activity and stated that she did not feel supported by her now ex-husband in her athletic endeavours and said "I couldn't really talk about it or anything because there was no interest. And it was seen as like a disruption, there was no real support for it" (Kathleen). One participant even divulged in the interview that her partner did not enjoy hockey and she needed to wait until her partner was asleep to even watch hockey games on television. Her partner did not attend program sessions and show support, compared to most other participants' partners who did attend.

Inconvenient Time and Location Logistics

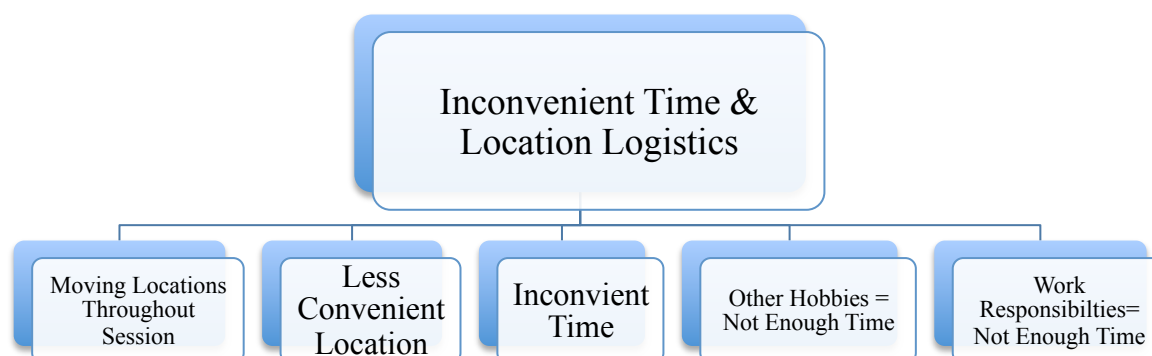


Figure 5. Inconvenient Time and Location Logistics Concept Map

The third barrier that emerged was *inconvenient time and location logistics*. Most interview participants cited that a lack of time was a reason why they did not participate in more hockey. Bonnie, for instance said, "Just time, yeah it's a big factor." Christie echoed this view, saying that "Well time is a factor, working full-time and already having two hobbies is kind of enough." Time was also discussed with regards to the time slot of the program as a barrier to

participation. Lisa stated “that was my excuse last year, the time of day. It was enough for me to say no I'm not going to do it.” Last year the program ran on a weekday evening at 7:00 pm, whereas this year the program runs at 12:00 pm on a weekend. Location was also a large factor to participation in the ALTPH program. Most of the participants travel for 30 minutes to an hour, not accounting for traffic, to get to the program because this program was the best option for them. When discussing location, one participant said, “so last year when it was Wednesday nights out in the River³*, the River is a *long* [distance away]... It was a long ways to go and it was definitely a barrier...when I found out it was at Griffon* [closer location to participant] predominantly with the Learn to Play, that actually pushed me to sign back up for the Learn to Play” (Kara). Another participant agreed that location could be a barrier for certain people. “In terms of location, I have my own car, I'm lucky. I know there's a couple women who played last year who couldn't do this time”(Trish).

Access to Equipment

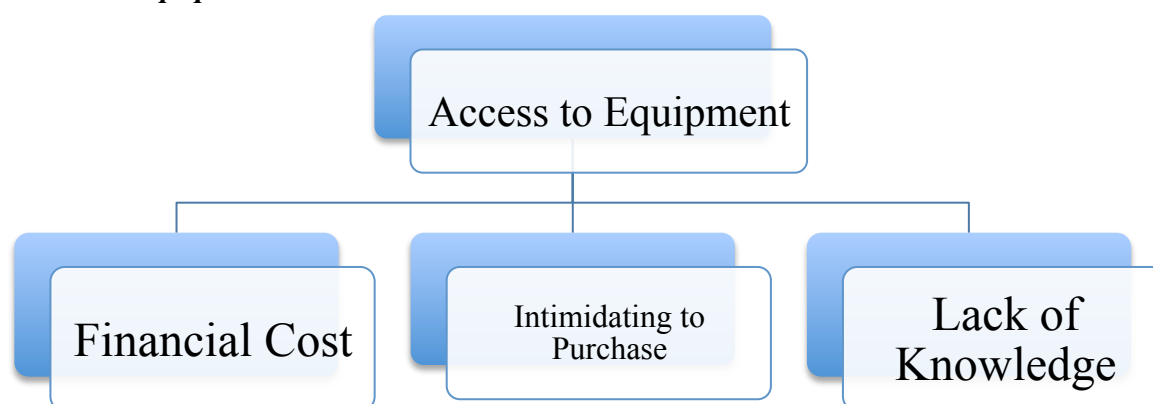


Figure 6. Access to Equipment Concept Map

The fourth barrier identified for past participation in hockey and the ATLPH program was *access to equipment*. Accessing equipment is a barrier to participation in two separate ways. The

³ *indicates pseudonyms

first reason is financial: “There's a lot of equipment so you have to invest in the equipment and invest in the program. So you have to have some access to funds to play” (Nicole). Another participant stated:

I had to go get all my equipment this year. I didn't own anything. And that was a lot...But in past years when I thought about wanting to play, that was one of the factors that held me back a little – that what if I don't like it and I've gone and bought all this equipment. (Christy)

Christy questioned whether purchasing hockey equipment was a sensible investment in the past, yet she came to the conclusion that for the ALTPH program, it was a worthwhile investment as she purchased all the equipment necessary to play. Christy arriving at this conclusion could be due to the environment that is facilitated by the coach and other participants. Another participant hoped to ease the financial burden by enlisting family members to purchase some of the equipment as Christmas gifts “'cause it's pretty pricey”(Kara).

The second way in which equipment acted as a barrier was the lack of knowledge. There is a significant amount of equipment used in hockey and there is a specific order in which it is put on the body. Without being taught how to put on the equipment, it would be difficult for a novice player to properly prepare for hockey. Moreover, many participants discussed how the process of purchasing equipment made them feel uncomfortable, enough to make it a significant factor that shaped their experience. Some participants described lacking the knowledge and/or confidence to purchase and don the equipment on their own. For example:

I remember too, not even knowing how to put on the equipment. Ya that was a hard time, I think I got my pants on and then realized 'oh wait I have a Jill⁴

⁴ Protective groin garment for females

thing' and what order do you put them on. Even now sometimes I must admit

[I think,] 'what do I put on now?' It's not kind of second nature to you. (Trish)

Similarly, Bonnie stated:

Before I started, it was just figuring it out...equipment and what I needed and put on, I didn't know any of that... but it was a factor, just not knowing. I'm used to doing things that I'm pretty confident in and can do well. But this was a total unknown for hockey for sure. (Bonnie)

Trish explicitly stated she did not know how to use the equipment in the proper order, admitting she did not have the full knowledge necessary to use the equipment yet. In addition, the way Bonnie articulated her experience with the equipment was telling of how she felt about it. Her words and pattern of speech, choppy and with broken sentences, in this quote are very uncertain, reflecting her uncertainty about the equipment. Many women discussed not knowing what to do with the equipment and requiring assistance from spouses and children who knew what to buy, as well as how to put it on. "They all took me shopping and so my daughter and my husband and everybody, and they're all, my son, in there 'cause they all played before, so they were all helping me pick gear and put it together" (Kara). Though Kara's experience purchasing her equipment was made positive because of her family's involvement. She alone did not have the resources to purchase the equipment, therefore without her family's assistance, Kara could have had a much more negative experience. Another participant realized that she was lucky to have a husband that could help, with her and her children's equipment needs and imagined people in situations where they did not have such assistance: "But other people, their parents don't play hockey, you have to figure it out for your kids" (Bonnie).

Having family to assist in the equipment purchasing and learning experience was key to women successful negotiating this process. Others, however, found it to be a negative experience:

So um it's a bit intimidating to go to the hockey stores and they have racks and racks of male equipment, I had to get a new Jill and there's hardly any Jill's. But even in like fitting skates and stuff like that, I'm not sure if it's the industry and maybe this can be the education factor, but how much money is women's hockey now pumping into their stores?... Because finally they have women's [chest protectors and shoulder pads] and maybe they did before, but I'm just talking the local store. (Melissa)

Melissa did not feel respected or valued in the hockey stores by the male staff and is speculating that since women and girls' hockey is growing in popularity, it would be worthwhile for stores to increase their female staff representation, and the amount of female hockey equipment and merchandise they carry. By the passionate way she spoke, it was clear Melissa felt this inequality was unjust, because she and many other women spend a lot of hard earned money at these hockey stores for her children and herself. Whether participants found their experiences purchasing and learning about the equipment necessary to play hockey positive or negative, it was clear that this was a significant component to their ALTPH experiences.

The previous section highlighted the barriers participants' faced, past present and future, to their hockey and ALTPH participation. These barriers included lack of opportunity, inconvenient time and location logistics, familial obligations and influences and access to equipment. However, some of these past barriers were overcome because of the facilitators. The following section is a discussion of facilitators to participants' ALTPH program involvement.

Family that Plays Hockey

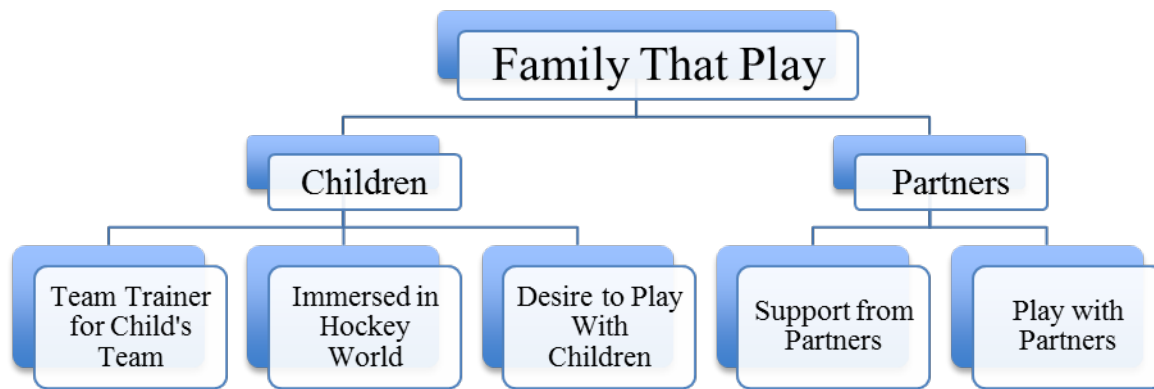


Figure 7. Family That Plays Hockey Concept Map

Having family members who play hockey was beneficial to the participants' involvement. Family that plays hockey was the first theme that was found regarding facilitation of participation in the ALTPH. All but one participant stated that they had one or more close family members, a partner, children, or other relatives, that currently play hockey. As Bonnie put it, "my husband plays, both my kids play, it's just sort of all consuming in my house," a common narrative among the interviewees. For me, I relied on a close friend who played hockey for assistance with equipment, and for support during my hockey journey. Though I did not share the same desire to be a part of my family's hockey life, I did experience a different kind of belonging. There was a sense of pride and identity as a strong, and physically active Canadian woman. I can attribute this pride and identity to feeling as though I have become part of this hockey community. For me, this feeling of finally being part of an exclusive, what seems like a 'boys only club,' one that is considered integral to our national identity, is complex, fraught with joy and satisfaction. In addition to the sense of belonging that I experienced, I felt excitement when I arrived at the arena, walked into the building with my enormous hockey bag and stick. I felt eager for the practice

and game to come, and for the chance to improve my skills, win small battles and solidify my social position, or belonging, as a hockey player.

The other participants' seemed to long for their identity to be acknowledged as a hockey player that belongs to their family's team. For this affirmation many participants were able to look to their spouses, which seemed to reproduce males as 'real hockey players'. Spouses acted as facilitators for the participants' ALTPH involvement in various ways including, acting as a resource for hockey knowledge, caring for the children when participants were at the ALTPH program or being a fan that watches and supports their partner and or mother. Having a partner that was already familiar with the game gave participants background knowledge, such as how to purchase and use equipment. Family members helped to overcome the equipment as a barrier and it was frequently discussed in interviews as being of particular importance. One participant stated, "my husband suited me up completely, and then I would practice [suiting up] in front of him. We went through the whole routine, the order. I had no clue!" She continued on to say:

I didn't know what was what or I didn't know how stuff would fit me, so he [husband] was literally trying on equipment lying around the house and seeing if it would fit me, and then yeah, he had to teach me the whole routine and I practiced it before we went out the first day literally. (Bonnie)

As previously mentioned, feminist theory often examines power imbalances and domination (Creswell, 2013). In that regard, within the above quote we can see Bonnie is leaning on her husband for support and the knowledge she lacked. Moreover, this highlights the uniqueness of an adult female experience in a traditionally male arena, where Bonnie lacked the resources necessary to play which is heavily due to the social construction of gender. It demonstrates how sport is not removed from our patriarchal society, as Bonnie looked to her

husband for guidance and knowledge that she was not able to accrue growing up female. On the other hand, it may also demonstrate a shift in scripts, as her husband was clearly supportive of Bonnie's activities. Her husband collaborated with Bonnie to back her endeavours to play hockey by providing her with the resources she needed.

Even the sheer fact of wearing hockey equipment elicited positive emotions in participants and their family members. This can be seen when one participant describes her husband's and daughter's reaction to the first time wearing the gear: "they're like 'look at you!' and I was like 'I know! Can you believe I'm wearing hockey equipment? This is so crazy!'"[laughing]. And they both were like, 'Way to go mummy!!' (Larissa). This exchange between Larissa and her husband and daughter demonstrates the support she experienced but also mirrors the feelings of pride and excitement that I also experienced when donning the equipment. Just as Larissa wearing her hockey equipment was a visual for familial inclusion, so too was a specific instance of water bottle labeling that was noted during participant observation. Each participant brought a water bottle and placed it on the top of the bench for easy access during the session. Water bottles for women's hockey and male hockey players that choose to wear cages on their helmets, have a long spout that can fit into the mesh of the cage. This long spout makes it clear that the water bottle is for hockey, and most likely women's hockey. Most water bottles have a name or identifying mark on them; some however have MOM written in big letters. When I first noticed this, I thought it was ineffective as many of the women in the program are mothers. However I then realized there was more meaning to those three letters than initially thought. The women who had mom written on their bottle were the mothers of children who also played hockey. Not only did the water bottle signify her identity as a hockey player, but by having MOM written on it, signified her membership in her family's hockey club.

The theme of supportive partners was salient throughout the interviews, Bonnie particularly appreciated this support: “In fact my husband came out to watch...he was totally keen! It was totally awesome” (Bonnie). In addition to showing support for their spouses while they attended the ALTPH program, some partners facilitated other experiences with hockey. Specifically, some participants stated they had played hockey before enrolling in the learn-to-play program with their partners and that their first experiences with hockey were with their partners. For example, when asked if the ALTPH program was her first experience playing hockey, one participant said, “Yes. Well besides just going to the community ice with a stick and my boyfriend, but not really hockey” (Christy).

With regards to children, participants discussed watching their children play and being a team trainer for their child’s team. A related and common theme was the desire to be able to play with their kids, especially as they grew older and their skill level increased. As explained by Bonnie when asked what her goals were for her participation in the program she stated, “really to be able to confidently able to play a fun game with my kids. To learn a bit more about the game for sure, so I can keep up with them as their skills advance.” Bonnie’s response can also be interpreted as reframing her hockey participation to fit within the ethic of care.

In addition to wanting to be able to play hockey with their children and spouses, some women expressed concern with their children’s coaching staff and made a goal to learn more about the game in order to assist with coaching or training their child’s team. This can again be seen as participants reframing their hockey involvement to fit within the ethic of care. These women used the ALTPH program to gain skills needed to become more involved in their children’s hockey. For instance, when asked for details about her enrolling in the ALTPH program, one participant stated very clearly her reasoning:

The driving factor was being so frustrated with the coach on [my daughter's] team last year and being really frustrated particularly with how I was being treated on the bench as a trainer, because the year before I had felt very much a part of the team, and it was an amazing – the whole team, the parents, the kids, the coaching we had too was one of the most amazing experiences of my life actually, like it was social it was so much fun, it was so supportive. And then last year we had this team that didn't seem to click and the coaching staff that frankly I didn't think weren't great coaches, and also you know for me as a trainer that *really bothered* me (said emphatically). (Kara)

Kara also conceded that she was already investing a lot of time at the rink with her daughter, and thus, it seemed logical to work with the team. In addition she specified she had a desire to help in some way, so she first began as a volunteer trainer, then stated:

I thought it would be more fun to coach, but again still in that 'not comfortable doing things that I'm not good at' aspect. I knew I could skate and add value but I wanted to make sure that I could have enough sort of basic hockey skills as well that um A) I could kind of be credible in the ice rink with the kids and B) that I could be most helpful to them (Kara).

The ALTPH program is used by Kara to feel that she belongs on the rink with her daughter and that she can contribute to the team by having the firsthand knowledge and skills required to coach a hockey team. Interestingly, Kara was a competitive figure skater in her youth and is not lacking in athletic capabilities. Thus, her athletic history may be affecting her desire to be respected on the ice. This reasoning for ALTPH involvement reproduces the traditional age-gender script that makes it culturally acceptable to participate in sport, as they are using it to support their children's physical activity efforts. Specifically, by using the program to improve their children's hockey experiences, these women are again reframing their hockey involvement to fit

within the ethic of care framework because women often state they are better able to fulfill their roles as mothers and wives if they are able to participate in some forms of physical activity (Miller & Brown, 2005).

In addition to assisting their children's hockey teams, other participants used the program to stay connected to family they might not otherwise be able to see often. Specifically, two women are family friends, and they both say the program is an important way to stay connected. They carpool to the program each week and enjoy the drive as a social time to catch up. "We chat all the way and it's our time to get caught up as well, so we chat all the way down, and in the change room" (Melissa). Melissa's friend, Trish, echoes this statement: "Part of it is social for me and making sure that we keep in touch and see each other at least once a week which is great." The ALTPH program was a safe, inviting place for participants to learn the skills they desired that allowed them to gain membership in their hockey-centric families and to maintain existing relationships.

Program Environment

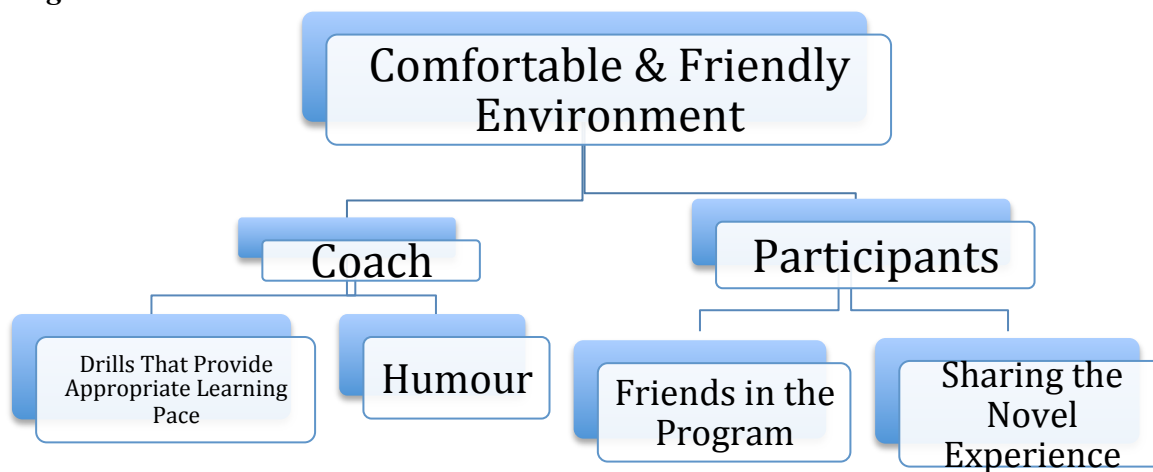


Figure 8. Program Environment Concept Map

The second major theme identified as a facilitator to ALTPH participation is program environment. The environment created by both the coach and the other participants has been highlighted as a significant facilitator for women to maintain their participation in the program. Not only do participants say the coach is knowledgeable, welcoming, friendly, and funny, but the other participants' warm interactions and personalities have been stressed as reasons to come back each week. This can be seen in some of the interview participants' responses to the question of what they perceive as facilitators to their participation:

So I love the program because it's so chill. Like everybody is just welcoming and on the ice together and supportive and just I feel like it's a place of community and no judgment. Um and that's huge. And there's no like, there's no competition right because...ya know we're all just there to learn the game and have fun. And so that for me is big. (Kara)

As seen in Kara's quote, she felt the program was welcoming and non-judgmental. Another participant explained "Just the comfort level of learning together when it's all women" (Bonnie). Bonnie is emphasizing the women's only aspect of the ALTPH program, which highlights the uniqueness of women's sporting experiences. As feminist theory considers women's experiences to be impacted by gender (Creswell, 2013), the women's only aspect of the ALTPH could work to reproduce or resist gender norms. The implications of the women's only environment will be explored further in the Discussion section. During participant observation, I noticed that many participants would have felt uncomfortable and physically unsafe if the program were co-ed. Specifically, I overheard women say that they would worry about being in a hypothetical on ice collision with a male player, who they believed would be bigger and faster. In addition, another participant stated, "I chose [the league] because I liked and I knew they did good things with girls hockey, and encouraging women to play" (Nicole). This participant is a clear example of how

many of the participants feel about the league that runs the ALTPH program. Indeed, I saw that the participants feel very strongly about how the league has positively influenced girls' and women's hockey. For example, I overheard on many occasions participants discussing their positive experiences with their daughters' teams in the league and referring to the league as one of the most popular women's leagues in the city.

Not only did participants discuss their daughters' positive experiences with the league but there was also discussion of the coach (Amy) and the atmosphere that she creates. This is a significant aspect of the ALTPH program both from a participant's view and a researcher's position, as the coach is in power, and has the potential to enact this power over the participants. Amy was able to even out the gaping power imbalance between her and the participants by creating such a fun, casual and welcoming environment. Amy's general structure of the lessons was as follows. After gearing up, we waited on the bench for the Zamboni to flood the rink and then proceeded onto the ice for a short (two-four minutes) warm up skate. This warm up skate could also be viewed as free skate, a time for participants to work on any (individual) skill they wish to improve upon. Amy would blow the whistle and our skills session would begin. She started by giving us instructions for the first drill that focused on various aspects of hockey, including, shooting, skating skills with or without the puck, positioning, or one-on-one work that focused on getting the puck from your partner. Following approximately 20 to 25 minutes of drills, Amy then puts each player on a team, usually based on our jersey colour. We then play a game for the remainder of the session. A personal highlight was during this warm up skate time. I decided that I longed to attempt hopping over the boards, instead of using the doors to exit the bench. This is commonly seen in elite or professional hockey. Since I am neither elite, nor professional, this skill was frightening. I skated to the empty bench, spent some time envisioning

me doing the technique that Amy described when I inquired about how to approach this skill. Larissa spotted me contemplating the jump and came over to support me. She said, “I’m here if you fall, though I can’t do very much to help you, except maybe laugh.” We had a laugh about how scared we both were and how silly it all seemed. I put my gloved hand on the top of the board, which was just above naval height, and pushed. I did it, I hopped over and landed safely on the ice! I was overjoyed and Larissa was too. What I was unaware of was that Amy had witnessed this and she was about to make me do it again in front of the whole team. Thankfully, I successfully landed the second time and my audience laughed and cheered. I felt like a true hockey player in this moment.

The support from my teammates and encouragement from Amy was not a scarce occurrence on the ice and Amy’s coaching style was a very salient theme throughout the interviews. The participants consistently acknowledged that they highly respected the coach because of her skill and knowledge of the game, the way she used humour to create a comfortable, relaxed environment, as well as her ability to teach adults. Trish explained what she liked about the coach:

You automatically have respect for her because she has done this, she went down and played in the U.S. for university, she's obviously got the skills and capabilities. What I really like about her is that she is funny. She does make us laugh.

This was a common narrative from the participants, with other women adding that the way in which the coach structured the sessions was very conducive to adult learning. Specifically, the coach gave instructions that were not only appropriate for novice hockey players, but adult learners; for example, beginner drills were instructed in a fast paced manner. In addition, another

participant explicitly stated that the coach is one of the main reasons she returns to the program weekly because the coach supports this participant's overall goal for the program:

So the fact that [Amy] is I think is a very talented and conscientious coach, makes it fun for me, that facilitates my overall involvement and supports my goal of being able to bring that back to my daughter and the other girls that she plays with. (Kara)

For Kara, because she is considering becoming a coach for her daughter's team, the way in which Amy instructed the sessions was of particular importance. The fact that the coach is able to create an environment that is conducive to these women learning and enjoying hockey is an extremely important facilitator to their participation. In addition to participants discussing their respect and fondness for the coach during interviews, I observed data to support this experience. On many occasions the coach, Amy, would share her own hockey woes. Whether this was an effort to ensure participants understood that at all levels, hockey players make mistakes or if it was simply to make participants laugh, the effect was an increased level of comfort in a potentially unsettling space. Amy seemed to understand that these participants would thrive in a friendly, yet still physically and cognitively demanding atmosphere. Specifically, she would describe ways to complete drills depending on skill and comfort level. She never insisted participants do the drill one way, yet always encouraged participants to push and believe in themselves.

In addition to the coach creating a positive environment, the participants also contributed to making the environment welcoming, supportive, fun, and accessible. The participants played major roles in supporting others in the program. I noticed how both on the ice and in the change room, participants complimented one another on a skill or drill well done, and engaged in casual friendly conversation, which boosted the camaraderie of the group. The conversations in the

change room ranged from talk about their children, to their own struggle with practice that day. This chatter seemed to ease any anxieties participants may have had, as they would share in their teammates struggle or use them as a momentary distraction from their own apprehensions about their hockey skills. This comfortable and friendly environment was a strong motivator for me to return week after week. I thoroughly enjoyed Amy's casual and humorous teaching style, in addition to the other participants' welcoming attitudes. The welcoming attitudes often translated to being overly polite and apologetic. We said sorry to each other on multiple occasions. Any minor error or awkward moment would elicit the apology. And although physicality was not a salient feature in most interviews, Larissa touched on the physicality of the program and the evolution of our confidence in ourselves by saying:

I love the physical challenge, I love the feeling of coming home and feeling utterly spent.

I love the feeling of when you're on the ice and your legs are burning. I love the fact that the girls have gotten a little more physical and we don't say sorry as much. (Larissa)

This can be connected to the previous discussion of girls' prior sport experiences being characterized by timidity, and insecurity (Young, 1990). Participants were reproducing the stereotypes that hold femininity is marked by subordination (Hill Collins, 1993) and showed a lack of confidence in their bodies, common to females participating in sport (Young, 1990). Luckily, the more time we spent on the ice, developing our skills, our confidence seemed to increase.

Prior Skating Experience

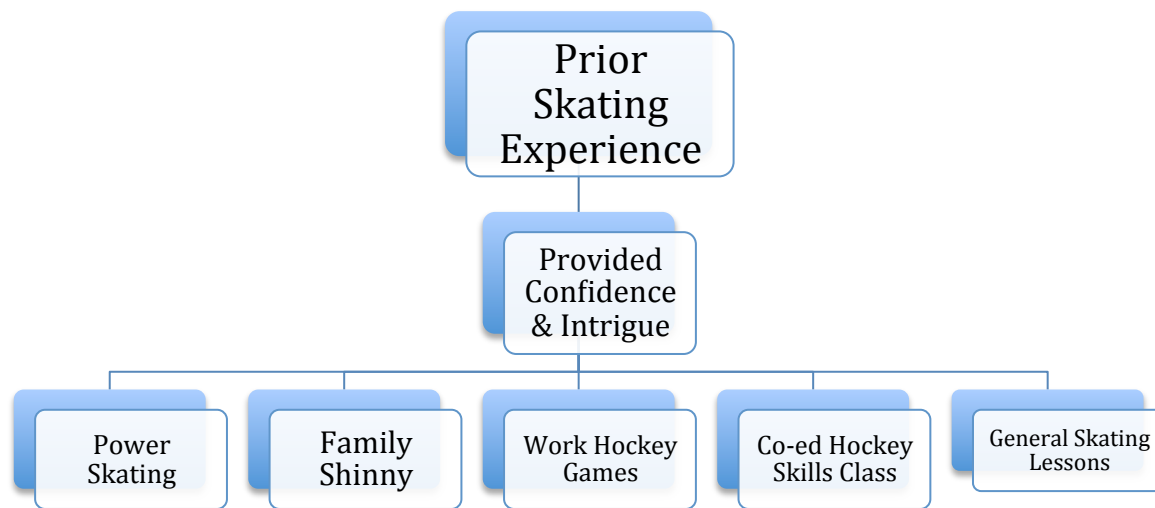


Figure 9. Prior Skating Experience Concept Map

Another salient facilitator was the fact that all of the participants interviewed had prior skating experience, such as power skating lessons, figure skating as a child, shinny (a less structured version of hockey) with family and friends or work hockey games, prior to enrolling in the ALTPH program. This differs from my own experiences, as I did not have any prior experience with ice hockey, though I did take skating lessons as a child and play floor hockey in elementary school and field hockey in high school. This prior experience with ice hockey can be considered a stepping-stone for enrollment in ALTPH program, as it gave some women the confidence to try hockey for the first time. Most participants discussed partaking in some form of skating lessons as children, mostly figure skating, which is not surprising as figure skating is commonly viewed as a gender appropriate sport for females. As Lisa explains, “I learned how to skate, to figure skate. I had some skating lessons as a kid. And our school was next door to the rink so we would go skating” (Lisa). One participant engaged in competitive figure skating as a child but did not continue for very long: “I tried figure skating and figure skated competitively

for about four years. It was really boring and there was no social aspect to it at all. And so I dropped out of skating” (Kara).

More recently, many participants took power skating lessons that were offered by the parks and recreation department of the City of Toronto, and it was here that they improved their skating skills enough to feel confident trying hockey. Bonnie had a very positive experience in her power skating lessons, stating that “I did the power skating last year with the city, so that helped too. It was excellent. Really excellent.” In addition, since many of the participants have spouses and children that play hockey, they had engaged in family shinny. A couple of participants played in a hockey game with work colleagues. The experience was enlightening for these women, as they had never played hockey themselves and it was here that they discovered they enjoyed playing hockey. Not only did prior skating experience give participants the confidence to try a more official hockey program, but it also gave them an intrigue for the game. If participants had not partaken in these programs and enjoyed them, they may not have been interested in trying more hockey. For example, after trying shinny for the first time with friends, one woman described the moment she got home and spoke to her daughter, who has been playing hockey for many years:

That night, it’s the first night that I came back from trying it, I said you have been lying to me! You never told me how much fun it is to rapidly skate down the ice after a puck!
(Melissa)

Melissa enjoyed playing shinny, and was unaware of how fun she would find that experience until she tried it. Just as Melissa stated, it was clear within the rest of the interviews and from the participant observation, that participants enjoyed their time on the ice. Though participants were in full hockey equipment, including a cage, you could hear their laughter and through the cages

see the smiles on their faces. This was fun. Sometimes the laughter would be because they accidentally collided with another participant, or sometimes it was a combination of the struggle, embarrassment and enjoyment from attempting novel skills. The pleasure participants experience during the program connects with the next facilitator of individual desire.

Individual Desire

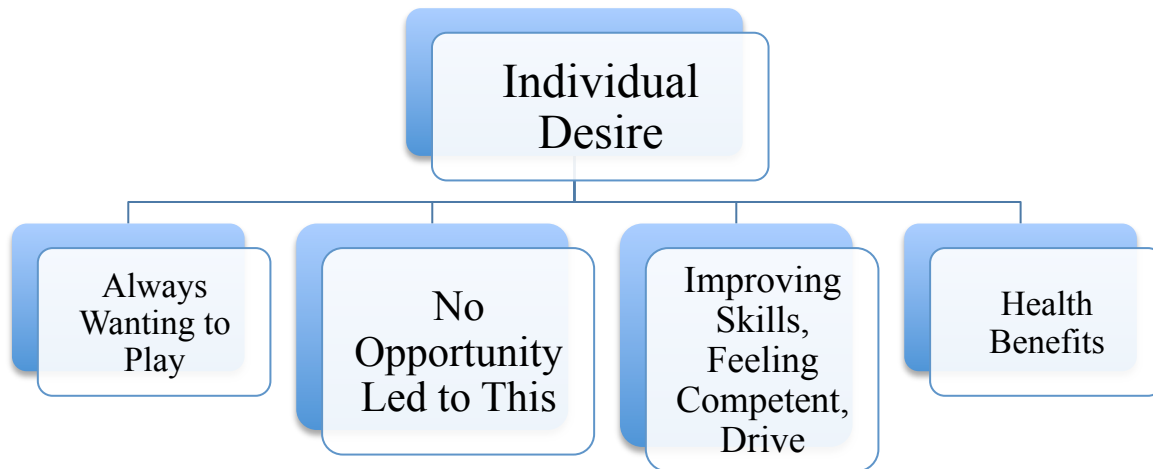


Figure 10. Individual Desire Concept Map

The fourth major theme that arose from interviews is an internal, *individual desire* to play hockey. The women that were interviewed expressed varying individual reasons for participating in the ALTPH program that included health and weight management, and a long held desire to try the sport. There has been substantial research in sport psychology that examines motivation for sport participation (Fraser-Thomas, Côté & Deakin, 2008; Baker, et al., 2009; Roberts, Treasure & Conroy, 2007); however within the sociology of sport discipline in which this study is grounded, individual desire is not akin to motivation. Participants' individual desire is a result of structural and cultural experiences. I suggest that their individual desire is not innate; rather, it is a form of agency, that was either constrained or enabled in response to barriers and facilitators they may have experienced in their lives. Those that used the program for health benefits found

that the novel exercises were a positive addition to their current workout routines. One woman said the program has had a positive effect on her weight management. Other women stated that the program was beneficial for their other activities, including running, and cycling. It is arguable that using the program for health benefits is evidence of internalizing the script of ‘good’ ageing and healthism. For example when discussing her reasons for participating, Trish state that “I was finding it that even though I was dieting I wasn’t losing any weight and I figure at that age, ya know I’m in my 40’s now, I actually have to do that”. It is clear that she believes to age well, you need to be active, even though as a young child she self-identified as a “couch potato.”

In addition to the perceived health benefits afforded to these women from the ALTPH program, there was a strong sense of prolonged desire to play hockey. These women did not have the opportunity to play as children and the opportunity now existed at this point due to differing variables such as financial status, ages of children, and so on, such that they were now able to play hockey. There was a sense of longing when women would discuss their family’s hockey history and their lack of involvement with the sport currently. As one participant said:

My brother got to play hockey and he loved hockey and the whole family [loved hockey]. There was tournaments you know and just like his hockey became all of our lives. And I was like this is so bogus, like why, why him? So it just always stayed with me. It just was something I always wanted to do, part defiance like it’s not for boys but a big strong interest is it looked like so much fun. (Larissa)

This participant showed a sense of sadness and envy, stemming from the fact that hockey played a major role in her childhood, but it was her brother who played and most likely received the praise and attention of her family.

The individual desire to play hockey can be put within a social context, in that the participants' previous experiences shaped her desire to play hockey regarding hockey. The gendering of sport experienced by participants when they watched their brothers play as children, likely ignited participants' desire to play hockey. These participants now have the chance to re-write their scripts. They no longer have to be their brothers' cheerleader. I shared Larissa's sense of envy for many years, and subsequently, I have had an internal desire to play hockey. Hockey was a sport I have felt like I could have done well in, but was never enrolled as a child. In addition, I was always envious of girls that played hockey in high school. To me, these girls embodied resistance to gender stereotypes because they were strong, and fast, and in my experience, were respected by males. The fact that these girls' sexuality was never questioned could be due to the fact that this was an exceptional athlete program environment, and thus most students were elite athletes and possibly resisted gender norms. I perceived girls that played hockey to be strong and cool because of the confidence I saw in them. Though I was a competitive athlete as a teenager and continued participating in many sports throughout my adulthood, I did not feel satisfied with my lack of abilities on the rink. Much like Nicole, my athletic background takes the forefront and my reasons for participating were largely skill related. The ALTPH program was a suitable way to start my hockey participation; however, it is by no means the end to my hockey development. Similar to the interview participants, the goals for my participation are to play in a league. Though I could technically play in a league now, I need to achieve a certain skill level to have the confidence to contribute to a more competitive level team.

Participants' hockey culture seemed to be bolstered by the positive reactions the women received when coworkers and family members learned of their newly acquired hockey skills. Many women discussed an experience in which an acquaintance was surprised when learning

they were playing hockey. This surprise then gave way to what the women perceived as respect. It was described as finally being a part of an exclusive club in which the members gave knowing and respectful nods to each other when seeing one another, especially walking with their gear. Likewise, I have had similar emotions the moment I finish putting on the lower body equipment – Jill, shin pads, socks, skates, pants – and stop to take a break. At that point in the preparation for practice, I seem to always take a break, as it is a lot of work gearing up. Wearing the Jill and the fact that my pants are a little large for me, seems to force me to sit with my legs wide, taking up space on the locker room bench. I feel strong, stoic, and my mindset shifts from friendly and excited, to serious. Some of the participants also share my sentiment, as it was discussed many times that they feel like they are gearing up for battle. Participants may have felt as though they were gearing up for a battle they have been fighting all their lives, as they did not have the opportunity to play a child.

Social Class

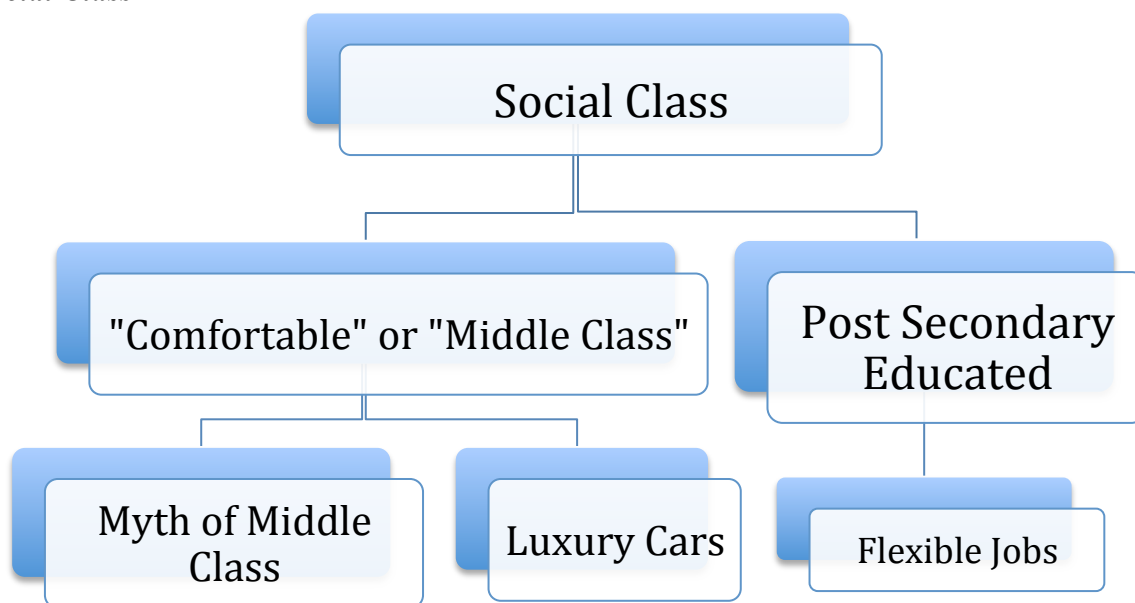


Figure 11. Social Class Concept Map

The final theme that emerged as a facilitator to these women's participation in the ALTPH program is social class. As Kraus (2011) states, social class reflects more than material resources. It is also defined by the cultural experiences and behaviours that are taken up by a particular class. It was clear that these women belong to a more privileged social class due to a variety of reasons. For example, each woman interviewed had a post-secondary education. Though the \$250 registration fee for the 12 week program was not considered expensive by the participants and me, the cost of equipment⁵, gas, parking, and time infers that the program registrants have access to sufficient resources. As a student, my financial status is considerably lower than the other participants in the ALTPH program, and yet I could afford to participate due to the low registration fee, and the fact that most of my equipment was given to me by a friend who no longer uses it or purchased second hand. In comparison, it was clear that these women were financially comfortable as many women enrolled in the program drove luxury vehicles, and their children also played hockey. Not only did the participants seem to belong to an upper socioeconomic status, they also had access to a community of people of similar social class, such as parents from the school their children attended and coworkers. Specifically, some women were recruited by other participants, for the ALTPH program at their children's school. For example, Bonnie explained that "when I heard about [the program] through the school moms, I was kinda motivated to look into it." This was a loaded statement as she referred to other women that had children attending the same school as hers as "the school moms," indicating a particular social group or community. It also demonstrates that Bonnie may have wanted to join the program to gain social capital with the other parents at her children's school. Lastly, regarding the finding that many women shared an upper middle class status, some women also took part in

⁵ Prices approximate. Hockey skates – \$60.00-\$700.00

Pants, elbow pads, shin guards, chest protector, stick, neck guard total—\$218.99-\$900.00

yoga, which has been found to be more common for those with an income of \$60 000 or higher (Chao & Wade, 2008). By having the social class, via economic status and social capital, to afford the hockey experience, these participants were able to use their resources to facilitate their ALTPH participation.

During interviews, participants were explicitly asked about their financial status, and their responses did not vary much. Most participants used language similar to the following participants' responses such as "I make a good living, I'm comfortable" (Nicole), "I would say, middle, middle class pretty much" (Kathleen) or "we live comfortable" (Larissa). Though the language used to describe their financial status may be modest, it is possible that the participants incorrectly believe they belong to a middle class economically, due to their adoption of the middle class sport ethic. This is elaborated on in the Discussion and Conclusion chapter.

This chapter highlighted the key findings of this case study. It demonstrated that there were four themes of barriers, which included, lack of opportunity, familial obligations and influences, time and location logistics, and access to equipment. It also demonstrated that there were five themes of facilitators, which included, family that plays, prior skating experience, individual desire, comfortable and friendly environment and social class. The key facilitators to these women's ALTPH program involvement were having family or partners that play. The key barrier to participants' prior hockey experiences was a lack of opportunity, due to the gendering of sports. The lived experiences of each woman enrolled in the program varied; however, there were commonalities as well such as feeling joy, pride and a sense of community. In addition to the facilitators, barriers, and the lived experiences of participants, the results section highlighted some of my experiences. The following chapter provides the discussion of the results, in relation to existing literature as well as the conclusion.

Chapter Six: Discussion and Conclusion

In the results chapter, four barriers to the participants' hockey and ALTPH participation- were highlighted - lack of opportunity, inconvenient time and location logistics, familial obligations and influences and access to equipment – as well as five facilitators to ALTPH participation – family that plays hockey, comfortable and friendly environment, prior skating experience, individual desire and social class. This section discusses the findings in further detail and relates these findings to existing literature to help develop a more in-depth understanding of novice adult women's hockey experiences, as well as demonstrate what this specific case study helps us understand about the internalization of stereotypes and its affect on sport participation.

Since feminist researchers believe that gender is a significant category of analysis that is used to organize and shape our experiences (Creswell, 2013), the ALTPH program was important to examine, as it was women's only, therefore using gender as an organizing principle. In addition, while there has been research examining girls and young women's elite hockey experiences, there have been very few studies investigating adult women's novice hockey experiences. As such this study begins to address this gap in our knowledge of women and hockey by focusing on adult women's novice hockey participation, specifically exploring both the barriers and facilitators to their participation, as well as gaining insight into these women's lived experiences. Findings from this case study demonstrate that there are many shared truths that are experienced when participating in the ALTPH program; however, there is not one single or collective truth. Moreover, all women interviewed experienced at least one of the barriers and facilitators to their participation, many of the participants identified with the majority of the themes. This fact highlights that while the participants shared many characteristics and experiences, their individual realities were not completely homogenous. What is homogenous

however, is the interconnection between barriers and facilitators for participants. Each theme, regardless of whether it was a barrier or facilitator, contributes to the overall hockey experiences of each participant. The following section discusses the results of the case study with regards to existing research and how each theme demonstrates the internalization of stereotypes and its affect on participants' hockey involvement.

Though I had expected the women to talk about wanting to feel stronger and to clearly dispel any ageing stereotypes as a primary motivator for enrolling, this was not the case. I believe participants did not discuss this because they were not in the older cohort that the previous year had been. Since participants' ages ranged from 28 to 50 years, they may not feel ageing stereotypes majorly impact their lives. A key facilitator to the participants' hockey engagement was having family that also plays hockey. It has been demonstrated by various studies, that parents' engagement in sport and physical activity is strongly related to their children's participation (Moore, et al., 1991). It can be argued that there is a more bi-directional relationship between parents and children and sport participation. Snyder and Purdy (1982) found that parents' interest in sport increased as a result of their child's participation. Moreover, mothers of children who participated in sport were more likely than fathers to develop an increased interest in sport. This finding was echoed by the current case study, as many participants indicated their children and husbands already played hockey and the ability to play with their family was a driving factor to their participation in the ALTPH program.

The participation in sport together as a family contributes to a family's sport culture. Family sport culture, as studied by Birchwood et al., (2008), are the beliefs, behaviours and traditions of a family's sport participation. Some family cultures are supportive of sport participation; and it is within these environments that participants may be equipped with the

means necessary to participate in sport. As Wheeler (2011) discovered by interviewing children and their parents, families create a sporting culture using various strategies. These strategies are both intentional and unintentional, and are based on parent's personal histories with sport. It was clear that participants in this case study each had a family sport culture that was influenced by their histories. Specifically, participants discussed how their own parents and family influenced their sport behaviours (and subsequent lack of hockey involvement). This usually took a different form as participants entered into adulthood, and evolved into their current sport participation as a family. Not only were participants heavily involved in their children's, nieces', and nephews' hockey careers, they had personal relationships with other hockey parents. The relationships parents have with other parents are another contributing factor to a family's sport culture (Wheeler, 2011). These participants had access to networks that assisted their hockey participation. They had the resources, via their husbands and partners who already played hockey, knew the equipment and the game and their other family and friends who participated in the ALTPH program who recruited them. Through being socialized within their family's sport culture, participants' hockey involvement was a shared interest that was supported and facilitated by their families.

The family sport culture could also help participants accrue the required resources to participate in hockey. As all participants' had prior experience with skating, they were equipped with some assets that allowed them to successfully navigate into the ALTPH space. Participants were enrolled in figure skating lessons at an early age by their parents, participated in shinny with their families and/or engaged in power skating lessons to keep up with their kids. These practices may reflect the players' uptake and reproduction of their family sport culture, as identified by Wheeler (2011). If individuals value sport participation and believe in the potential benefits of

involvement in sport, it is unsurprising that they will have participated in other hockey or sport endeavours. It is evident that participants were socialized into and upheld a family sport culture that valued participation in hockey and believes in the potential benefit from such participation. The fact that many participants learned about the ALTPH program via their daughters' hockey involvement highlights the importance of examining women's sport experiences, a central tenet to feminist theory within sport. It was clear that the participants' ALTPH involvement was strongly influenced by their family's sport culture and hockey involvement, but along gendered lines for many of the women. This finding further demonstrates the need to analyze sport within the social constructivist and feminist theory frameworks this study uses. In addition, by using feminist theory to examine the unique power imbalances, by way of resource differentials these women face in learning hockey later in life, we are able to pinpoint where these women lacked resources and how they were able to overcome barriers to hockey participation by accruing such resources. As this study is working to promote Canadian women's participation in sport, it is suggested that some introductory hockey programs could be structured around the family, having parents and children learning together. Specifically, the strong connection found by this study between women's hockey participation and their family's sport culture, speaks to a positive relationship that works to increase women's hockey participation.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting the influence that participants' with children had on those without, and in particular the reproduction of heteronormative construction of family. As previously mentioned there was a strong familial involvement in the program, and for those with children it was even more robust. Participants' children would often accompany their mothers in the change rooms, often leading to their mothers centring the discussion on the children, even taking over the verbal space. Mothers discussing their children's hockey games or tournaments

took up a majority of the locker room talk. Did this discussion silence or inadvertently exclude a specific group of participants, such as myself and other participants who did not have children? Is there a voice that was not heard because of such a strong heteronormative familial influence? These are questions I pose as a researcher; however, even as a participant, I would prefer an environment that was centred on our hockey experiences, and not overpowered by participants' children.

In using feminist theory, scholars are called to be more attuned to power imbalances and domination (Creswell, 2013). Since dominant stereotypes of women and motherhood, such as ethic of care, exist and often dictate who possesses the qualities that are deemed to be those of a good or proper woman (Miller & Brown, 2005), there may have been some negative judgment of or power imbalance among the participants of the ALTPH program. Specifically, as the women with children often controlled the locker room conversation, usually about their own children, they were adhering to the dominant cultural ideals about gender and motherhood. In doing so, there may have been fewer opportunities to express other forms of gender, and alternative notions of motherhood. Just as Donaldson (1993) and Dworkin and Wachs (2009) discuss how men who conform to hegemonic masculinity dominate those men (and women) who do not conform as closely, this may also be the case among these women who conform to idealized versions of femininity versus those who do not. In addition, as it has been clearly demonstrated that men who conform to hegemonic masculinity reap societal benefits (Kimmel, 1994; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), these women who were dominating the locker room conversations may have also reaped some social benefits. Though this is speculative, in a traditionally male space of hockey where historically heterosexuality and femininity have been questioned, these women may have been able to reaffirm their heteronormative, 'good women' status.

Prior skating experience was repeatedly cited as a facilitator, in that it either provided participants with the basic skills to feel comfortable trying hockey more formally, the intrigue, and/or the confidence in themselves to attempt a new sport. The finding that prior skating experience acted as a facilitator to the participants' enrollment in the program has not been explored by existing literature. Despite the program being for novice hockey players, participants felt they required a base level of skill to play. They acquired this through playing shinny with friends and/or family, and through being engaged in one or more of a related form of physical activity, namely, figure skating, power skating classes, or hockey goalie experience. That some of this prior experience was gained via family members, serves to reinforce the role of the family in facilitating the women's participation. Many participants explained their first exposure to hockey was very positive and that led to an increased desire to play the sport more regularly and on more official terms. These findings suggest prior positive experiences with hockey or other forms of skating are key facilitators to these adult women's hockey participation.

It was also clear that participants expressed an individual desire or motivation that facilitated these women's participation in the ALTPH program. I suggest that this individual desire is also an expression of the sport culture within which they have been socialized. This sport culture likely contributed to participants' individual desire to play hockey. This theme is an extremely salient notion, as all participants' described their participation as a result of the right time, right place or the pieces of the puzzle coming together. Some participants explained that their other sport or physical activity programs were coming to an end they needed to look for a new activity to participate in. The desire to take up a new sport speaks to the internalization of healthism and good ageing. As we saw with Trish, she believed that it was more important than ever in her 40s to be active. Though she described herself as a "couch potato" in the past, some

women are able to enact agency and re-write their scripts, as Trish appears to be doing by commencing her sport involvement in her 40s. By acknowledging that the women in this study have agency, I also acknowledge that they may have the ability to resist oppressions, which as Stewart (1994) states, is an important position researchers must take when undergoing feminist research. There was also evidence that participants' hockey culture was created at a young age, due to family involvement and once they had the occasion to play hockey, participants viewed this as the perfect opportunity to partake in something that has been strongly internalized. This facilitator has been labeled individual desire as it encompasses participants' past history with hockey or rather, lack thereof, coming together with their yearning to be involved in their families' hockey lives and a desire to try a new activity. Family sport culture may have also served to facilitate women's involvement by diminishing the risk of having their sexuality questioned. Since hockey is seen as a traditionally masculine domain, women who participate therein disrupt the gender norm and have been accused by media, coaches, fans and critics of being lesbian (Blinde & Taub, 1992). Participants of this study regularly engaged in conversation about their husbands and children, possibly to solidify their heterosexuality. They also framed their involvement as a way to be a part of their family. It may be that this is an example of the ethic of care (demonstration of being a good wife and good mother) doing the work of maintaining the heteronormativity of hockey. Though no participants discussed a struggle with their sexual identity as a result of their hockey engagement, the frequent discussion of their husbands, especially within the locker room, could serve as a way to covertly establish their sexual identity.

Despite having a hockey culture that contributed to the individual desire to play that has, in many cases, existed since childhood, the participants did not begin their hockey playing

careers until well into adulthood. The fact that they are novice hockey players is a contributor to this study's importance, since much of the existing literature has examined more experienced hockey athletes. By studying novice hockey players we are able to see how this particular group of adults, not competitive athletes, internalize gender and sport stereotypes and how this can potentially affect their participation in sport. However, as there were no studies on adult novice hockey players, related literature is relied on for discussion. One scholar in particular, has done numerous studies on experienced hockey players. Dr. Nancy Theberge is a major contributor to the body of knowledge on women and girls' hockey experiences and her study *No Fear Comes: Adolescent Girls, Ice Hockey, and the Embodiment of Gender* (2003), demonstrated that girls wanted respect for their efforts and skills as hockey players. While Theberge (2003) focused on elite level hockey players, the notion of respect was also a theme within the interviews among novice players. Most commonly, it was discussed in terms of the subtle nuances, such as the looks men would give participants when they became aware of or knew that they played hockey, or the feeling participants would experience when walking around with their hockey equipment. Participants recalled moments when male colleagues would inquire about their hockey involvement and express how the exchange made them feel respected by these men. On another occasion, a participant described the scenario in which she was walking from the parking lot to the arena with her gear and said people needed to get out of her way. For her, seeing people physically moving out of her way, made her feel respected. The idea of wanting respect was again subtly mentioned when a participant stated she was participating in something that "changes someone's outlook on me in a positive way, I know I'm doing something pretty cool" (Larissa).

The feeling of belonging to the exclusive club, which was discussed and experienced by many participants, echoed the sentiments of the girls in Theberge's (2003) study wanting respect for their participation in hockey. There is a deep connection for some of the participants between their individual desire to play hockey, and their desire for gender equity. When Larissa spoke about never having the opportunity to play, but always attending her brother's hockey games and now getting the symbolic approval of her participation from her male acquaintances, it was clear she too wanted respect for her efforts. Creswell (2012) states that a central theme of much feminist work is challenging "the injustices of current society" (p. 29), it is unsurprising that some of these participants felt the desire to play, at this stage in their lives and potentially right what they may have felt as a wrong. As previously mentioned, Litchfield and Dionigi (2012) found a sense of belonging can be fostered through sport participation and the participants in this study demonstrated this connection by being active in the creation of a positive environment and sharing in the novel experience.

With regards to a comfortable and friendly environment being a facilitator to the participants' engagement in the ALTPH program, one aspect that was highlighted by participants was the fact that the program was a women's only program. Participants stated on many occasions that they felt the all female environment was crucial to their participation. Characteristics of the program that participants highlighted and specifically connected to it being a female only program were friendly, welcoming, and supportive. Participants stated that they had attempted other skating programs that were co-ed and did not feel as comfortable and confident as they do in the ALTPH program. These descriptions mirror Donnelly's (2011) findings in her ethnography of the women only spaces of women's roller derby and women only home improvement workshop. Specifically, Donnelly (2011) found that women who engaged in

the aforementioned activities actively (re)produce the characteristics that are often used to describe women-only environments, such as, welcoming, comfortable and supportive.

Donnelly's (2011) findings highlight that the above characteristics are not a natural effect of women-only programs but participants work to create such an environment. In addition, it is interesting to note that Travers and Deri (2011) identified the lesbian softball leagues as positive sporting experiences for transgender people due to its inclusivity; however no participants openly identified as gay or transgender despite the ALTPH being viewed as an inclusive space.

Therefore, the inclusive environment created by both the lesbian softball leagues studied by Travers and Der (2011) and the ALTPH program may due to their unique populations or their shared resistance to gender and sporting stereotypes.

This inclusive environment can be seen in the social construction of the ALTPH program in that both coach and participants were aware that this is a women's-only environment and were active in the reproduction of what a women-only environment looks like. As Kara explained, "I think the more we can create welcoming environments in the community through sport, the more women will participate. I think it's a wonderful opportunity." Kara's quote echoes the findings by Gill (2007) and Kluge (2002) that state women are more likely to rely on other women for support with regards to their participation in non-traditional activities. Kara also believes that there is value in all women environments and was reproducing Donnelly's (2011) findings that participants are often aware of the social construction of female only sport atmospheres and subsequently reproduce the features commonly associated with women's only environments. Participants actively reproduced the women's only environmental characteristics by being supportive, welcoming and not competitive. In addition, Donnelly (2011) discusses the notion of advertising the activities as "no expertise necessary" (p. 209). This is of particular importance to

this study as it is a common phrase used in learn-to-play settings. Women of all skating abilities are welcome to join the ALTPH program and as Donnelly (2011) argues, this statement makes the program more accessible to all adult women – potential participants, upon reading this description, can envision themselves as learning to play hockey. In addition, the coach, having immense hockey knowledge, skill and experience held a large amount of power within the ALTPH program. However it should be reiterated that the coach was able to overcome this large power imbalance between her and the novice participants of the program by using her skills as an instructor, and creating a fun, casual and welcoming program environment. Lastly, the ALTPH program was a comfortable and friendly environment that not only, aimed to be inclusive for women of all hockey abilities but also served as a reprieve from the participant's everyday lives. As one participant explained her reasons for participating in a conversation with the whole group, she needed an escape. Tanya, admitted that she needed a place to get away from her children and husband where she could be just herself, not mom, not wife. When Tanya divulged this information to the group, I looked around and saw nodding and empathy. Kara then, regarding Tanya's comments said in her interview, "I think that's wonderful to be able to say that and to be able to create that for women...I think it's almost unique in some ways for sport to be able to do that."

Kara's discussion of the women's only environment highlights the fact that the participants were active in the creation of the positive, and welcoming environment. This is inline with the theoretical and philosophical assumptions within this study, as social constructivism holds that norms and ideals are impacted by the subjective experience. Furthermore, by being grounded within with an epistemological assumption and using a feminist

theory lens, it is fitting that participants' past hockey experiences and beliefs as young girls have shaped their current experiences.

In addition to a positive environment acting as a facilitator, having high economic status has been consistently identified as a major influencer (Jarvie, 2011; Little, 2014) to active leisure participation. Unsurprisingly, this study found that most participants would be considered to have an upper-middle socio-economic status; however, they repeatedly identified themselves as middle class. Despite the fact that all interview participants had a post secondary education, owned at least one vehicle (often a luxury vehicle), had children enrolled in the second most expensive sport in Canada (Canadian Youth Sports, 2014) (save three participants who did not have any children), the women still identified themselves as middle class, commonly using the additional term, "comfortable." However, the shocking reality is the national median individual income is \$28, 200 (Statscan, 2011), therefore it may be unlikely that most of the participants fall within the middle class. It is more likely that they took up a middle class sport ethic, in that, their participation in sport was framed within the notion of self-improvement (Bourdieu, 1978). Not only were participants presumably part of the upper-middle class, they each shared in social class ranking. Specifically, the women in the program worked "white collar" jobs, and were a part of a social support network that embodies the same class. Sport is often seen as symbolic of social class (Jarvie, 2011), therefore participation in hockey may be symbolic of a certain social class shared by the participants.

Findings from this study highlight the most salient explanation for participants' lack of experience with ice hockey earlier in life is the absence of opportunity. Lack of opportunity to play hockey was cited, most consistently as a barrier to participants' hockey engagement. This is important as it highlights the acknowledgement by participants that lack of opportunity was a

barrier to past hockey participation, but there are other current barriers they must still negotiate. This reason for women's lack of participation in hockey is not unexpected, as most of the participants grew up prior to the 1990 boom in female hockey (hockeycanada.ca, 2014).

The dearth of opportunity also highlights the internalization of sporting and gender stereotypes by participants and their family, for as Pfister (2012) states, "sport was invented by men and for men; women were latecomers" (p. 369). Though women's ice hockey was available, albeit opportunities few and far between, participants repeatedly stated that it was their brothers who participated in hockey, and that they engaged in 'lighter activities' (Melissa) that were viewed as more socially acceptable or gender appropriate for girls to participate in. This narrative is in line with a study that identified existing stereotypes and other hobbies as major barriers to team sport participation for girls (Wetton, et al., 2013). In Wetton et al's (2013) study, both students and their teachers had internalized sporting stereotypes that maintain sport is for boys and not girls, and this internalization led to girls' lack of participation, as well as contributing to girls' negative sport experiences. Many of the girls agreed with the statements that it is "not seen as cool for girls to play sports" and girls should not play sport because it is a 'Man's Game'" (p. 3). Girls within the study also stated that they participated in other activities, which Wetton et al interpreted as hobbies; one of whom said "I cook a lot...so I can't find the time" (p. 3). As Wetton, et al., (2013) explain, "there is an underlying explanation for this choice, that girls, from an early age, have been socialized into believing sports are not in their nature" (p.4). In this case study, a variation of this underlying explanation is operating for the women who also stated that as children they participated other activities, such as dance, figure skating, gymnastics, and volleyball, which have been viewed as more gender appropriate for females. Participants' families valued sport; however, they were confined to sport that fit within

gendered norms. Even the few women in the ALTPH program that were younger, born in the mid 1980s, described participating in more traditionally feminine activities and that hockey just was not an option for them.

Although the women claimed lack of opportunity was the primary barrier to their involvement as children, women's hockey did exist when all of the participants were younger. None of the participants questioned their lack of hockey participation at the time: they simply said it just was not what girls participated in. This shows a clear internalization of the idea that certain sports are solely for boys, just as was seen in the Wetton, et al., (2013) study. Not only is there evidence that the participants' families may have internalized gender stereotypes when they were children, there continued to be a subtle internalization of the idea that men are naturally better at hockey than women. On multiple occasions participants made comment that they were glad they were not learning to play with men as they would fear feeling inferior or risk injury due to faster men on the ice, despite the novice status of all ALTPH participants. This aforementioned internalization of sport and gender stereotypes was also seen in Theberge's (1998) *Same Sport Different Gender: a Consideration of Binary Gender Logic and the Sport Continuum in the Case of Ice Hockey*. This study demonstrated that even women who played on a competitive hockey team believed men were naturally quicker. Unfortunately, this belief has not shifted much in the 17 years following that study, as seen with some of the participants of this study.

The second major barrier that was identified was familial obligations and influences. This can be described as having young children and/or an unsupportive partner. This finding echoes Miller and Brown (2005) who found that women with young children are less likely to engage in physically active leisure than women without young children. Likewise, the fact that most

women enrolled in the ALTPH program had children who were older than toddler age, or no children at all, can be seen as further evidence of familial obligations and influences as a barrier. Participants also explicitly stated that having young children prevented them from participating in the ALTPH program earlier. This is not surprising as research suggests that women are much more likely to be the caregivers of their children, to be available to their family all hours of the day, and to put aside their own needs to care for their children (Dionigi, 2010).

The above finding also suggests that participants may have internalized the stereotypical social construction of a good mother, as well as other traditional gender roles. Ethic of care is the notion of the self-sacrificing mother and partner that can influence a mother's behaviour. This narrative is very persuasive and pervasive, whether it is seen in the media, or within the families themselves. Internalizing these beliefs can have a negative effect on the health of women that have children, as demonstrated by Melissa who stated giving up her own time and leisure when her children were young and admitting that this was the incorrect decision. Kara also discussed acknowledging her struggle and resistance to ethic of care by stating that, "To be able to admit that, ya know I love my three kids to death. I actually need to know every week that I would have an outlet to get away from them, to have something that's mine" (Kara).

Moreover, Miller and Brown (2005) discovered that women are more likely to frame their active leisure within the ethic of care framework; that is, mothers engaged in physical activity because they believed it aided them in performing the duties of being a good mother. The participants in this study also justified their involvement in the ALTPH program as a means to improve their ability to fulfill their role, though not as a mother, but as their children's hockey team trainer. A team trainer's role is in many cases, comparable to the role often taken up by mothers, so much so that they are often called team mom. In children's hockey, the trainer tends

to player's injuries, providing them with first aid, ensure all children have water and remain hydrated throughout the game and they are often seen as the coach's assistant. They do not lead drills, only providing support to the head coach when needed. This is another example of how gender was an organizing principle in the participants' lives (Creswell, 2013), as they were the team trainer for their daughters' teams, not their sons. No participants discussed this level of involvement in their sons' hockey, however they felt a strong urge, whether it was from the league, their families or themselves, to be involved in only their daughters hockey. Though it is important to have female leadership, I do question what the reasons for this division are and if it is a reproduction of current stereotypes surrounding the maleness of hockey. Was this a case of 'leave the real hockey to men and boys'? Regardless, many of the participants observed a need for better training on their child's hockey team. They wished to fulfill that need themselves, yet felt they lacked the expertise, therefore they enrolled in the ALTPH program to gain more knowledge and increase their skill level, in order to provide their children with the expertise the participants felt was necessary. This is also in line with the variance in sacrificed leisure time between men and women. As it was mother's that gave up their leisure time to address their child's hockey needs by enrolling in the ALTPH program and becoming team trainers. Men do not sacrifice their own leisure time during the varying stages of adulthood, whereas women do. As men do not sacrifice their own leisure time, regardless of marital status or having children, this may in turn affect his spouse and her leisure time. Moreover, one participant of this study identified having an unsupportive spouse as a barrier to her sport participation, which echoed Miller and Brown's, (2005) findings.

In addition, inconvenient time and location logistics were identified as a barrier to hockey participation for the women in this study. One common duty as mother and wife for many

participants in this study was taking the role of their children's team trainer. Therefore, if the program's time and location did not fit with their children's hockey schedules, they may not be able to participate. In contrast, the participants' husbands or other males were the head coach. This finding could be read in different ways. Though this is reproducing gender stereotypes and can be analyzed negatively, another explanation for this particular involvement is the reality that participants may use this to feel connected to their family and included in something that they were not previously permitted. Therefore, their participation in hockey, regardless of role, may solidify their membership in the family sport culture. Nevertheless, this set place in the family may reproduce and reaffirm gender stereotypes.

Another barrier to the participants' engagement in hockey was the access to equipment. Hockey equipment is costly and therefore it can be a financial burden. As previously discussed, high socioeconomic status was correlated to women's participation in sport, conversely low socioeconomic status can be a barrier to sport participation (Jarvie, 2011). The participants discussed equipment as a previous barrier to their participation. Most women, when describing their thinking process when considering joining the hockey league, stated the financial commitment of the equipment was a factor that held them back. In addition to the financial burden the equipment can create, there is a barrier related to the equipment that comes to light when using gender as a category of analysis. Hockey is a sport that is traditionally seen as male, celebrating masculinity and youth (Theberge 2003; Dionigi 2010). Unfortunately, this is not limited to the arena. Participants in this study described their experiences purchasing equipment in intimidating and predominantly male environments. They noticed that most staff in hockey stores were young males and the selection of female hockey equipment was lacking. To navigate this masculine space, some participants included their husbands and children in the process. This

is particularly interesting as other public sport spheres, such as bars, have historically been exclusively male spaces (Wenner, 1998), yet sport equipment stores and their potential to reproduce the gendering of public spaces have not been studied.

Another notable theme that was the idea of fun, which has been examined in sport psychology, often used with motivation theories and examining children's experiences with fun, (e.g., Bassett-Gunter & Leatherdale, 2013; Côté, Baker, Abernethy, 2003). The term fun was used countless throughout the project, both on the ice and in interviews. The joy on participants' faces when they put on equipment for the first time, tried a new skill, regardless of success or failure, and finally participating in the game of hockey was impossible to neglect. For example, in one interview, the word fun was used to describe the participant's experience and feelings with the program 14 times, while another interviewee used the term 11 times. It was a common script that participants said they were not aware of how fun hockey was until they tried it. In addition, during the program's sessions, there was an immense amount of laughter and expressions of joy. Therefore, pleasure is an important facilitator for these women's hockey participation and should be examined more thoroughly in future research.

Multilevel Gender Analysis

Well-known gender scholar, Dr. Michael Messner (2000) used a comprehensive three-level approach to studying gender in sport environments. Some of the above findings can be put into perspective using all three levels of analysis, interactional, structural and cultural, with the foundational assumption being that gender is socially constructed and we can see this construction through this multilevel analysis. The interactional level examines how you do or perform gender, the structural level examines how the existing sport structure provides a context for gender and the cultural level examines how popular culture can impact gender by providing

references. Such references may be stereotypes about gender and sport. First, at the interactional level, participants were active in performing various gender ideologies, such as stating their beliefs that men are naturally better at hockey. Participants also made references to the inherent differences between boys and girls when discussing their children. Second, at the structural level of analysis participants discussed their roles with their children's hockey teams. Many participants were their children's team trainer. All participants that were trainers stated the head coaches for their children's teams were men and their role as team trainer was less valued. None of the participants expressed a desire to become the head coach, and all participants had accepted the head coaches as male. Also, these women were the team trainer to their daughters' teams, not their sons' hockey teams. The league in which their daughters played was creating a reproducing an environment that used gender as their main organizing principle. In addition, the ALTPH program was structured as a women's only program that also provided a female coach. This form of sex segregation aimed to increase participation, but nonetheless served as a structural level of gender organization. Third, the cultural level of analysis looked at the symbolic representations of culture and its effect on resistance or conformity to norms. It is at this level that the more covert, or subtle events were analyzed. One such event was the realization that most participants were bringing their purses from the change room onto the bench, while wearing full hockey gear. This is a cultural representation of a stereotypical view on what it means to be a woman: she has baggage, she also does not have the freedom to not carry objects, usually equipment to perform her femininity, around with her at all times. The contrast between this very stereotypical feminine symbol and the stereotypical masculine image of a hockey player was striking. It is here where participants seemed to resist the traditional view on who is a hockey player, while simultaneously conforming to gender norms. Participants also engaged in many conversations

regarding National Hockey League teams and Canadian National Men's teams, with little to no conversation about professional women's hockey, therefore pop culture provided participants with references of what 'real hockey' was.

This study employed rigorous methods that provide trustworthy data. One of the benefits of employing a case study method is that an in-depth, description(s) of the case can be offered. Just as Porterfield (1999) was able to divulge aspects of her life story, both past and present, to provide a fuller picture of what rowing meant to her, this project provides clearer images of what the ALTPH program means to the participants. In addition, the methodological approach this study took is also a salient feature that provides rich and unique data.

So What? The Bigger Picture

The previous discussion highlighted findings and connected them back to existing literature, as well as demonstrated which data were new contributions to women and sport research. But what does this small, very specific case study truly mean? As I presented this data to colleagues, I was surprised to be asked the questions, "So what? Why should I care?" This question hit me hard; it sent shockwaves through my body. My stomach sank and I thought to myself, 'Oh no, I have been working tirelessly on this project, trying desperately to get the participants' stories, as well as my own, heard, but it does not mean anything.' Upon reflection, I realized I was so wrapped up in the research that I had forgotten that I would need to communicate the importance of the study in various ways to people that have not experienced the ALTPH program. Moreover, I needed to examine the importance of this study, beyond the participants' journeys. The significance of this study, outside of these women's experiences, lies in its ability to demonstrate the impact of internalization of stereotypes on women's sport participation. Whether it was participants' parents or themselves who internalized sport and

gender stereotypes, it was clear that the impact stereotypes had on their sport participation was significant and ongoing.

As participants discussed, lack of opportunity was the main reason that they had yet to play hockey; however, the discussion of this barrier centered on the fact that during their childhoods, it was uncommon for girls to play hockey. Hockey, for many of these women, was associated with masculinity, as they watched their brothers play hockey. As this study is grounded in the social constructivist theoretical framework, I suggest that the participants were socialized to believe that hockey was their brothers' domain and right, as a male, and their athletic domain centred around less confrontational sports. This was seen as their own athletic endeavors were geared towards what were seen as more gender appropriate activities, like dance, and gymnastics. Though girl's hockey did exist, it seemed to be only for those who resisted gender and sport stereotypes. Moreover, participants did not recall having any choice or discussion about what sport or activities they participated in. It was almost an assumed, or automatic occurrence that they would not play hockey. Presently, many of the participants enrolled in the ALTPH program because it was women only and they believed even male novice hockey players would be more skilled than they were. It was clear that many of these women had internalized the stereotype that men are naturally faster, stronger and more skilled athletes than women and that ultimately impacted their choice of program.

A second major influencer on participant's hockey engagement was the ethic of care. Participants internalized the belief that to be a good mother, they must be self-sacrificing and give up their own leisure time to take care of their children and families. Thus, some participants stated that having young children prevented them from playing hockey. In addition, the internalization of the updated ethic of care led to some of these women framing their ALTPH

participation as an extension of their mothering duties. Participants engaging in a team trainer role for their children's team was an additional way they transferred the ethic of care notion into their physical activity involvement.

Research clearly demonstrates that stereotypes influence behaviour, (Bem, 1974; Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1975; Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar & Kauer, 2004). And as Messner (2007) states, gender “is not simply something that individuals “have”—like the color of their eyes—rather, it is actively constructed by groups, within institutional and cultural contexts that are themselves organized by gender, and saturated with gender meanings.” (p. 11). Through the process of socialization, we learn what is appropriate for our gender and what is not. Sport has institutional, structural and culture context that exists within a social setting and therefore is not immune to the impact of socialization and specifically the internalization of stereotypes. One example of the behaviour that demonstrates the internalization of sport and gender stereotypes was participants' constant discussion of their husbands that was interpreted as a method to potentially resist the lesbian stereotype associated with sport (Blinde & Taub, 1992), specifically contact sport, participation. Not only did participants' past family behaviour exhibit the possibility of being impacted by stereotypes, but participants themselves exhibited evidence of being impacted by stereotypes in their current behaviour. The sport participation of women in this study was impacted by the social construction of femininity, a good wife and mother. This case study helps us understand the complex relationship between gender and sport, by considering the impact of social construction. Dominant notions surrounding gender, such as the ethic of care theory and that women are timid, or shy (Malszecki & Cavar, 2005; Woolum, 1998), were both reproduced and resisted in the ALTPH program. As demonstrated, participants and their families were impacted by the prevailing gender stereotypes, however the fact that these

women, by way of enacting their agency, are participating in a sport which has been previously viewed as a male domain indicates the resistance of presiding gender ideals.

In addition to adding to the understanding of stereotypes and their impact on sport behaviour and experiences, this study also contributed to feminist understanding of sport. Specifically, by understanding women's experiences in sport throughout their lives as unique, varying, and impacted by many social factors, such as the previously mentioned stereotypes, feminist theory was a central tenet of this study. I was able to examine and question hockey as it is traditionally viewed, as well as how the women in the ALTPH program negotiate this. By keeping in mind Cole's (1993) definition of sport from a feminist perspective as a discourse that can work to organize, and reproduce stereotypes, this project was able to clearly demonstrate the connection between sport and society. More explicitly how women's sport experiences are impacted by unique sociocultural factors.

This section discussed the results of this study in relation to existing literature. It was demonstrated that some of the results were in line with previous studies. However, it was clear that data from adult women's novice hockey experiences are missing from current literature, and therefore could not be linked directly to existing studies. As a result, we have gained more insight into how some women may shape their hockey participation within the framework of ethic of care. We have also increased the knowledge on the internalization of gender and participation in hockey. Moreover, the notion of sport culture and having the necessary resources were found to be an important facilitator for these women's participation in the ALTPH program. Without the required assets to play hockey, these women would not have been able to participate.

Summary and Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine the barriers and facilitators to adult women's hockey participation, as well as participants' lived experiences of being enrolled and participating

in the ALTPH program. Moreover, participants' past and present sport experiences were investigated as well. There were nine interview participants and 12 ALTPH program participants who were observed. In addition, I was also a participant, and therefore my views and experiences were also collected and examined. Based on the interviews, the main data source, participant observation and auto-ethnographic memo-ing, which supplemented the interviews, there were four barriers to the participants' hockey participation, including past and present. These themes were lack of opportunity, familial obligations and influences, inconvenient time and location logistics and access to equipment. Lack of opportunity was consistently stated as the main reason these women had yet to play hockey. Participants stated girls' hockey did not exist and therefore they spent their leisure time in childhood partaking in other activities. Familial obligations and influences was the second barrier that was identified. Women with children explained that when they had children, they sacrificed their own needs and desires to take care of their children. Familial influences were the ways in which participants and their families internalized gender stereotypes to influence their participation in traditionally male sport, as well as how domestic chores were divided up between spouses. Third, inconvenient time and location logistics was identified as a barrier to participants' past hockey involvement. In previous years, the ALTPH program has been on different days and at different locations. This can impede participation as Toronto is lacking in similar programs. Lastly, accessing equipment was stated as a barrier for two reasons. First, equipment can cost thousands of dollars, therefore it is a large investment. Second, access to equipment was a barrier was due to a lack of knowledge and resources. Participants lacked the required knowledge to purchase equipment and to use equipment properly.

There were also five themes that were identified as facilitators some of which helped women overcome the above barriers. They included family that plays, prior skating experience, a comfortable and friendly environment, individual desire, and social class. Having a family member that plays hockey was a facilitator for these women's ALTPH participation in various ways, including access to knowledge and resources. Most participants relied on their partners for the knowledge to successfully negotiate beginning their hockey playing careers. Having children that played hockey was a gateway for ALTPH involvement as many women were informed of the program at their children's hockey games. They also felt a drive to belong with their families as they were left out prior to being able to play hockey. The second facilitator was social class. All participants were considered upper-middle to upper class, therefore they had access to the funds required to play hockey. In addition they all shared a middle class ethic of sport, therefore the meanings of their sport participation were similar. Thirdly, prior skating experience was a facilitator to ALTPH involvement as this also contributed to participants having sufficient assets to successfully participate in the program. The knowledge gained from prior skating experience gave these women the base skill level they felt necessary to partake in the program. The fourth facilitator was the individual desire of each woman to learn hockey that was enabled because of a sport culture. The individual desire was derived from not having the opportunity as a child, from watching their brothers play and receive positive attention from their families and from believing their participation in this program would contribute to their personal health goals. Lastly, a comfortable and friendly environment was an important facilitator for ALTPH involvement for these women. The positive, humorous and non-judgmental environment created by the coach and the participants was consistently stated as the reason participants come back each week. Moreover, this very specific case study has demonstrated that the internalization of stereotypes

can have an impact on sport, explicitly hockey, participation. The study also demonstrated that there is a unique relationship between gender, class and hockey participation.

A key methodological approach of this study was autoethnography, whereby I gained insider status within the study and among the participants because I was enrolled in the ALTPH as a participant. This insider status eliminated the need for a gatekeeper, an individual that allows the researcher to have access to the group being studied. Insider status also contributed to the participants' comfort and increased my approachability. This aspect of the study was particularly difficult, as it involved elements of perceived espionage. At times I felt like a spy that was known to the community. It was slightly uncomfortable to keep my ears tuned and my eyes open during semi-private moments such as change room chatter and participants' failed drill attempts. To my own surprise, I did feel somewhat like an imposter, or as though I had infiltrated a private group knowing I would share what I witnessed. However, the unfettered access I had to the participants of the ALTPH program, as an insider, proved extremely valuable as insights were gained that were not possible without being a fellow participant. Whereby there are many methodological strengths in this study, there remains a potential weakness.

Specifically, as I reflected upon my experiences in the program and in conducting this study, I question whether this study reproduces hockey's perceived whiteness. Though hockey is constructed as a white sport, examining race was outside the scope of this study and it remains a glaring question. Where are the experiences of minority women and what would they be? How would examining the experiences of racialized minorities improve upon this study? Why were they not present in the program? Newcomer women may not have the family sport culture and resources to draw on to participate in hockey. What facilitators and barriers would be unique to immigrant newcomer women? Despite the fact that I was unable to address those questions due

to the scope of this small case study, significant insights that contribute to our knowledge of women and sport, as well as the impact of internalizing stereotypes on women's sport participation were gained.

The ALTPH program was a safe space for the participants to push themselves physically and emotionally. As we resisted and reproduced gender and sport stereotypes, we engaged in an activity that gave us joy, inclusion and pride. One participant was able to sum up her feelings regarding participation in the ALTPH program in a very poignant way:

I think the more we can create welcoming environments in the community through sport, the more women will participate. I think it's a wonderful opportunity...But I think anything that we can do to encourage that and bring connection into peoples' lives. And community to peoples' lives is amazing. And that sport is a very, very natural and wonderful way to connect with people...and I think particularly for women,...I think that sport has a really powerful role to play in women's lives. And that if you can feel more connected and supported that, that would have the benefits out to a lot of other aspects of our lives. And I loved Tanya saying that she joined hockey 'cause she needed to escape. To be able to admit that, ya know I love my three kids to death. I actually need to know every week that I would have an outlet to get away from them, to have something that's mine. I think that's wonderful to be able to say that and to be able to create that for women...I think it's almost unique in some ways for sport to be able to do that. It's a lonely world often and sport brings people together. And there isn't that much of it for women our age (Kara).

While I have argued that participants have internalized stereotypes and scripts pertaining to gender and age, the participants' struggle with the ethic of care ideology and their own health and

well being is clearly stated here. Kara's statement also signifies the importance of this study, by not only highlighting the need to for more programs similar in nature to the ALTPH program, but that there is an important social, physical and emotional role that hockey can play in women's lives, regardless of skill level and age.

This study is novel because there are no know studies that examine this cohort of women, and their novice hockey experiences. These women could be considered privileged in many aspects of their lives, being upper middle class, Caucasian and educated; however they still faced barriers to their hockey participation. Moreover, if a privileged group in society faces barriers to their sport participation, surely less privileged groups may face additional barriers to their sport participation. However, this study demonstrates that if a group has sufficient resources to enact their agency, they may be able to overcome the barriers to sport participation. The specific contributions of this study are that it clearly signifies how the internalization of gender and sport stereotypes can impact one's sport participation. Whether the impact is negative, in the case of the participants' past, or positive, as we can see some participations currently being impacted by the ethic of care notion, which increased their participation in hockey, the relationship between prevailing stereotypes and sport participation is significant for these women. In addition, this study has contributed to the knowledge on social and cultural barriers and facilitators to the women's hockey involvement. Lastly, as there was very little research on this topic, this study has contributed to building a body of knowledge on women's novice sport experiences.

Future Research Directions and Recommendations

This study highlights the need for further research on women and hockey participation. Moreover, more studies are needed that include women's voices that branch out from those at elite levels, to investigate novice and recreational participation. Some data were in line with

current research around women's sport involvement; however, there is a dearth of knowledge on the experiences of novice women hockey players. We know extremely little about what helps and what hinders women's novice hockey involvement. This study has demonstrated the importance of the ALTPH program in the lives of women. Additionally, it has demonstrated that there is value in being active, despite not being at an elite level. The vast distance, which participants travelled to attend the ALTPH program, also speaks to the need for more ALTPH programs within the City of Toronto.

As a result of this study, there are three cogent recommendations for future research. First, it is recommended that future research examine the experiences of racialized minorities. In this case study, participants shared a similar socioeconomic and racial profile, therefore the insights gained do not include experiences that women from less privileged socioeconomic status and more diverse backgrounds. Second, when examining barriers to participation in hockey as a child, parents play an integral role, therefore further research could involve the parents and how they make decisions about their children's sport involvement. None of the participants' parents, including my own, enrolled their daughters in hockey. By studying the parents of children, it may provide a clearer description of how internalizing gender and sport stereotypes can impact women's participation in hockey at all ages. Lastly, as access to equipment was stated as a barrier to women's hockey involvement due to financial reasons, and most interestingly due to lack of knowledge and negative purchasing experiences, it is recommended that future studies examine the impact equipment and access to equipment has on women's sport involvement that also include indirect sport spaces like the locker room, and sporting good stores, and how women navigate these domains.

Sport can be an inclusive space conducive to increased health and fitness levels, emotional well being, and social support, when executed thoughtfully (Theberge, 1998; Baker et al., 2009; Dionigi, Horton, Bellamy, 2011). The more we encourage and facilitate the inclusion of marginalized groups within sport, and challenge its hegemonic structure, the more we can all reap the potential benefits sport can have. The ALTPH program and this study contribute to this deconstruction of sport as exclusively for the young, male and elite.

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Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

1. Can you tell me about yourself? (Probe: work, passions, family, health, (account for participant's age) past work, passions, family, health)
 - How old are you?
 - How would you describe your financial status?
2. Can you tell me about your physical activity history? (Probe: Have you always played sports? As a child or younger person what were your physical activity experiences? Including barriers and facilitators)
3. How did you learn about the Adult Learn To Play program?
4. What are your reasons for participating in the program? (Probe: health, personal, curiosity)
5. Is this your first experience with hockey?
 - a. If no, tell me about your first hockey experiences?
6. Do you play any other sports or engage in other forms of physical activity? (Probe: Why not?)
7. If yes, how did you decide to enroll in this program?
8. Would you consider yourself a hockey fan, more specifically, do you watch hockey and enjoy it? (Probe: do you follow any teams? Do you attend games?)
9. Do your family members watch hockey?
10. Do your family members or friends play hockey? (Probe: Which family members? To what extent? Recreational, competitive?)
11. If yes, what is your role in relation to your family's participation in hockey? (Probe: What are you doing/what are your duties when your family is playing hockey?)

12. Are there any difficulties you face in your involvement in the program? (Probe: Financial, familial, time, personal)
13. If yes, can you describe these difficulties?
14. If no, what are the facilitators to your participation? What helps or allows you to play?
15. Can you take me through your routine on the days you have hockey?
16. Has your relationship with your body changed since your involvement in the program?
(Probe: How do you feel on the ice and off the ice with regards to doing activities?)
17. What are your goals for your involvement in the program?
18. How do you feel looking back to your first lesson and comparing then to now?
19. Can you tell me about a memorable moment during the program?
20. What keeps you coming back to the program?
21. Is there anything I missed? (Probe: That you think is important or would like to talk about?)

Appendix B: Recruitment Flyer for Interview Participants

Hello,

I am currently a Graduate Student in the School of Kinesiology and Health Science at York University. I am interested in researching women's experiences in hockey. My goal is to explore the barriers women face to participating in hockey throughout their life, as well as what factors facilitate their participation.

I am seeking participants who are enrolled in the Adult Learn to Play Hockey Program in the Leaside Wildcats Women's Division. The project will involve one-on-one interviews of approximately one hour. The interview will remain confidential and participants will remain anonymous throughout the study. Interviews will be scheduled at participants' convenience.

If you are interested, please contact me at: my email address

Thank you,

Daina Pidwerbeski

BA, MA (candidate)
Graduate Student, School of Kinesiology and Health Science
Faculty of Health
327A Bethune College
York University
4700 Keele St.
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M3J 1P3

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form - Interview Participants

Study Name: Adult Women Learn to Play Hockey: A Case Study

Researcher:

Daina Pidwerbeski

1st year MA Kinesiology and Health Sciences Candidate

York University

Purpose of Research:

To gain insight into the experiences of adult women enrolled in the Adult Learn to Play Hockey Program in Toronto, Canada. Main research questions will focus on barriers and facilitators to adult women's participation in the program. The research will be conducted by using one-on-one interviews, and participant observation. Data will be recorded then transcribed and analyzed.

What you will be asked to do in the research:

You will be asked a series of questions regarding your experiences playing hockey and asked to respond freely. The interview will aim to be between 60 and 90 minutes in duration.

Risks and Discomforts:

There is potential that some questions may evoke negative emotions or may cause discomfort when recalling experiences. You may become aware of factors that act as barriers to your sport participation.

Benefits of the research and benefits to you:

The benefits of the research are that insight will be gained into the ways in which factors facilitate or hinder women's participation in the Adult Learn to Play Hockey program. In addition, positive emotions may be evoked from the interview process.

Voluntary participation:

Your participation in the research is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to continue participating will not influence your relationship or the nature of your relationship with the researcher or with staff of York University either now or in the future. Participation will not impact your relationship to the program or arena.

Withdrawal from the study:

You may stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researcher, York University, or any other group associated with this project. In the event that you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately

destroyed wherever possible.

Confidentiality:

The interview recording will not be associated with any identifying information. The interview will be recorded using an audio recorder. A trained assistant will aid in the transcription of the interviews. The assistant will keep all information confidential. The data will be stored on a password protected computer and notes will be in a locked cabinet. Data will not be destroyed; it will be archived on a password protected computer for two years, after which data will be destroyed from the locked computer and any paper documents will be shredded. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

Questions about the research?

If participants have questions regarding the research in general or their role, they should contact the researcher or her supervisor. Dr. Yuka Nakamura is available via email. York University's Graduate Program office may also be contacted via telephone. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, you may contact the Senior Manager and Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, York Research Tower, York University, telephone or e-mail.

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I _____, consent to participate in Adult Women Learn to Play Hockey: A Case Study, conducted by Daina Pidwerbeski. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature

Date

Participant:

Signature

Date

Principal Investigator:

Optional: Additional consent

I give consent to the researcher, Daina Pidwerbeski, methods of data collection that include:

☐ Audio recording

☐ Other electronic or paper devices

Signature _____
Participant

Date _____

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form-Participant Observations

Study Name: Adult Women Learn to Play Hockey: A Case Study

Researcher:

Daina Pidwerbeski

1st year MA Kinesiology and Health Sciences Candidate

York University

Purpose of Research:

To gain insight into the experiences of adult women enrolled in the Adult Learn to Play Hockey Program in Toronto, Canada. Main research questions will focus on barriers and facilitators to adult women's participation in the program. The research will be conducted by using one-on-one interviews, and participant observation. Data will be recorded then transcribed and analyzed.

What you will be asked to do in the research:

You are being asked to be observed when attending the Adult Learn To Play Hockey program throughout your participation in the 12 week program. There are no interview questions nor are you expected to exhibit any specific behaviours.

Risks and Discomforts:

There is potential that some undesirable behaviours may be observed.

Benefits of the research and benefits to you:

The benefits of the research are that insight will be gained into the ways in which contextual factors facilitate or hinder women's participation in the Adult Learn to Play Hockey program. There are no direct benefits to you.

Voluntary participation:

Your participation in the research is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to continue participating will not influence your relationship or the nature of your relationship with the researcher or with staff of York University either now or in the future. Participation will not impact your relationship to the program or arena.

Withdrawal from the study:

You may stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating will not affect your relationship with the researcher, York University, or any other group associated with this project. In the event that you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed

wherever possible.

Confidentiality:

Pseudonyms will be used when collecting observation data. The data will be stored on a password protected computer and notes will be kept in a locked cabinet. Data will be archived on a password protected computer for two years, after which data will be destroyed from the locked computer and any paper documents will be shredded. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

Questions about the research?

If participants have questions regarding the research in general or their role, they should contact the researcher or her supervisor. Dr. Yuka Nakamura is available at via email. York University's Graduate Program office may also be contacted via telephone. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, you may contact the Senior Manager and Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, York Research Tower, York University, telephone or e-mail.

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I _____, consent to participate in Adult Women Learn to Play Hockey: A Case Study, conducted by Daina Pidwerbeski. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature

Date

Participant:

Signature

Date

Principal Investigator:

Optional: Additional consent

I give consent to the researcher, Daina Pidwerbeski, methods of data collection that include:

☐ Observations

☐ Note taking

Signature _____
Participant

Date _____