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HIGH SCHOOL BOYS' BASKETBALL AND THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF SUBURBAN, RURAL, AND URBAN HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITIES: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY

By

Jason K. Miller
B.S., Indiana University-Bloomington, 2000
M.S., University of Louisville, 2005

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of the University of Louisville
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Educational Leadership, Foundations and Human Resource Education
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

December 2008

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A Dissertation Approved on

November 20, 2008

by the following Dissertation Committee:

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Dissertation Co-Director

_____
Dissertation Co-Director

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my deceased pal,

Buddy,

the best dog a guy could ever have. Our time together was short but our walks kept my thoughts organized and my mind sharp.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank my dissertation co-chairs, Dr. Mary Hums and Dr. John Keedy, for their guidance, patience, and time throughout this process. I respect you tremendously. I thank Dr. Paul Winter for his guidance with Chapter II. I thank Dylan Naeger and Katie Sime McJury for serving as critical friends and a community of practice for the dissertation.

I thank my wife, Sarah, for believing in me and allowing me to work at my own pace. You allow me to pursue my dreams while not losing sight of life's realities. I thank my son Quinn for being my inspiration and motivation. I thank my parents Steve and Marsha Miller for their unconditional support and instilling the value of education.

ABSTRACT

HIGH SCHOOL BOYS' BASKETBALL AND THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF SUBURBAN, RURAL, AND URBAN HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITIES: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY

Jason K. Miller

November 20, 2008

This study examined the relationship between high school boys' basketball and the social structure of a suburban, rural, and urban high school in the lower Midwest. These schools surround a metropolitan area of approximately one million people. The researcher used interviews, observations, and mining of documents to collect data.

The study answered four research questions. The first question addressed the social structure of the three schools. Each school contained a group associated with sport participation called "jock" or "athlete." The second research question examined how boys' basketball participation affected social group membership and the associated positive and negative aspects. At each school, boys' basketball assisted in "jock" or "athlete" group membership. Boys' basketball players, however, had dual membership in two social groups at each school. The third research question examined how boys' basketball participation offered opportunities or limited upward mobility within the school and beyond. All three schools showed boys' basketball as an overall positive in this regard, but questions of how much occurred at the rural and urban school. Research question four served as a cross-case analysis regarding the role of boys' basketball within

the social structure of each school. The influence of socio-economics was a primary finding of research question four and ultimately the study. The findings contributed to the knowledge base that will allow high school basketball coaches and school administrators address social issues pertaining to the students who participate. The findings, furthermore, moved research forward concerning high school sport benefits and limitations and the social implications of high school sport.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

High school sport impacts virtually all people in the United States. Whether one is a participant, fan, parent, or student, sport has influenced individual attitudes and plays a role in the lives of, families, schools, and communities across the country (Gerdy, 2006).

According to popular belief and cultural norms, high school sport is historically credited with teaching values of sportsmanship and fair play. Participation is said to increase educational aspirations, develop a sense of community, enhance group cohesion, reduce dropout rates, and provide poor and minority students' access to a college education (Rees & Miracle, 2000). According to Hobsbawm (1983) sport demonstrates that certain characteristics (or myths) are true and can be generalized at a societal level. Hosbsbawm (1983) called this *invented tradition.* It is widely perceived that because a few gifted athletes from very low socio-economic status have advanced through society and become quite successful as professionals, sport is an open system and provides and increased likelihood of success too those who follow society's rules (Rees & Miracle, 2000).

A recent stream of research puts high school sport in a different context. The role of sport in schools has been scrutinized rigorously since Coleman's 1950s landmark study of high schools in the United States (Rees & Miracle, 2000). While Coleman

(1961) admitted certain benefits of high school sport, such as helping build community and school spirit for non-motivated students, he also determined high school sport to potentially hinder attainment of intellectual goals. Bernstein (1975), furthermore, determined school life to contain two types of rituals. One ritual type, consensual ritual, assists in sustaining a sense of community and is seemingly beneficial. The other ritual type, differentiating ritual, seems to mark off different groups within the school and can have negative connotations. Regardless, this recent line of research has raised questions regarding the overall impact of high school sport participation and gives credence to the study of the specific school communities and situations in which high school sport occurs.

The theory of social structure is also vital to the overall social understanding of high school athletic participation because it provides a framework from which such participation can be studied. Social structure has a long history in social science and dates back to the class structure analysis of Karl Marx and the early functionalist work of Emilie Durkheim. The theory evolved throughout the twentieth century and gained credibility through the work of Robert Merton and Talcott Parsons (Abercrombie et al., 2000). According to Jary and Jary (1991), social structure typically refers to: (a) entities or groups in definite relation to each other, (b) enduring patterns of behavior of participants in a social system in relation to one another, and (c) institutionalized norms or cognitive frameworks that structure the actions of actors in the social system. Social structure and its theoretical contributions naturally leads to the study of sport from a cultural and social perspective.

According to cultural and social norms, high school athletic participation leads to positive outcomes for young people (Gerdy, 2003, 2006; Sage, 1998; Videon, 2002). A growing number of books, media reports, and changes within society, however, are showing a different, more negative side of high school athletic participation. These changes are impacted greatly by highly differentiated contexts such as geography, demographics, economics, educational structure, and family matters (Gerdy, 2006). More research is necessary to examine the two emerging lines of research.

Conceptual Framework

In the last few decades, two landmark ethnographies examined high school sport participation in two distinctly different contexts with varying outcomes. In the late 1980s, H.G. "Buzz" Bissinger conducted an in-depth ethnography featuring the Permian High School football team in Odessa, Texas, deep in the Permian Basin of West Texas. *Friday Night Lights* has become a cult classic to hard core football fans, and a study in social structure to astute scholars. Odessa was and still is exemplified by closed-down storefronts, the absence of industry, and deeply rooted depression. The high school football team, regardless, brings nearly 20,000 fans to the stadium every fall Friday night. The ethnography is equipped with plots and thick description of how playing football for the Panthers creates a position of power within the Odessa and Permian High School communities.

The prize of the book, however, was in the "thick description" Bissinger created of the social norms and false sense of accomplishment such participation creates. The reality is the actual act of football participation frequently does not result in upward mobility for the 15-18 year old players. It is apparent only a fraction of the football

players will escape Odessa. Leaving Odessa, attending college, and focusing on a career are not even goals for most of the players (Bissinger, 1990).

The book also examined how high school football is out of line with the priorities of the educational system in the United States and specific school communities. The book was written in 1990 but provides statistics that are staggering even by today's standards. The cost of medical supplies for the boys' athletes at the high school was $6,750 and the cost of teaching materials for the English department was a $5,040. An English teacher with 22 years experience was paid $32,000 while the cost of game film for the football team was $6,400 and the Permian team spent $70,000 on chartered jets for the team's travels. The book also paints a contextualized picture of the role high school football plays in the very fabric of Odessa citizens and the community. The book, furthermore, presents issues such as social mobility and gender inequality (Bissinger, 1990).

Another in-depth ethnography, in contrast, paints a different picture in terms of upward mobility, but remains deeply steeped in the description of the social structure of a community. The pages of the New York Times bestselling book *The Last Shot*, by Darcy Frey (1994) takes the reader on a trip through the Coney Island neighborhood of New York City, including its basketball playgrounds and the high school basketball program at Lincoln High School, one of New York City's Public Schools most storied athletic programs. The book also provides rich details of how participation on the boys' varsity basketball team affects the individuals within the social structure of the high school community. When compared to Bissinger's work, the differences between Odessa and Coney Island are obvious.

The differences lie in the desire of the basketball players at Lincoln High School to use basketball as a means of making it out of the inherited social setting and community. According to Frey (1994) basketball serves as a means for a young man to get out of potential harm presented by the tough streets of Coney Island and the despair of Lincoln High School. Through summer basketball camps and tournaments where college coaches promise cars and women, those with poor at home circumstances who are forced to confront the streets and playgrounds where drug dealers and pimps prey, the goal is simple: a college scholarship and a new future (Frey, 1994). This goal, regardless, becomes moot when so few boys make it out of their impoverished neighborhood and fall victim to the traps it presents. The context of a failing school only adds to the obstacles encountered by the boys' basketball players. Even with all the negativities associated with the socio-economic context of Coney Island, basketball is determined to be a way out and a source of upward mobility for those with substantial athletic abilities. Frey (1994) was successful in moving the overall benefit of high school sport participation forward. Basketball clearly provided an opportunity for a few students to escape Coney Island for a college scholarship. The question, however, remained whether this limited opportunity justified the intense pressure and almost exclusive focus on basketball over academics and social development.

Social structure is most often associated with an individual's place within society. More important, social structure examines what factors and group memberships determine an individual's place within society. Arutiunian (2003) defined social structure as the "basic substratum of social development, the epicenter of factors that define social life" (Arutiunian, 2003, p. 44). Arutiunian (2003) cited empirical studies of

social structure and their focus on the task of discerning its component elements and the hierarchy of social groups, especially the distribution of property, power, prestige, and social position.

The development of the theory of social structure and its colleague, functionalism, is often attributed to two scholars in the twentieth century, Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton. Parsons (1964) is most often associated with the use of "open systems" thinking. In "open systems" thinking, systems are open and embedded within an environment consisting of other systems.

Parsons (1964) discusses the theory of social structure:

> Therefore, one primary concern of this work must be with the categorization of the structure of social systems, the modes of structural differentiation within such systems, and the ranges of variability with reference to each structural category between systems. The problem of order, and thus the nature of the integration of stable systems of Social interaction, that is, of social structure, thus focuses on the integration of the motivation of actors with the normative cultural standards which integrate the action system, in our context interpersonally. These standards are, in terms used in the preceding chapter, patterns of value-orientation, and as such are particularly crucial part of the cultural tradition of the social system. (p. 21)

Parsons was also instrumental in the development of the theory of functionalism. After a substantial amount of work in social structure, Parsons (1961) theorized that specific roles were found within an overall system of roles which led to the development of functions within society. Such roles are embedded within institutions and social structures including economic, legal, and even gender structures. These structures become functional because their development leads to society running with a sense of equilibrium.

Robert Merton was also instrumental in the development of functionalism and agreed with Parsons on most accounts. Merton, however, disagreed with Parsons that all roles contributed to society and felt some of Parsons' work was too generalized (Holmwood, 2005). Merton was instrumental in the discussion of how power, conflict, and coercion impacted social structures and their functions.

According to Sage (1998) social structure pertains to the patterned relationships connecting different parts of society to one another. For example, the social structure of sport includes the relationships among athletes, coaches, officials, and parents. The social structure of a school community could represent the relationships between athletes, members of the band, members of the debate team, and uninvolved high school students. Social structure also deals with how individuals are placed within social positions and how they obtain various rewards such as power, wealth, and prestige. Because of these traits, social structure helps researchers understand how the structural arrangements of society shape the conduct of individuals and their characteristics. If a better understanding of social arrangements in a school setting is achieved, researchers will be able to assist in preparing students for a better life during and after high school.

Statement of the Problem

Today's business leaders are increasingly concerned with the inability of the educational system to develop workers with the skills necessary to keep the United States competitive in the global economy (Gerdy, 2006). Two lines of research, furthermore, debate the role high school sport plays in the United States educational system and benefits and limitations participation provides the individual (Gerdy, 2003, 2006; Sage, 1998; Videon, 2002). High school sport, historically, through research and cultural

norms, is thought to contain socially defining aspects which ultimately play an increased role in an individual's ability to graduate high school, attend college, obtain a job, enter into positive and productive relationships, and contribute to society (Williams & Kolkka, 1998). A recent line of research, however, has presented questions regarding the overall positive benefits of high school sport and expresses the need to examine sport a social context (Rees & Miracle, 2000).

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to examine three high schools and their boys' basketball teams from a social structure context and answer four research questions.

Research Questions

1. What social groups comprise the social structure in these suburban, rural, and urban high schools?

2. How does boys' basketball affect a team player's membership within the matrix of social groups in these suburban, rural, and urban high schools?

3. How does boys' basketball participation provide opportunities or limit attainment of upward mobility within these suburban, rural, and urban high schools and beyond?

4. How does the socio-political context of boys' basketball participation differ across these suburban, rural, and urban school settings?

Significance

According to Rees and Miracle (2000) a great need exists for studies which place school sport within the context of school life and how adolescents "make sense" out of school rituals and norms such as sport. Because much of the research to this point has been in sociology of sport journals and through journalistic inquiries, this study is vital because it intends to place high school sport in the context of the U.S. educational system and in three distinct socio-economic contexts. This issue is important to sport managers

and educational administrators because of the growing perceived importance, publicity, and scope of high school sport. The socially defining aspects of sport participation ultimately play an increased role in an individual's ability to graduate high school, attend college, obtain a job, develop relationships, and contribute to society (Williams & Kolkka, 1998).

This research is also important because it relies heavily on the study of high school athletic participation within the context of the role sport plays within the specific school community. Using participation in high school sport implies that the social structure and statuses, norms, roles, and other elements comprising the social system are maintained and developed through member interactions (Williams & Kolkka, 1998).

Definition of Terms

Below are the definitions of terms used throughout this study.

Social Structure

According to Jary and Jary (1991), social structure typically refers to: (a) entities or groups in definite relation to each other, (b) enduring patterns of behavior of participants in a social system in relation to one another, and (c) institutionalized norms or cognitive frameworks that structure the actions of actors in the social system. According to Sage (1998), furthermore, social structure pertains to the patterned relationships connecting different parts of society to one another. For example, the social structure of sport includes the relationships among athletes, coaches, school administrators, and parents. The social structure of a school community could represent the relationships among athletes, members of the band, members of the debate team, and uninvolved high school students. Social structure also deals with how individuals are

placed within social positions and how various rewards such as power, wealth, and prestige are obtained. Because of these traits, social structure assists in the understanding that social arrangements help researchers understand how the structural arrangements of society shape the conduct of individuals and their characteristics.

Upward Mobility

Upward mobility involves the degree to which, in a given society, an individual's, family's, or group's social status can change positively throughout the course of their life through a system of social hierarchy or stratification. Subsequently, it is also the degree to which that individual's or group's descendants move up and down the social class system. The degree to which individuals can move through their system can be based on attributes and achievements or factors beyond their control.

High School Sport

High school sport in the United States was modeled after public school sports in Great Britain. By the late 19th century many students in the United States participated in interscholastic sport. High schools fielded football teams in Boston and formed the Interscholastic Football Association. In 1903 the New York City Public Schools League was formed and by 1910 similar leagues had been started in other cities. By the 1920s, high school sport was firmly institutionalized in U.S. schools. In addition, the schools had been turned over to the control of school authorities, with the teams being instructed by coaches hired as full-time faculty (Sage, 2000).

According to Gerdy (2006), elite athletics were incorporated into the U.S. educational system for a variety of reasons. It is typically believed athletics were implemented into the system because of the development of "character" for the

participants. Athletics were also seen as unifying for the school and brought a sense of community spirit. In addition, athletics were seen as an important instrument of public health by promoting the value of being fit.

Functionalism

After a substantial amount of work in social structure, Parsons (1961) theorized that specific roles were found within an overall system of roles which led to the development of functions within society. Such roles are embedded within institutions and social structures including economic, legal, and even gender structures. These structures become functional because their development leads to society running with a sense of equilibrium.

Robert Merton was also instrumental in the development of functionalism and agreed with Parsons on most accounts. Merton, however, disagreed with Parsons that all roles contributed to society and felt some of Parsons' work was too generalized (Holmwood, 2005). Merton was instrumental in the discussion of how power, conflict, and coercion impacted social structures and their functions.

Structural Functionalist Perspective

Structural functionalist perspective is best defined as a range of theoretical perspectives within anthropology and sociology that addresses the relationship of social activity to an overall social system. Structural functionalism emphasizes the aspects of social institutions and behavior that are conducive to stability and order within society (Loy & Booth, 2000).

Socio-Political Context

Socio-Political context is a term developed by the researcher and the dissertation co-chair to explain the combination of social and political factors in the determination of the social structure pyramid at each school used in this study.

Summary

Popular belief, cultural norms, and some scholars have long told the benefits and positive aspects of high school sport participation. A line of research, however, has emerged in the last few decades painting a different picture for high school sport participation. This line of research has pointed to negative aspects associated with high school sport participation and has called for research which examines high school sport from a social perspective.

The theory of social structure is also vital to the overall social understanding of high school athletic participation because it provides a framework from which such participation can be studied. According to Jary and Jary (1991), social structure typically refers to: (a) entities or groups in definite relation to each other, (b) enduring patterns of behavior of participants in a social system in relation to one another, and (c) institutionalized norms or cognitive frameworks that structure the actions of actors in the social system. Social structure and its theoretical contributions naturally leads to the study of sport from a cultural and social perspective.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars, as well as popular folklore, have long told the benefits of high school sport participation for high school aged adolescents (Videon, 2002). It is assumed that sport participation teaches life lessons, increases self-esteem, and builds interpersonal and leadership skills (Videon, 2002). Some research indicated students who participate in interscholastic sports are more likely to enroll in college preparatory curriculum, aspire to enroll in college, improve attendance records, earn higher grades, and lower discipline referral rates (Videon, 2002).

In contrast, a growing body of research has cast doubt on the win-at-all cost culture of school based elite athletic programs benefiting the education and the development of character (Gerdy, 2003). This review of literature addressed the extent to which high school sport participation and its place within the social structure of a school community contributes to moving individuals up and down the social ladder. It is becoming increasingly obvious high school sport participation plays a different role for both the individual and the school community. Factors such as geography, demographics, and economics are very much a part of the highly contextualized characteristics of high school sport in the social structure of the high school community.

The major streams of the high school sport participation and social structure literature addressed in this literature review include (a) a description of social structure,

(b) the evolution and current state of high school sport participation, (c) social and ethical issues and high school sport, and (d) examples of research methods and design.

Description of Social Structure

This section addresses the following: (a) an overview of the social structure theory and theorists, (b) an overview of functionalism and the structural functionalist perspective, (c) description of gender and social norms in American high schools, and (d) practical examples of social structure.

Social structure is rooted in the work of sociologist Emilie Durkheim and the class structure analysis of Karl Marx, but clearly defined and theorized by two landmark scholars, Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton. Social structure is most often associated with an individual's place within society. More important, social structure examines what factors and group memberships determine an individuals place within society. Arutiunian (2003) defined social structure as the "basic substratum of social development, the epicenter of factors that define social life" (Arutiunian, 2003, p. 44). Arutiunian (2003) cited empirical studies of social structure and their focus on the task of discerning its component elements and the hierarchy of social groups, especially the distribution of property, power, prestige, and social position.

The theory of social structure is also vital to the overall social understanding of high school athletic participation because it provides a framework from which it can be studied. The theory evolved throughout the twentieth century and gained credibility through the work of Merton and Parsons (Ambercrombie, et al., 2000). According to Jary and Jary (1991), social structure typically refers to: (a) entities or groups in definite relation to each other, (b) enduring patterns of behavior of participants in a social system

in relation to one another, and (c) institutionalized norms or cognitive frameworks that structure the actions of actors in the social system.

According to Sage (1998), social structure explains the patterned relationships connecting different parts of society to one another. For example, the social structure of sport includes the relationships among athletes, coaches, officials, and parents. Social structure also represents the relationships among athletes, members of the band, members of the debate team, and uninvolved high school students within a school community. Social structure also deals with how individuals are placed within social positions and how various rewards such as power, wealth, and prestige are obtained. Because of these traits, social structure assists in helping researchers understand the structural arrangements of society which shape the conduct of individuals and their characteristics.

This section also contains studies which delve deeper into the discussion of social structure and examine issues such as social class, individual lifestyle, and community and provides practical examples and definitions of social structure. The section is framed in the work of the two most influential social structure researchers Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton. Parsons (1964) is most often associated with the use of "open systems" thinking. In "open systems" thinking, systems are open and embedded within and environment consisting of other systems.

Parsons (1951) discusses Social Structure:

> Therefore, one primary concern of this work must be with the categorization of the structure of social systems, the modes of structural differentiation within such systems, and the ranges of variability with reference to each structural category between systems. The problem of order, and thus the nature of the integration of stable systems of Social interaction, that is, of social structure, thus focuses on the integration of the motivation of actors with the normative cultural standards which integrate the

> action system, in our context interpersonally. These standards are, in terms used in the preceding chapter, patterns of value-orientation, and as such are particularly crucial part of the cultural tradition of the social system. (p. 21)

Another example of social structure is the in-depth ethnography, *Learning to Labour,* by Paul Willis. Willis conducted the study between 1972 and 1975 and focused on non-academic working class boys in England. Over the years, it has become a tool in developing a better understanding of the social effects of schooling in America and abroad (Willis, 1977). Through the use of interview, group discussion and participant observation with the boys, the researcher followed the individuals through their final two years of school and first few months of employment. Willis (1977) analyzed the inner meaning, rationality, and dynamic of the cultural processes and how they contribute to the development of the working class and the overall development and maintenance of social order.

Functionalism and the Structural Functionalist Perspective

Parsons was also instrumental in the development of the theory of functionalism. After a substantial amount of work in social structure, Parsons (1961) theorized that specific roles were found within an overall system of roles which led to the development of functions within society. Such roles are embedded within institutions and social structures such as economic, legal, and even gender structures. These structures become functional because their development leads to society running with a sense of equilibrium.

Robert Merton was also instrumental in the development of functionalism and agreed with Parsons on most accounts. Merton, however, disagreed with Parsons that all roles contributed to society and felt some of Parsons' work was too generalized

(Holmwood, 2005). Merton was instrumental in the discussion of how power, conflict, and coercion impacted social structures and their functions.

While not exactly the same, social structure and functionalism are often associated with the structural functionalist perspective. This association occurs because all deal rather exclusively with the sorting out of social groups and the dynamics of society. Structural functionalist perspective is best defined as a range of theoretical perspectives within anthropology and sociology that addresses the relationship of social activity to an overall social system. Structural functionalism emphasizes the aspects of social institutions and behavior that are conducive to stability and order within society (Loy & Booth, 2000).

According to Loy and Booth (2000) functionalism is one of the oldest theoretical traditions in anthropology and sociology. This theory was once very popular within general sociology. Functionalism can be traced back to the nineteenth century work of Auguste Comte who is considered by most to be the founding father of sociology and reached its peak after World War II (Loy & Booth, 2000). It was around this same time that functionalism came under attack and it became less important in the 1960s and 1970s. Interestingly, functionalism reached the highest level of acceptance in sport at the same time it was losing acceptance in general sociology. Loy and Booth (2000) maintained it was imperative functionalism be examined when studying issues of individuals being integrated into sport or social conflict within sport.

In theoretical terms, functionalism represents a broad approach to the study of sociology and social systems (Loy & Booth, 2000). The key feature is "society" being considered unified system with orderliness and stability in the context of an ever

changing environment. Much of the early work, while borrowed from Comte, was produced by Emile Durkheim and compared society to biological organisms. Eventually, the work of Durkheim greatly influenced the landmark work of Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton.

Greendorfer and Bruce (1991) utilized the qualitative method of document mining to analyze the current state of sport socialization research. The purpose of the study was to revive interest in this important research topic and suggest alternative approaches of study. One method was more representative of a functionalist integration. Functionalist integration attempts to shift to more macro considerations by conceptualizing sport socialization as a mechanism of social and cultural reproduction. In turn, the nature and role of social structure is examined based on the overall process of learning, interaction, and communication within specific contexts.

This theoretical discussion is vital to the discussion of high school sport participation and social structure. Such a synthesis, according to Greendorfer and Bruce (1991), is necessary in creating a cultural studies approach which attempts to contextualize sport socialization within the broader framework of power, hegemony, and ideology. Such issues as the increasing involvement of females, higher participation among the middle and upper classes, differential mechanisms operating for blacks and whites, and levels of involvement based on age are in great need of research using a cultural studies approach.

Williams and Kolkka (1998) demonstrated the use of the structural functionalist perspective in disability sport. This study of the socialization process into wheelchair basketball showed how the assumptions of structural functionalism underlie decisions

about research problems, data collection methods, explanation of results, and conclusions. The study was framed in the assumption that wheelchair basketball is a social system and socialization is a process that ensures pattern maintenance within the system.

Williams and Kolkka (1998) claimed the use of sociological perspectives fostered the development of a more systematic study of the social aspects of sport and disability sport. The authors defined social functionalism as society being an organized system of interrelated parts which attempts to maintain a state of equilibrium. This was applied to wheelchair basketball by conceptualizing wheelchair basketball in the United Kingdom as a social system whose structure determined how teams, individual players, coaches, and others behaved within it. The second assumption of social functionalism was that the wheelchair basketball social system has needs and prerequisites. These needs must be met if the sport is going to survive. These needs were listed as pattern maintenance, social integration, goal attainment, and adaptation.

The researchers defined socialization as the process of passing on a group's culture to new members (Williams & Kolkka, 1998). Researchers who used structural functionalism identified three concepts as the cornerstones of socialization. First, within a social system, a set of formal and informal roles are designated to achieve the function of pattern acceptance. Second, each individual being socialized interacts with these agents in specific contexts. Third, the individual's personal attributes determine whether cultural information passed on by particular socialization agents are internalized. Williams and Kolkka's (1998) study was important because it developed

The study utilized traditional positivistic research designs which used survey instrumentation (Vogt, 2005). Participants were 144 male and 18 female wheelchair basketball players representing sport clubs in the United Kingdom. The questionnaire was developed in conjunction with the Great Britain Wheelchair Basketball Association (GBWBA) (Williams & Kolkka, 1998). Demographic data such as gender, age, marital status, employment, impairment, education, and occupation were collected. Content validity and test-retest reliability of the instrument were developed with the help from GBWBA. A 76% response rate was reported. The data on socialization was analyzed using the Crosstabs and chi square features of SPSS. Agents and contexts data were subjected to a chi square test. Using chi square, personal attribute variables were tested for associations with agents and contexts. These agents and contexts were tested against information sources using one-way ANOVAs utilizing an alpha level of .05. Peers were found to be the main initial socialization agents. In contrast, more formal roles such as coach, development officer, or teacher did not account for much of initial socialization. As the socialization process continued, basketball playing peers and the coach were shown to have the most influence.

This study was vital to the overall description of social functionalism in the sport context. The structural functionalist perspective highlights the contexts in which specific groups of athletes develop particular sporting identities and lays a conceptual foundation of disability sport as comprising different subsystems (Williams & Kolkka, 1998).

Liston (2006) presented a more reality-congruent understanding of aspects of the emergence of women's soccer in Ireland since the 1970s. The study was framed with the theoretical assumptions that females' increasing involvement in a traditionally male-

associated sport like soccer is more adequately understood in sociological terms. For example, items such as the position of soccer in the overall status hierarchy of sports and gender roles within soccer were vitally important to the context of the study. Furthermore, the ways in which changes in the self-images and social make-up of male and female athletes were thought to be connected with changes in the social structure of gender relations (Liston, 2006).

The study utilized qualitative historical perspective design and drew on interview and survey data and the researcher's perspective from involvement with elite soccer in Ireland (Liston, 2006). The researcher presented an historical account of women's soccer in the Republic of Ireland. This history on the historical account of the rise of female soccer participation and how it related to the sociological issues of the times such as female participation in other sports, the increase in importance and prestige of men's soccer, and migration patterns of star female and male soccer players to England and Ireland. These sociological patterns are vital because the increase in female soccer participation has led to equalizing tendencies in power relations between males and females. Such patterns have enabled females to become more involved in traditionally male dominated sports.

Perhaps the most interesting finding from interview and survey data involved the soccer players socially identifying themselves as such and how this identification placed them within the overall social processes of Ireland (Liston, 2006). The author argued female and male athletes express their identities as soccer players which can be more accurately depicted in the context of factors such as the position soccer occupies in the overall status hierarchy of sports and how soccer players' self image and social make up

became influenced by the wider structure of gender relations within the society they live. These identities have changed over time including the acceptance of females being identified as sporty and athletic.

While complicated in nature, social structure can best be summarized as the relationships among groups and how such group membership determines an individual's place within an overall social system. Arutiunian's (2005) work provided an excellent example of social structure. By reviewing the literature on social structure, a number of elements became relevant to the discussion. Among these elements were race, gender, social class, and norms.

Adolescent norms are vital to the high school sport and social structure study because they explain group membership and factors such as race, gender, and social class. High school sport participation has become increasingly prestigious in many contexts. This phenomenon is crucial because it is important to study whether or not such prestige adds to a high school athlete's ability to excel within society.

According to Loy and Booth (2000) functionalism's holistic approach helped guide early sport sociology research because it forced researchers to look at sport as a reflection of society as a whole and its complex relationships with other institutions. While researchers retreated from the sport as a reflection of society thesis, the significance of sport as an institution in day to day life remains strong.

Adolescent Norms and Roles

Using data from 1,755 college students, Suitor and Carter (1999) explored regional differences in adolescent gender norms. The researchers collected data at four Northern universities and three Southern universities during the 1997-1998 academic

years. The purpose of the study was to examine ways adolescents in high schools had gained prestige with peers (Suitor & Carter, 1999).

The researchers wanted to collect the data from institutions whose student bodies were composed primarily of individuals who attended high school in the state where the institutions were located and drew from the broad range of high schools within the state (Suitor & Carter, 1999). The researchers also wanted to collect data from universities with comparable student bodies in terms of entrance requirements, academic focus, cost, and race and ethnicity which led to the selection of three flagship universities in the Northeast and two in the South.

To measure adolescent gender norms, the researchers asked students to respond to the following statements: (a) "List five ways in which males could gain prestige in the high school you attended" and (b) "List five ways in which females could gain prestige in the high school you attended" (Suitor & Carter, p. 92, 1999). The researchers used these questions because individuals generally acquire prestige by adhering to group norms; therefore, the means of acquiring prestige should serve as indicators of whether norms existed in a particular group. The researchers coded and analyzed a total of 79 mechanisms by which students acquired prestige in their high schools (Suitor & Carter, 1999). The leading ways that boys garnered prestige were sports, grades, and intelligence. These methods of obtaining prestige did not vary by region. The leading outlets for girls garnering prestige were through physical attractiveness, grades, and intelligence. These outlets also did not differ by region.

Practical Examples of Social Structure and Functionalism

According to Loy (1972), the American Creed is based on an "open" class system emphasizing that the top of the social ladder are open to anyone based on hard work, talent, and aptitude. This belief is illustrated by hundreds of success stories. Such success stories pertinent to sport include Willie Mays, Mickey Mantle, and Althea Gibson.

Because of such stories, the American system still utilizes sport in terms of the development of youth from lower socioeconomic status to greater upward mobility The researcher described examples, especially in American football that have utilized athletics as a way of boosting the social mobility of participants. Interestingly, even sociologists who are very critical of the ability to move up the social ladder in everyday life see elements in sport which promote social mobility.

The purpose of Loy's (1972) study was to investigate the social origins and social mobility patterns of a selected sample of former university athletes. Special interest was placed on athletes competing in different sports and whether or not such athletes experienced similar patterns of social mobility and their post college career patterns. The study participants were recipients of Life Passes from 1924 through 1968 from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). To obtain a Life Pass an athlete must have participated in intercollegiate sport for four years and have earned at least three varsity letters. The participants were mailed a six page questionnaire and a return rate of 85% was reported by the researcher.

The study found that despite the notion of student-athletes coming from a wide range of social backgrounds the majority actually came from the American Middle Class

(Loy, 1972). Athletes from contact sports tended to come from lower socio-economic situations. In terms of social mobility the study found that 44% of the individuals earned advanced degrees. Annual income statistics showed that sport must have played a positive role because many of the former college athletes were considered to make a substantial amount of money and were employed in occupations of high socioeconomic status (Loy, 1972). Loy's findings were vital to the discussion of sports role in social structure.

Purdy (1980) provided evidence of the need for and growing importance of social structure of sport research. The purpose of his study was to assess the present and future status of the sociology of sport. Purdy (1980) sampled 36 individuals who had credentials studying or teaching in the field of sport sociology. He provided a quality review of literature addressing the magnitude of sport and its place as a social institution. The sheer number of participants and spectators, according to the literature review, demands the study of sport from a sociological perspective. Because sport is such an integral part of society it can be seen as a reflection of society's overall structure and can provide insight into society and its subsystems.

The study reviewed over 2,000 university catalogs indicating more than 200 schools offered a course which could have been considered sociology of sport (Purdy, 1980). Approximately 75% of those courses were offered in Physical Education departments. The researcher surveyed 41 social scientists from the United States and Canada. The researcher reported a return rate of 90%. The study aimed to acquire information regarding the years of formal training of the respondents, number of years

specializing in the area, types of courses offered at the various institutions, and the growth of the discipline and outlook for the future.

Findings pertinent to the study of high school sport and social structure were contained in the discussion of the future outlook of the discipline. Despite the researcher suggesting that sport sociologists must continue to call for the need for study, he also found evidence scholars must better understand the processes, by which individuals are socialized into sport and via sport (Purdy, 1980).

According to Sage (1998), it has often been assumed sport enables upward social mobility in American society. This, however, creates a much debated question on whether or not it does. The other side of this argument discusses the very low percentage of individuals rewarded with athletic scholarships and ultimate employment as professional athletes. Sage (1998) does however express validity to the notion of sport possibly facilitating social mobility for some athletes, especially high school athletes from poor socioeconomic backgrounds who obtain athletic scholarships to college in situations where they would not have obtained this status otherwise.

Arutiunian (2003) presented social structure as a central problem in sociology globally. The researcher defined social structure as the "basic substratum of social development, the epicenter of factors that define social life." Arutiunian cited empirical studies of social structure and their focus on the task of discerning its component elements and the hierarchy of social groups, especially the distribution of property, power, prestige, and social position.

While the context of Arutiunian's (2003) study is post-perestroika Russia, his work is applicable to the present study of social structure and high school sport. Most

notably, the researcher, through qualitative mining of documents presented quality operational definitions of key social structure elements as class structure, examples of social groups, stratification of large groups, and social mobility (Arutiunian, 2003). The researcher also provided an assortment of high quality figures and charts directly applicable to this dissertation examining social structure and high school sport.

The Evolution and Current State of High School Sport Participation

The state of high school sport participation has changed dramatically in a variety of contexts. The studies in this section address: (a) high school sport development and participation trends, (b) social changes in youth sport participation, (c) the role of parents on a variety of sport participation issues, (d) the role of coaches and their behavior and (e) a discussion of the role of sport in society.

High School Sport Development and Participation Trends

According to Sage (2000), public support for education and ultimately high school sport at public schools was a complicated matter during the 19th century. Citizens advocating classical economies felt public education violated individual rights. It was not until the 1874 Kalamazoo decision by the Supreme Court of Michigan (Sage, 2000) that wide spread support of public education was obtained in the United States. After this decision formal education grew throughout the world and so did the development of extra-curricular activities and ultimately school based sport.

High school sport in the United States was modeled after the public school sports in Great Britain, although such "public" schools in Britain were nothing of the sort (Sage, 2000). By the late 19th century many students in the United States were participating in interscholastic sport. High schools fielded football teams in Boston and formed the

Interscholastic Football Association. In 1903 the New York City Public Schools League had been formed and by 1910 similar leagues had been started in other cities. By the 1920s, high school sport had been firmly institutionalized in the schools of the United States. In addition, the schools had been turned over to the control of school authorities, with the teams being instructed by coaches hired as full-time faculty (Sage, 2000).

According to Gerdy (2006), elite athletics were incorporated into the American educational system for a variety of reasons. It is typically believed athletics were implemented into the system because of the development of "character" for the participants. Athletics were also seen as unifying for the school and brought a sense of community spirit. In addition, athletics were seen as an important instrument of public health by promoting the value of being fit.

Despite the common belief to the contrary, the implementation of high school sport into the high school system had very little to do with education (Gerdy, 2006). In reality, the great industrialists of the early 1900s did not see high school athletics to be about education but as a means to train, socialize, and control a workforce. Industrial American needed individuals who were loyal, dependable, physically fit, team oriented, and obedient. Leaders believed sport assisted in the development of these characteristics. Employers of the time did not want their workers to be great thinkers, as sports as a part of the educational system would suggest.

According to Gerdy (2006), high school athletics remain a local phenomenon compared to the nationally recognizable machine of big time college athletics. In short, the heavy influence on high school athletics in the United States undermines the ability for schools to meet the educational and public health needs of their students. With more

influx of young athletes being forced to specialize in just one sport, high school games being televised nationally, and basketball and football teams playing national schedules, high school sport is on a path to professionalism much like college athletics.

Despite the increasing debate regarding the importance and benefit of high school sports, participation is at an all-time high. According to the 2005-06 High School Athletics Participation Survey conducted by the National Federation of State High School Associations, the number of students participating in high school athletics increased for the 17th consecutive year (Anonymous, 2007). Overall participation grew by 141,195 students to 7,159,904 or 53.5percent of students enrolled in high schools across the United States. Girls' participation set an all time high of 2,953,355 participants with competitive spirit teams gaining the most female participants (14,154) followed by outdoor track and field, indoor track and field, and cross country. The total for boys also increased to 4,206,549. Football saw the most increase (26,281) followed by outdoor track and field, baseball, and wrestling. Basketball is the sport most participated in by girls (452,929) while football is the most popular for boys (1,071,775).

Social Changes in Youth Sport Participation

According to Rees and Miracle (2000), sport in schools has been credited with teaching values of sportsmanship and fair play. It was also reported to develop sportsmanship and fair play, increase educational aspirations, and a greater sense of community and group cohesion. In contrast, a growing number of researchers are questioning the win at all cost model of scholastic sports in the United States and pointing to more tame structures in Europe (Rees & Miracle, 2000). The researchers maintain the European model is more conducive to the development of the individual as a

whole and places sport in the proper context in the overall system of life. Regardless, there is no denying the complexity of high school sport in the United States at this time.

An important component to the high school sport and social structure literature is the description of change which has occurred in youth sport over the years. High school sport has changed in a variety of ways. Individuals are focusing on one sport at an early age. High school sport is becoming a marketable and revenue driven entity. National media, Hollywood, and television are emphasizing high school sport at a high level. The fact remains, however, that participants in high school sport are teenage children who are still very much in development stages of their lives.

Frey and Massengale (1988) described the current role of high school athletics, while providing a complex discussion of how the desire for profit, power, and prestige have replaced character building as guiding values of school sport. The article was framed on the understanding the values associated with school sports are similar to those values important to United States society. Values such as striving for excellence, achievement, humility, loyalty, self-control, respect for authority, self-discipline, democracy, hard work, and deferred gratification represent desirable behaviors in athletics and society according to the authors.

The authors maintained school sports are continually justified because of the perceived educational value of athletics and their role in the development of proper character traits. The authors, however, maintained the reality of school sport participation is much different. Frey and Massengale (1988) argued there was a significant mismatch between how culture perceives school sport and the actual structure

of school sport. For school sport to actually provide such values and traits the structure must provide the means.

Before giving a quality historical account of high school sports, the authors' detailed their contention that the structure of modern school sports at all levels does not permit the implementation of the values traditionally associated with athletics (Frey & Massengale, 1988). The authors claimed character building has been replaced by desire for profit, power, and prestige. Modern school sports operate under the structure of commercial enterprise, but profess the goals and values of an amateur model.

Frey and Massengale (1988) provided a quality historical perspective of high school athletics, described various structures which occur with in sport, and presented suggestions for changing in the structure of modern school sport. The way to change the structure of school sport is to focus on higher education. The authors maintained a change in collegiate sport models would lead high schools and youth sports to adopt a more socially compatible structure. Their historical account utilized the qualitative methodology of mining of documents.

Paino (2001) conducted an historical account discussing the current state of high school basketball in Indiana from a cultural perspective. The researcher examined the issue by studying the forces of change versus the power of nostalgia. The study was framed by the premise that the popularity of Indiana boys' high school basketball had declined since its peak in the 1950s. The media, however, continued to portray high school basketball in the state as an intense cultural phenomenon with an intimate relationship between town and team (the researcher presented this as more an issue of reputation than reality.)

The researcher painted a very rich and vivid description of both the history and the current state of Indiana boys' high school basketball. The researcher did not deny the once prominent place high school basketball held within the families, communities, and fabric of the state. The decline in popularity during the second half of the twentieth century went a long way in showcasing the state's culture values. The researcher pointed out the growing influence of inner-city African Americans on the game making it increasingly difficult for the majority of Hoosiers to use basketball as a culturally cohesive force (Paino, 2001). Quite simply the Hoosiers love for the game has been portrayed by historian, journalists, and broadcasters as a close bond between the boys' basketball teams and their town and tied closely to the state's rural tradition.

The researcher employed the use of document mining successfully with extensive quotations and evidence from Indiana newspapers. He placed significant importance on the story of Milan and its loose interpretation in the movie *Hoosiers* (Paino, 2001). In order to give a more specific example of the cultural significance of high school basketball in Indiana in the first half of the twentieth century the researcher provided examples of other books and academic articles that illustrated how nations, states, cities, and towns developed a sense of community and shared purpose through the support of the local high school teams. The researcher quotes H.G. Bissinger and his drawing of parallels between town and high school sport in Texas (football) and Indiana (basketball).

The researcher also used race as a prominent factor for the decrease in popularity of high school basketball in Indiana. He provided an historical account of the Ku Klux Klan, the integration of high school teams, media portrayals of African-American players, and stars such as Oscar Robertson (Paino, 2001). The researcher maintained a

very different relationship between Hoosiers and basketball after 1960. It was increasingly obvious basketball was not a sport played by white boys who represented the values of a rural community. The researcher provided ample evidence of the overall lack of interest in high school basketball by pointing to a sharp decrease in attendance at state tournament games.

Gerdy (2003) examined the role of athletics in United States schools. The researcher questioned the American model of elite school based athletics and wondered if the United States could learn something from the private sport club system in Europe. The researcher points toward a growing stream of literature that questions the roll school sport plays in the overall development of an individual and creates scenarios, particularly through elite football programs and the enormity of the resources such programs require as potential detriments to the overall American educational system.

Gerdy (2003) says the overall mission of improving the health and education of the individuals is not being achieved by the current school based system in our country. For example, the researcher maintains 99% of high school players never play another down of organized football after high school. Physical education classes, however, are being cut at an alarming rate. The researcher asks the fundamental question of how much greater good could be provided if football resources went toward an exercise and health program for the entire student body.

Goldsmith (2003) examined why African Americans and Whites participated in different high school sports and at different rates. The researcher considered explanations such as family, neighborhood, and school inequality and two race-relation theories (competition theory and the cultural division of labor perspective). Both race-relation

theories view racial differences in culture as being linked to racially based norms which vary in strength depending on setting.

The researcher presented a section on the structural explanations of race relations. Such explanations maintained cultural differences resulted from variation in people's structural positions within the context of society. Racial differences in culture are not a product of race. Racial differences, in contrast, are caused by other structural differences which are seen as the determinants of culture (Goldsmith, 2003). The most studied and common determinant of culture is social class, but other structural differences in the larger social patterns are also quite important to the discussion. A few of these structural differences include schools, socioeconomic status, and neighborhoods.

Goldsmith (2003) analyzed data from the NELS (National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988) and the 1990 census. The NELS is a stratified-random sample of 24,599 eighth graders in 1,052 public and private middle schools. The researcher used data from the first follow-up in 1990 and included data from student, principal, and teacher questionnaires. Sports participation was the dependent variable. The effect of race was measured with a dummy variable which equaled one for Blacks and zero for Whites. Sex was also dummy coded. Socioeconomic status was measured by an index designed for the NELS. The researcher also measured neighborhood resources and racial hierarchy by using indexes created to analyze the 1990 census.

The statistical analysis mixed multinomial logistic regression (MLR) with multilevel models (Goldsmith, 2003). Results indicated racial differences in sports Whites play more frequently were related to SES and neighborhood inequality. Differences in sports Blacks play more frequently were more closely related to strong

race effects. Racial differences were also found to be more prevalent in schools with more Blacks and in schools with more racial hierarchy. The last finding provided partial support for both race-relations theories.

Chalip and Scott (2005) conducted a study which described the emergence of social forces in a youth sports league. The researchers provided detailed accounts of the increase in political rivalries, the emergence of policy coalitions, conflict between clubs, and efforts to disband the league. While the researchers ultimately pointed out the league was somewhat to blame because of its lack of planning for its growth and success, they suggested four forces were the key reasons the league was unable to create such a plan. These forces included: (a) goal displacement, (b) tribalism in the confederation of rivals, (c) the uncertainty of principals, causing personalities to be viewed as more influential than issues, and (d) the reliance on tradition which caused policy proposals to be ignored (Chalip & Scott, 2005). Based on these forces, the researchers concluded the league demonstrated a reactive rather than proactive stance on policy and ineffective policies and operations will continue unless specific procedures are implemented.

The researchers used the case study qualitative design and employed participant observation, interviews, and archival analysis of league and member team records to examine a summer swimming league in the American Southwest (Chalip & Scott, 2005). Chalip and Scott (2005) provided a detailed account of pertinent literature including data and theory about the formation of a voluntary, parent based association as the primary provider of non-school sport programs, the expectations and success of parental involvement in such organizations, and conflict over planning and policymaking.

The researchers observed participants in a summer swim league over a five year time period. The study took place in the 8th through the 12th years of the league's existence (Chalip & Scott, 2005). Both researchers took an active membership role with the organization. One researcher served as a consultant to the league's executive board while the other founded one of the teams and served on the executive board. It is important to note both worked in an ethnographic manner, while one researcher operated as a league outsider and the other operated as a league insider. Field work included attendance at league meets, attendance at executive board meetings, and attendance at board meetings and special subcommittee meetings of one member team. League records such as minutes and reports were examined and league officials were interviewed. Analysis used methods constructed to produce grounded theory.

The researcher provided rich detail of the set up of the league and even more detail of the centrifugal forces in the league (Chalip & Scott, 2005). Such rich description included documenting exact meetings and informal conversations and block quotes from interview data. The researchers provided detailed subsections of key controversies such as the arriving at the individuals best time in an event, meet scoring debates, and underlying social forces such as goal displacement, tribalism in the confederation of rivals, the uncertainty of principals, and tradition. The researchers provided new directions for research, discussion on future league design, and the overall management of sports systems.

Scheerder, Taks, Vanreusel, and Renson (2005) examined social changes in youth sport participation styles over the past three decades. The study was framed on the premise that social changes in that time period had a considerable impact on the lives of

young people (Scheerder et al., 2005). The purpose of the study was threefold. First, the researchers questioned whether distinct youth sport participation styles could be detected over the last three decades. The researchers noted very few studies had been dedicated to such topics when compared to music, media, and movie consumption. Secondly, the researchers questioned whether specific styles of sports participation had developed. Finally, had changes in the social stratification of youth sports participation developed. The researchers briefly explained an ongoing debate on whether traditional structuring and positioning parameters such as social class still exist and whether they were still relevant in the analysis of sport groupings. This statement is important in the sport participation and social structure literature and will be addressed in more detail later in this literature review.

The data were drawn from four large-scale surveys of Belgian high school boys and girls. Sport participation rates in specific sports were measured in 1969, 1979, 1989, and 1999 (Scheerder et al., 2005). The 1969 data originated from the Leuven Growth Study of Belgian Boys, a national cross-sectional longitudinal study of 8963 boys ages 12 through 20 (Ostyn et al., 1990). The 1979 data were drawn from the Leuven Growth Study of Flemish Girls, a cross-sectional survey of 10,000 elementary and high school Belgian girls (Simons et al., 1990). The 1989 and 1999 data were both drawn from two cross-sectional surveys of 5000 elementary and high school boys and girls in Belgium (Scheerder et al., 2005).

An important aspect of the study was the examination of the socio-cultural background of the high school boys and girls including sex, age, socio-economic status of the parents, and family size (Scheerder et al., 2005). In order to statistically analyze the

associations between different patterns of active participation in leisure-time activities and socio-cultural characteristics, three procedures were utilized. First, categorical principal component analysis was used to examine whether clusters of sports participation styles could be detected. Second, binary stepwise forward logistic regression analysis was used to examine the associations between the socio-cultural covariates and the log odds of the outcome by estimating the probability of the event's occurrence, e.g. participation in a specific sports style. Finally, bivariate correspondence analysis was used to graphically illustrate the findings from the component and regression analyses.

Results of the statistical analyses indicated different participation styles for each period of time and that these styles have been developed and differentiated through a growing responsiveness to wider social trends (Scheerder, et al., 2005). Examples of such social trends can be described as a new kind of youth culture appearing after the completion World War II. This period was exemplified by young people becoming serious leisure and sport consumers. Study results indicated club sports increased and prevailed during the years of the study. Throughout the years of the study boys' and girls' sport participation clearly mirrored social norms of society with girls slowly leaving the home for athletic pursuits and slowly moving toward team sports.

The researchers found structural and positioning variables such as age, sex, and education remained significant determinants for young people's active participation in leisure-time sports styles over the observed time periods (Scheerder, et al., 2005). Perhaps most importantly, despite those social structures continuing to shape youth sports participation styles, the researchers suggested there is more variety within social groups

than among social groups because of an increase in individualism. Such findings were vital to the overall study of high school sport and social structure because it enhances the connection between sport and sociological factors such as gender, age, and family status.

Another key component which has undergone much change is the role of parents in high school sport participation. Parents currently play a major role in the youth and high school sport equation. Almost weekly, sport scholars are presented with examples, both good and bad, of a parent influencing a child's decision to participate and the actual participation process. Media outlets offer a variety of feel good stories, but also present dark portrayals of parents going too far. Parent social class and family dynamics are also proving to be quite important in the overall scope of high school sport participation and social structure research. Gone are the days of the parent only providing a listening ear or a ride to the courts.

The Role of Parents

Parents are involved in high school and youth sport participation at a number of levels. Such involvement has increased drastically over the past few decades. Woolger and Power (1993) published a report on academic literature which discussed the role of parents in a variety of areas pertaining to sport participation. Five major areas of the articles were: (a) the role of parents in the development of children's sport attitudes and behaviors, (b) nature of parent influences, (c) dimensions of parenting which may influence children's sport achievement, (d) sport socialization issues, and (e) sport socialization in the family context (Woolger & Power, 1993). The purpose of the article was to create a conceptual framework for understanding parental influences based upon academic literature on academic achievement motivation. Woolger and Power (1993)

drew a number of important conclusions about the nature of parental influences. Adult athletes attributed many of their attitudes and behaviors in sport to the behavior of their parents (e.g., Snyder & Spreitzer, 1973). Adult athletes also tended to report parental behavior during their childhood (ages 5-12) was more influential than parental behavior (e.g., Greendorfer, 1977; Higginson, 1985; Weiss & Knoppers, 1982). Finally, the researchers showed positive correlations between athletes' perceptions of the amount of parental encouragement, interest, or involvement and current levels of sport participation (e.g., Butcher, 1983; Higginson, 1985; Melcher & Sage, 1978). While these studies presented the potential importance of parental influences, they did not identify specific parental behaviors influencing youth and high school sport experiences (Woolger & Power, 1993).

Woolger and Power (1993) pointed out a number of key findings from the literature on parenting and achievement in the academic areas. Achievement researchers from a variety of perspectives have argued parents play an important role in the socialization of achievement attitudes, motivation, and behavior. A number of dimensions of parental behavior also appeared to be important. These dimensions included acceptance, modeling, performance expectations, rewards/punishment, and sports contexts. Woolger and Powell provided numerous directions for future research in specific role parents play in youth and high school sport participation. Future studies should measure both perceptions and behaviors. Such research on the role of parents is vital to the discussion of high school sport and social structure.

According to Shakib and Dunbar (2004), despite the increased structural opportunities provided by Title IX, young females continue to participate in physical

activity at a lower rate than males. This pattern seems to be due to gender stereotypes imparted by family communication and influence, however, most physical activity studies use social influence frameworks (i.e. social learning theory) which don't account for communication and influence according to the researchers. The researchers conducted a qualitative study which took into account the family as the primary socializing agent where gender roles are learned. The researchers studied male and female high school basketball players and illustrated how communication within the family context prompts learning about parental role models in sport and how adolescents talk about maternal and paternal sports participation.

The researchers provided a detailed literature review on social learning theory and family influences on sport participation. According to the literature review, social learning theory considers the family one social system among many able to influence behaviors. Each social system (family, peers, school) are comprised of socializing agents influencing behaviors by communicating values and norms about the specific behavior. Significant others are believed to communicate opinions, values, and norms through behaviors as well as consciously and unconsciously providing rewards and punishments (Shakib & Dunbar, 2004). In contrast, very little is known about the process by which parents influence decisions and importance placed on activity. Gender is one social process thought to effect sport socialization, but there are few studies on the matter or on how parental role modeling effects sport socialization.

The participants were 44 racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse high school students (25 females; 19 males). Fifty percent were African-American (11 females; 11 males), 18.2% were classified as Armenian American (7 females; 1 male),

15.9% were classified as White (3 females; 4 males) and 15.9% were classified as Hispanic (4 females; 3 males) (Shakib & Dunbar, 2004). Only high school students who played on high school basketball teams were invited to participate. The study used a purposive sampling technique. All members of the basketball teams were invited to participate, but not all agreed to be involved in the in-depth interviews.

The participants attended three public high schools (six high school basketball teams, three female, and three male teams) (Shakib & Dunbar, 2004). Gaining entry involved negotiation with various gatekeepers including teachers, coaches, and principals. The three schools were selected by using maximum variation sampling strategy. This strategy purposefully includes cases in the sample that vary from one another on important characteristics. Because variation existed, the researchers were able to identify common patterns which occurred across divergent social contexts.

The researchers used qualitative, semi-structured interviews and audio taped each interview (Shakib & Dunbar, 2004). The interviews were conducted by the principal investigator of the study. In order to decrease subjectivity and become experienced in dealing with diverse populations, the researcher conducted field work with each of the basketball teams for two months prior to the interviews. This fieldwork included attending practices and games, as well as informal conversations with team members. Prior to each interview the researcher obtained a signed consent form. Parental consent was acquired for interviewees under the age of 18. Interviews lasted between three and four hours and occurred either at school or at the student's home.

After the interviews were transcribed, the data were analyzed using ethnographic content analysis. This technique allowed categories to emerge from the data which is

consistent with the data analysis technique of grounded theory. Two broad categories emerged from the data regarding prompts to adolescents' learning about parental sports participation and interpretations of parental sports participation.

According to the researchers, the participants reported a rather large difference between mothers' and fathers' sports participation (Shakib & Dunbar, 2004). The interviewees reported 68% of fathers and 50% of mothers participated in sports. Girls were found to be twice as likely as boys to report having a mother who participated in sports, supporting prior research discussing the increased likelihood of sport participation based on the athletic participation of the role model. Parent's visibility playing sports was the strongest prompt to children learning about parental sports involvement. The researchers offered rich description of exact conversations with the interviewees regarding the likelihood of fathers but not mothers telling stories of past athletic endeavors and the visibility of sports memorabilia by fathers.

Coakley (2006) published an article documenting the dramatic change in family life and expectations for parents over the past two generations. Specifically, the researcher addressed the role of the father in youth sport experiences. The study began with a description of the growth of youth sports since the 1950s. Such sports participation has been exemplified by the supervision of adults and has resulted in a number of cultural and structural factors related to family, parenting and childhood. Because of those cultural and structural factors, like parents being responsible for socializing their children and children being prone to getting into trouble if not supervised by adults, a context in which parents actively seek adult-supervised activities for their children has been created.

The researcher also presented a detailed account of fatherhood from the early 20th century to contemporary society (Coakley, 2006). The researcher traced the role of father from that of breadwinner, but rather withdrawn from family structure and relations because of intense need to work and provide, to fathers becoming co-parents and accepting sharing of traditionally feminine roles and responsibilities. The researcher provided rich description of this transformation and provided examples of the factors leading to it. Sports and youth sports in particular have been a consistent context for fathers to be involved with their children without challenging gender specific issues. Even as other development areas such as school activities, youth sports supervision and involvement remains an overwhelmingly masculine enterprise.

The researcher provided a number of reasons for male dominated involvement with youth sport participation. Historically fathers have been involved to clearly define gender roles, enhance the masculinity of the boys' of their communities, to simply spending quality parenting time with their children. Fathers' have also been the decision maker when expensive training and equipment becomes a part of the equation. Fathers' involvement in youth sport has truly bridged the gap in the constantly changing roles and definitions of fatherhood (Coakley, 2006).

In the end, the researcher provided a detailed call for future research on the role of parents and specifically, fathers in the youth sports setting. Such studies will provide input on issues such as the overall commitment of parents to their children through youth sports, and the true motives of fathers' participation in youth sports settings.

Perhaps equally important to the study of high school sport participation and social structure are studies which examine the role of coaches. Coaches are vital to the

overall picture because they have the ability to be positive or negative influences on young people. High school coaches have become increasingly visible within communities. Coaches are important in determining whether students become well rounded individuals.

The Role of Coaches

High school coaches play a major role in the sport experiences of a high school athlete. Butterfield and Brown (1991) conducted a study to examine the high school sports experience from the perspective of student-athletes in the United States. The researchers had particular interest in the student athletes' perception of the athlete-coach relationship, the methods coaches used to motivate athletes and teach sports concepts, and injuries occurring in sports participation. The researchers also asked the participants to rate their overall experience as high school athletes.

The participants were male and female athletes who participated in one interscholastic sport program during the 1989-90 school years (Butterfield & Brown, 1991). The sample was representative of grades 9-12 and freshman, junior varsity, and varsity competition. The participants attended a high school of approximately 417 students in a middle class community of approximately 12,000. The teams are supported by the community, but a moderate level of pressure is placed on the students to "do well" in terms of wins and losses especially in football and basketball.

A questionnaire was designed to assess perceptions of experiences of high school athletes. Student responses were summarized by frequencies and percents of those who responded to each question (Butterfield & Brown, 1991). Overall, the vast majority of student athletes were pleased by their experience as high school athletes. Coaches were

depicted as being interested in the total development of the student-athletes. However, injuries seemed to occur at an alarmingly high rate.

Newman (2005) conducted a study to develop a plan to improve the grade point average of male student-athletes at a public high school in Maryland. The researcher also attempted to define how the school defined academic success, and conducted an analysis of the role coaches play in obtaining such academic success. The researcher also examined the role family members had on the academic success of male athletes. The researcher provided a detailed account of the literature describing sport having positive influences on character, development, and outcomes.

The study used a survey of 139 male student-athletes and 16 coaches and was created by the researcher (Newman, 2005). The survey was developed by analyzing previous research the advice of a panel of experts. The instrument had an open-ended question section, questions with Likert-type scales, and a demographic section. Spearman Rho formula was used to compute correlations to study survey results. 75% of the athletes indicated the coach as one of the top tree categories of people with the most influence on academic performance. Coaches also indicated they played a major role in the academic success of student-athletes and survey results indicated the majority of coaches at the school took steps to improve academic performance. One strategy, not used at the school was mandatory study halls. While the coaches did not provide this service, both the student-athletes and the coaches said study halls would improve academic performance.

Turman (2005) conducted a study focusing on coaches' use of anticipatory and counterfactual regret messages, utilizing video footage (i.e., pre-game, halftime, and post

game speeches) of high school football coaches' interactions with their athletes throughout competition settings. The study was framed in the regret literature. Anticipatory regret messages are best described as coaches using language and messages developed to persuade players to behave in a certain manner in order to prevent a result from occurring. Because coaches understand what can potentially occur based on certain actions, they often use counterfactuals in their speech patterns (i.e., "If you do what we talked about in practice we will win this game"; "If you don't focus on your assignments, your season will be over") (Turman, 2005).

Participants in the study were 17 high school football coaches who used a combination of anticipatory and counterfactual regret messages (Turman, 2005). Regret messages were exemplified by: (a) accountability, (b) individual performance, (c) collective failure, (d) social significance, (e) regret reduction, and (f) future regret. Turman emphasized the transformation of sport from a game culture (playgrounds and pick up games) to sport culture (organizations and official results). This transformation explains much of the pressure placed on a coach which is then passed on to the players. This transformation has led to a rather large percentage of athletes dropping out of sports because they are dissatisfied with their experiences. Such a phenomenon is important to the study of high school sport participation in itself and is examined in the high school sport participation trends section.

Participants in the study consisted of 17 high school football coaches from a variety of divisions in Iowa (Turman, 2005). Demographic data were collected and a structured procedure of data collection utilized to obtain consistent types of data across each team. Approval was sought of each of the participating coaches the day before the

game occured. Video footage was taken of coach-athlete pre-game interaction in the locker room, and coach-athlete interaction during special team warm-ups and team drills prior to the game. During the game, the researcher took field notes reflecting the course of the game. During halftime, the researcher video taped coach – coach interaction and the head coaches' halftime speech to the players. Finally, the researcher video taped the post game speeches of most of the coaches.

The data analysis consisted of coding the video tapes and field notes. The primary researcher utilized two additional coders to analyze the data. Emergent themes were created by identifying classifications and assigning temporary labels (Turman, 2005). Inter-rater reliability was utilized to assess trustworthiness of the data.

The study demonstrated a variety of counterfactual and anticipatory regret messages were used by high school coaches and were prevalent during coach-athlete interaction (Turman, 2005). Such regret messages allowed coaches to provide a representation of their perspective on team performance and allowed them to construct the nature of reality to their young athletes. According to the researcher, coaches' focus on team performance may be useful in explaining how athletic satisfaction, anxiety, and retention continue to be connected with coaching behaviors. Practically speaking, such focus on performance and use of regret messages can have a negative effect on young athletes, because they are encouraged to believe that the primary goal of competing in sport is to win.

Similar to Turman's (2005) article on regret messages, Murray (2006) conducted a study to examine the directional relationship of coaching behavior, team cohesion, and performance in high school sports. The researchers presented a need for the study based

on the great influence coaches have on their team, and the influence their behaviors have on athlete performance. While some researchers previously examined team cohesion as related to coaching behavior, very few empirical studies had been conducted on the relationship of team cohesion, coaching behavior, and performance as measured by win/loss record. The author maintained that team sports also provided an opportunity to study team success and team cohesion in a real-world situation. Murray (2006) also moved the area of research forward by examining the topic through multiple time-point measurement as opposed to studies which focused on data collected at a single point of time. Using multiple time-point measurements is important because it allowed the researcher to examine the issue within a variety of contexts.

The participants were 320 male varsity high school soccer and baseball players (Murray, 2006). Teams played in the top two division levels in high school athletics, and played in highly competitive leagues. Two instruments were used in the study: the Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS, - Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980) and the Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ - Carron, Widmeye, & Brawley, 1985). The researchers indicated performance measurements were based on wins and losses over the season. The LSS measured five dimensions of leadership behavior and the GEQ assessed four dimensions of team cohesion. Both were administered in the form of a questionnaire.

The researchers used a multivariate multiple regression and a canonical correlation to examine the relationship among leader behaviors and team cohesion (Murray, 2006). The overall multivariate relationship indicated a significant relationship between leader behavior and team cohesion. To examine changes in cohesion across an

entire season a 2 X 2 MANOVA with repeated measures on the second factor was used to evaluate if time and sport had an effect on cohesion. Since performance was measured as win/loss, a logistic regression was utilized to determine the percent of variance in the dichotomous dependent variable explained by the independent variables. This analysis revealed that successful soccer teams tended to be more task cohesive, and successful baseball teams tended to be less task cohesive. Overall, the findings supported the significant relationship between team cohesion and leadership. Such findings are crucial to the study of high school sport and social structure because it could be hypothesized that better team cohesion and leadership may lead to happier and more productive athletes. These qualities could be used by coaches to develop better people and use sport as a means of developing team work for the athletes to use later in life.

As described in the section on the current state of high school sport participation, high school sport is a complex entity with a number of contributing factors. Youth sport participation has changed drastically over the past few decades and seems to be changing with overall societal trends. High school sport is accounting for greater differences between social groups than within social groups because of the enhanced focus on individualism. Certainly, coaches play a major role in the overall high school sport experience. Coaches' roles can have positive or negative effects, especially through the use of regret messages which can lead to and over emphasis on winning.

The Role of Sport in Society

O'Hanlon (1982) wrote an historical account of the social role high school sports played in the lives of young people, particularly around the time of World War I. According to the researcher, defenders of sports have maintained the benefits of

organized athletics. The researcher quoted prior research which maintained supervised sport develops courage, discipline, and other qualities such as cooperation. O'Hanlon provided context in his study on the ongoing discussions about the social and educational values of school sports after 1900 and their reflection in the school reform movement of the early 1980s.

In his paper examining the debate over the place of sports in fostering military preparedness, and the emergence of high school sports programs after World War I, the researcher analyzed the social role of sports in the larger context of public education (O'Hanlon, 1982). The article provided a very descriptive historical account which utilized document mining and interviews as its primary techniques for data collection. The article provided rich description in the level of cooperation needed to play sports, conduct a war, and similarly reform public education in the United States. The article discussed the issue of student preparedness and drew parallels between high school athletic participation, fighting in a war, and reforming public education.

In his article on the links among sports history, sports geography, and the sociology of sport, Maguire (1995), used a case study he conducted on the long term process of football hooliganism in British society. The author began the study with an understanding that was contrary to relatively recent scholarship stating hooliganism was a new trend and one which was getting worse. Most of the current scholarship claims hooliganism has direct ties to the changes taking place in British society since the early 1960s and that football was founded without such behavior. The researcher and his colleagues maintained there was evidence of such behavior dating back to the 1880s and 1890s.

Of value in this article is the researcher's emphasis in tracing not only the sociological aspects of British football and the role of hooliganism, but also the historical contexts (Maguire, 1995). Using an historical and sociological perspective, the researcher found the historians who had placed hooliganism as a direct link with social changes only studied documents and artifacts pertaining to the relatively recent and highly reported incidents. The documents and artifacts were primarily sport organization meeting minutes and national newspapers. This did not allow the overall social nature of the issue to be discovered. By taking a deeper look into the issue by delving deeper into meeting minutes, earlier newspapers, interviewing individuals, allowed a broader view and historical perspective of hooliganism to be displayed. The primary purpose was to exemplify that sport sociologists often focus on the current when a more complete picture of an issue can be explained by providing an historical angle as well. Issues of the content, context, and tone of reporting needed consideration to formulate a compete discussion of the matter. Such complete work can lead to theory formation through substantive detail.

Eisen (1990) conducted a study which aimed to highlight some of the epistemological problems sport sociology faces when studying culture and using knowledge obtained from research. The article argued the need for sport researchers to communicate with other scholars, sport management professionals, and the general public the vast findings regarding sport sociology.

While the study expounded on a variety of topics, it provided tremendous insight and context into the idea of social structure and sport. Eisen (1990) described sport sociologists' ability to utilize cultural studies and cultural interactions in order to obtain a

better understanding of forces governing life. The researcher scoffed at sport sociologists of the day who left much of the sociological work pertaining to culture and sets of subcultures to other branches of the social sciences such as anthropology, philosophy, and history. The researcher demanded that society does not have the knowledge to understand how sport works and the enormous role sport plays within the context of society. Eisen (1990) actually quoted a famous social structure scholar on whose work this current study is framed upon, Robert K. Merton, in his discussion of the need for sport researchers to go beyond reciting facts and looking into building theories regarding sports place within culture and society in the United States.

Contextual issues such as social class, family, and individual lifestyle are important components of the high school sport and social structure discussion. Karvonen, West, Sweeting, Rahkonen, and Young (2001) conducted a study to examine the extent to which young people's lifestyles related to social class, their relationship with health behaviors, and variations in these relationships between countries. The researchers also examined the extent to which post-modern (global) influences have replaced those associated with traditional (local) social structures. The researchers cited that in recent sociological debate, lifestyle has emerged as a concept of importance equal to traditional social structures such as social class. Lifestyle is best defined as the chosen courses of action while factoring in the given opportunities. This is especially apparent in leisure choices.

The study was a comparison between 15 year olds in Glasgow and Helsinki. Two datasets involving the 15 years olds in their final year of statutory education were used. The data were collected one year apart using the same methods of data collection,

measures, and analyses (Karvonen et. al, 2001). The Glasgow data were taken from Phase 3 of the *West of Scotland 11 to 16 Study: Teenage Health*, a longitudinal, school based survey of health and health behaviors within a cohort. The Helsinki data were taken from a cross-sectional survey of 15 year olds who completed similar questionnaires in a school setting. The schools were sampled randomly and both surveys included questions about leisure activities, health-related behaviors, and social class background.

The analyses were multifaceted. First, the researchers examined the difference in each of the 13 leisure items using the *t* test. Second, the researchers examined social class differences in lifestyle and health related behaviors in each location separately (Karvonen, et. al, 2001). The researcher utilized one-way analysis of variance and chi-square tests to test for differences in means and proportions. Third, the researchers used a series of logistic regression analyses with each of the health-related behaviors as binary-dependent variables to assess the impact of social class and each lifestyle variable. Finally, the researchers specifically tested for differences in patterns between Glasgow and Helsinki by introducing two-way interaction terms for location with sex, each lifestyle and social class, retaining those significant at the 5% level.

The researchers reported involvement in commercial leisure was unrelated to class in both locations, as was involvement in sports/games in Glasgow, while conventional lifestyles and street-based lifestyles were determined to the social class membership of the individual (Karvonen, et. al, 2001). The researchers also found sport/game participation reduced smoking, drinking, and drug use, even among street based children. The researchers concluded that, while there is a link between social class

and some lifestyles, most notably in street based lifestyles, most young people's lifestyles cut across class structures and national boundaries.

Through an examination of social structure literature, social structure was defined as the basic substratum of social development and the epicenter of factors that define social life. Peers were determined to be the primary socializing agent within a social system of wheelchair basketball in the UK along with coaches. High school sport participation proved to play a major role in the garnering of prestige among high school boys.

Pardue (2002) conducted an ethnographic study regarding the role of soccer as an example of nationalism in Brazil. The researcher became perplexed by a Brazilian television commercial where an elderly, poverty stricken woman was filmed kicking a wash bucket as if it were a soccer ball. The researcher was curious as to how the woman, who by traditional norms had very little interest or knowledge of soccer, was still placed into the commercial kicking the soccer ball. Through his fieldwork, the researcher analyzed nationalism and hegemony using a sociolinguistic approach. He attempted to do more than simply detect a connection between society and sport. The focus of the article was in the voices of various dominant as well as fragmented populations, whose discursive practices help explain how cultural forms like soccer can obtain a reputation as national even to disinterested parties and those who do not have access to soccer in most situations.

Pardue (2002) observed soccer, both as discourse and institution, contributing significantly to the sense of national identity – what it means to be Brazilian. It was the opinion of the researcher, however, it is only as discourse that soccer succeeds in

encompassing fragment populations and resistant ideologies otherwise not represented in the overall soccer experience. The intent of the researcher was to explain why soccer remains one of the only things that have been consistent and positive in Brazil's national identity.

The literature which the researcher drew upon, but attempted to only compliment with the study, was categorized into three main areas: soccer and politics (ideology), soccer and social mobility (socioeconomics and/or psychological), and soccer and Brazilian modern history (postcolonial distinction in a world system or vis-a vis a Third World category) (Pardue, 2002). The researcher attempted to synthesize the existing literature but focused primarily on sports talk as a dynamic yet hegemonic code of culture, one that provides various identity spaces for Brazilian speakers.

Through his work in the field, Pardue (2003) discovered soccer as a discursive practice encompassing an extremely wide range of everyday situations. The discussions of soccer had no barriers and overflowed structural institutional boundaries and included persons and sociocultural contexts miles away from or even against sport. Simply put, soccer became a metaphor for society throughout the majority of social networks (family, school, media, neighborhood, music, literature, popular religious institutions).

The ethnographic nature of the study allowed the researcher to provide very rich descriptions of interactions with individuals and small groups of Brazilians. The researcher did an excellent job of describing these conversations and providing a framework to the study by providing in depth discussions of specific areas such as business, fatherhood, linguistics, and soccer as a disruption. The overall finding of the

study was that all Brazilians related to soccer as a national entity in Brazil and it overflowed into virtually all aspects of life and speech patterns.

Cohen (2007) conducted a study to assess the impact participation in extracurricular high school sports had on high-risk behaviors. The researcher surveyed Los Angeles County public high schools in 2002 to determine the amount of extracurricular sports programs offered and the percentage of students taking part. The survey asked respondents to report which sports were offered at each school, the number of boys and girls participating in each sport, and various school characteristic data. A total of 175 out198 schools completed the survey where school principals were asked to arrange for extracurricular activities staff to complete the survey. The RAND Institutional Review Board approved the survey and design.

In addition to the sports programs and participation data being dependent variables, juvenile arrest rates, teen birth rates, and sexually transmitted disease rates were identified as additional variables (Cohen, 2007). The researcher used data from the California Department of Education to establish the percentage of disadvantages students at each school which served as the independent variables. Such students were categorized by receiving free or reduced lunch or having parents who did not receive a high school diploma.

The researcher used univariate analysis to describe the sample and Poisson multivariate regression analysis to examine the number of sports program available (Cohen, 2007). The average school offered 14 sports programs and the average participation rate was 39% for boys and 30% for girls. Smaller schools and schools with a greater number of disadvantaged students offered fewer sports programs. The more

sports the school offered significantly impacted the percentage of participants it had. When area-level demographics were controlled for, schools offering more extracurricular sports had significantly lower rates of juvenile arrests and teen births. Sexually transmitted diseases, however, showed no difference depending on number of sports programs offered.

Summary

The social structure literature is vital to the overall study of high school sport participation and social structure because of the focus on group membership. It is becoming clear the choice of individuals to participate in high school sport could have a much larger impact in the individual's overall place within the social structure of a community.

Social and Ethical Issues of High School Sport

This section presents studies addressing issues such as the effects of athletic identity and motivation goals, the effect of sport on building character, the relationship between high school sport participation and leadership and academic outcomes, and other examples high school sport participation social norms. This section is important to the overall study of high school sport participation and social structure because it provides insight on the individual traits which are present in high school athletes.

Within the role of high school sport on sociological issues, this literature review addresses the following types of studies: (a) the role of sport on character development, (b) the role of sport on future outcomes, (c) the role of race and gender on future outcomes, (d) the effects of sport participation on leadership ability, and (e) the perceived need for masculinity among boys and importance of friendship networks.

The Role of Sport on Character Development

According to Beller and Stoll (2000) the argument that sport participation assists the development of character goes back to English school masters in the early 1800s. This theory has evolved over the years and is now almost completely accepted by everyone associated with the education system in the United States. The idea, however, has not been developed through careful research, but merely the personal testimony of coaches and participants. While the researchers believe sport has the potential to develop moral character, they feel strongly a vast restructuring of coaching methodology and participation environment is necessary. The researchers specifically pointed to the win at all cost mentality of many coaches.

High school sport has long been considered to build the character of its participants. Due to the drastic changes in high school sport participation, this claim has been reevaluated. Gerdy (2006) discussed the inaccuracy of the notion that high school sports in the United States supplements the educational process. The researcher provided thick description of examples involving teachers changing grades for students because he or she could really play basketball and the misnomer that sport is often a child's "only chance at a better life."

Sage (1988) presented an excellent commentary regarding whether or not sport participation builds character. The author maintained one can take several perspectives in assessing the premise of sport participation and character building. Sage asserted, despite the taken-for-granted assumption about sport building character, there is not well-conceived and respected empirical research on the effects of organized sport involvement on social development. The author maintained the development of such empirical

evidence is difficult because of the vague nature of defining character development and the difficulty of interpreting it. The author also claimed it is impossible to verify if sport builds character or if character was already present in the individual.

While Sage (1988) did not deny the development of values and formation of character through sport, he also explained the possibility of learning illegal behavior through sport competition. The author claimed rule breaking is actually an institution within sport participation. In fact, Sage (1988) contented in some contexts, sport can be detrimental to the moral development of its participants. The author speaks of a naiveté within society for refusing to see sport as a possible contributor to socially corrupt actions and occurrences. Sage built his arguments on historical concepts and ideological discussions based on reviewing sport and character literature. The article is best described as an historical perspective, and is influenced by critical theory often associated with qualitative design.

Rees and Howell (1990) examined the extent to which high school sport serves as a character builder for its participants. The researchers used a broad list of personality measures in a secondary analysis of a five-wave panel of U.S. males (n = 1,628) (Rees & Howell, 1990). The researchers utilized a quasi-experimental design which incorporated pre-and post-sports participation measures of personality to evaluate the sport builds character argument (Rees & Howell, 1990).

The data were from the Youth in Transition (YIT) study (Bachman et al., 1990). The YIT Project was a five-wave panel study of sophomore males. The researchers used a multistage probability sample of approximately 25 sophomore males in each of 87 high schools, and interviewed virtually the entire originally selected sample. Three sets of

variables were utilized. Race, father's and mother's education, father's occupational status, family income, and academic ability were used to control for social issues Varsity sports participation was determined by asking whether or not the respondent participated in any varsity sports during the senior year of high school (1 = yes, 0 = otherwise) (Rees & Howell, 1990). In order to distinguish specific sport participation effects, dummy variables (1 = yes) were used to represent football, basketball, and baseball. The researchers also utilized a number of "personality" variables such as self-feelings, feelings toward others, and academic/occupational achievement.

The analysis included a series of multiple regression equations. The primary finding was how relatively unrelated participating in varsity athletics was to changing personality characteristics during the high school years. There were also statistically significant effects that high school sport participation favored neither positive nor negative social outcomes. In terms of sports building character, playing football was found to slightly raise a boy's self-esteem as well as his value of academic achievement. Varsity sports participation and total number of sports played lead to more positive attitudes toward the high school experience. College plans were increased by playing football or basketball. Occupational plans were also positively affected by sports participation (Rees & Howell, 1990).

A few findings indicated anti-social outcomes. Irritability was affected significantly by the total number of sports participated in (Rees & Howell, 1990). Basketball participation correlated to reduced belief in the importance of being honest and in social responsibilities. Varsity sport participation significantly increased aggression. The study was important because it uncovered an area for future research

regarding the subculture of manliness and being "macho" because of high school sport participation. This phenomenon is addressed in more detail later in the section.

According to Ryska (2002), school personnel have been widely interested in the determinants of children's self perceptions as well as the degree to which such perceptions pervade various achievement domains. Particular attention has been focused on the potential role competitive sport involvement plays in the formation of children's competence perceptions within alternate achievement settings such as school, vocations, and interpersonal competence perceptions in these nonsport-related areas.

Stoll and Beller (1998) published an article to discuss a debate involving moral educators and sport enthusiasts. The debate involved two basic premises: (a) morality cannot be defined empirically, and (b) moral reasoning (the foundation to character development) can be taught, examined and evaluated. The debate is intense, with supporters of the first premise condemning the second premise, casting serious doubt on its validity. The researchers are proponents of the second premise and the purpose of the article was to provide a general framework regarding research and how moral educators use many tools, designs, and both qualitative and quantitative methods to better understand how moral learning and education takes place.

According to the researchers, research is the careful, systematic, and logical means to solve a problem (Stoll & Beller, 1998). A process to discover the truth is embedded in conducting research and the researchers provided a detailed account of quality research from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective. The article contained sections on the delimitation of the research problem, the development of research questions, and the ever important evaluative tool. The researchers also provided

a discussion of pertinent moral development research, a definition of moral education and the role of moral education in the development of personal character.

The primary argument and key point of the article is the importance with which the researchers portray moral education. Moral education is said to be a lifelong endeavor which ultimately is rigorous, systematic, and important to the better understanding of society. In the end, moral education research even employs several of the methods favored by the opponents of the paradigm (Stoll & Beller, 1998). Through moral reasoning education, the researchers believe teachers and coaches can positively affect the learning process of participants in sport.

Ryska (2002) investigated the singular and collective impact of athletic identification and motivational goals on global self-perceptions among high school student-athletes. The self perceptions used in this study were self identity and motivation. The participants in the study were public high school students from the southwest United States (N = 258). The participants were active members of interscholastic athletic programs in the sports of soccer (n = 78), basketball (n = 68), tennis (n = 42), baseball (n = 36), and volleyball (n = 34). Participants ranged in age from 15-18 years and were categorized by the following ethnic groups: Anglo American (48.5%), Mexican American (23.7%), African American (18.9%), Asian American (4.8%), and others (4.1%).

The independent variables were athletic identification and motivational goals. The Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS; Brewer, Van-Raalte, & Linder, 1993) was used to assess the manner in which participants personally identify with their role as a high school athlete. Athletic identification was measured at an interval level. The Task

and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire (TEOSQ; Duda, 1989) was used to measure individual differences in the tendency to pursue ego and task goals within the competitive sport setting. Motivational goals were measured at an interval level.

The dependent variable was perception of competence. Four subscales from Harter's (1988) Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents (SPPA) were used to assess perceived competence. Perception of competence was measured at an ordinal level. The research design was hierarchical multiple regression analysis on each of the four perceived competence dimensions.

The results of the study generally indicated an athlete's motivational orientation moderated the impact of his or her athletic identity on various global competence perceptions. Athletic identity was found as a negative predictor of academic, social, and behavioral orientation. Athletic identity, in contrast, predicted greater academic and vocational competence among high task-low ego athletes.

The findings also suggested a specific impact of each dimension on a corresponding aspect of nonsport-related perceived competence. The author believed these results can be used by school personnel to assist the student-athlete in developing specific competence perceptions by understanding how the athlete is motivated in and identified with sport.

The Role of Sport on Future Outcomes

Sabo, Melnick, and Vanfossen (1993) examined the impact of race and gender differences on the postsecondary and occupational outcomes of individuals who participated in high school athletics. The study was framed with the popular notion of "Succeed in sport, succeed in life" in mind. The researchers pointed out the reputation of

high school sport in helping white males enter and move up the corporate ladder, encouraging poor black males to go to college, and fostering character development which enhances adult life. A key to the study, however, is the citing of empirical evidence suggesting the role of high school sport participation to be less optimistic and clear. The researchers provided evidence from studies touting the benefits of athletic participation, as well as, studies pointing out the uncertainty and potentially negative impact athletic participation has on educational attainment and social mobility.

The study used longitudinal panel data from the *High School and Beyond* study (1980-86). The *High School and Beyond* study was a federally funded project conducted by the Center for Education Statistics in the U.S. Department of Education (Sabo et. al, 1993). Sabo et. al (1993), conducted multiple regression analyses to identify significant relationships between high school athletic participation and gains in postsecondary educational and occupational mobility.

The data from the *High School and Beyond* study were from questionnaires, transcript records, and school information (Sabo et. al, 1993). The sample was highly stratified and of the multistage probability variety. The respondents were 14,366 high school sophomores in 1980 and were surveyed at two year increments over the next six years. The independent variable, high school athletic participation, was measured by questionnaire items describing the extent of the individual's athletic involvement at the sophomore and senior year of high school.

The multiple regression analyses were estimated for subgroups that differed in race/ethnic status, gender, and school location (urban, suburban, and rural) (Sabo et. al, 1993). High School sport participation was found to affect the postsecondary status of

while males and to a lesser extent suburban white females and rural Hispanic females. High School sport participation had little or no effect on the college attendance behavior of black males or females. Findings suggested high school athletic participation played no role in occupational status and promotions.

Barron, Ewing, and Waddell (2000) introduced a simple allocation-of-time model in a study which examined the implications of the choice to participate in high school athletics on educational and labor market outcomes. The researchers framed their study by describing the educational experiences sports can provide which cannot be duplicated in the classroom. According to the researchers, sports enhance skills such as thinking and acting quickly, working under pressure, and handing inadequacies in a face-to-face manner. Despite these characteristics, many communities have reduced the funding of their high school athletic programs. Because of this dilemma, it was the purpose of the study to determine the effects of participation in high school athletics on later educational attainment and labor market outcomes in terms of wages and employment (Barron, et. al, 2000).

According to prior research, it seemed obvious high school sport participation increased the likelihood of employment and higher wages. The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth claimed men at an average age of 32 who had played high school sports were paid 31% higher wages than individuals who had not participated (Barron, et. al, 2000). The National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 found men at an average age of 31 who had participated in high school sports were paid 12% higher wages than those who had not participated. Barron, et. al (2000) however, claimed a better understanding of what goes into an individual's choice to participate must be

obtained to better interpret the findings of the National studies. The researchers introduced the simple allocation-of-time model to explain the choice to participate in athletics and the implications on educational and labor market outcomes.

The researchers also provided a section to more carefully analyze the findings from the two national data sets. The researchers claimed the studies did not take into account all the various reasons individuals choose to play high school sports (Barron, et. al, 2000). In fact, two very specific reasons for choosing to play sports - ability and having a low preference for leisure - were not accounted for in the national studies. The researchers felt a closer look needed to be taken regarding the higher wages and employment status being a result of athletic participation or merely the traits of more capable and harder working individuals. The opinion that ability and lack of value of leisure is important to the correlation of athletic participation and educational attainment and wages was supported because when ability was controlled for, the relationships between athletic participation and educational and labor market outcomes was reduced. The researchers did find, however, across both data sets that athletic participation was more likely to increase wages than other extra-curricular activities.

The remainder of the article provided descriptions of the decision to choose and theory behind it. The researchers also present a variety of analyses of the data obtained from the large national data sets. The researchers were not explicit regarding the specific analytic techniques used to determine findings. The findings, however, did cast doubt on some of the characterizations of the athletic participation decision that relied only on the allocation-of-time framework (Barron, et. al, 2000). The primary finding of the study was evidence athletic participation may have acted as a signal of individuals with greater

ability or of individuals who did not value leisure time. It was also argued after the analysis that high school athletic participation increased productivity which could lead to higher employment rates and higher wages.

Traditionally, high school sport participation has been assumed to have nothing but positive influences on future outcomes. Due to the changes in high school sport, such positive influences are not always the case. Gore, Farrell, and Gordon (2001) conducted a study to understand whether sports involvement positively contributed to mental health independent of the effects of other known protective factors such as parental and peer support. The researchers, furthermore, examined whether sports involvement moderated the depressive effects of family, peer, and school-based risk factors.

The sample consisted of 1,036 high school aged youth and utilized the qualitative method of interview. Participants were interviewed at two different time points (Gore et al., 2001). The data consisted of the first two waves of a five-wave longitudinal study examining stress, protective factors, and mental health in adolescence. The participants were systematically sampled from the public high schools in three Boston-area communities. The first two interviews occurred in 1988 and 1989, exactly one year apart. The Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) was used to assess depressed mood. The CES-D was a 20-item, self-report instrument which assessed the number of days that respondents' experienced depressive symptoms in the past week (Gore et al., 2001).

The researchers used regression analyses to assess the data. Background variables were included in the regression analysis as controls included age, highest level of education attained by either parent, family structure, and the adolescent's description of

the family's standard of living (coded on a 6-point scale ranging from "very well off" to "poor") (Gore et al., 2001). Depressed mood at the first interview and body mass index (BMI) were used as controls.

The regression analysis indicated a significant association between team sports involvement and depressed mood among both males and females (Gore et al., 2001). This was reduced to insignificance when other protective factors were controlled for. One significant interaction effect, however, was observed (Gore et al., 2001). The researchers discovered that team sports for females, but not males, were shown to protect against depressed mood associated with poor school performance. Because of this finding the role of sports involvement was a positive instrumental activity for females.

Eccles and Barber (2003) assessed the links between participation in structured leisure activities and positive youth development. The researchers, furthermore, examined the association of extracurricular activity involvement with both educational and risky behavior outcomes during adolescence and youth adulthood and the possible mediating mechanisms of those associations. The researchers conducted the study to address the growing interest in the development scenarios of extracurricular programs for youth. In recent years, researchers had grown increasingly interested in extracurricular programs and which ingredients were positive and negative for youth and why. Their interest was fueled by items including how such activities might promote school achievement and assisting in school disengagement issues, social class and ethnic group disparities in school achievement, and preparation for the technical labor market.

The study used data from the Michigan Study of Adolescent Life Transitions (MSALT) (Eccles & Barber, 2003). The MSALT is a longitudinal study that began with

a cohort of sixth graders drawn form 10 school districts in Michigan in 1983. The majority of the sample is white and comes from middle-class families living in working-class communities in small industrial cities around Detroit. Approximately 1800 of the youth have been followed through eight waves of data collection. The analysis for the study being reviewed here focused on the 1259 respondents who completed the tenth grade survey items regarding activity involvement. Along with each wave of data collection the students were given an extensive interview with items measuring a wide range of constructs. The specific constructs used for the article being reviewed were activity involvement, risk behaviors, educational outcomes, job characteristics, and family characteristics. Specifically, the study focused on educational and occupational outcomes as well as involvement in risky behaviors.

Participation in team sports predicted greater involvement in risky behaviors (Eccles & Barber, 2003). At the grade 12 data collection both males and females drank and got drunk more often than non-athletes. Being involved in team sports also predicted significant increases in alcohol use and getting drunk when controlling for mother's education, student gender, and intellect. In contrast, team sport involvement was a positive factor for academic outcomes. Team sport participants were also more likely to attend and graduate from college. Team sports participation also predicted more enjoyment of school, a higher GPA, and more total years of education. Perhaps most interestingly, team sports participation predicted obtaining a job with future and a job with autonomy by age 24.

Activities were found in previous literature to link adolescents to certain types of peers. Because individuals spend a lot of time in such activity settings, it is likely an

individual's friends would be drawn from other participants. It was also found that the behaviors of the group were influenced by the behaviors of each member. To put these thoughts in context, the researchers examined the link between activity participation and the characteristics of an individual's high school friends (Eccles & Barber, 2003). The 10^{th} grade and 12^{th} grade data suggested the peer group characteristics previously reported for team sports in terms of increased drinking and likelihood of having friends who drink were accurate.

The researches believed more rigidly structured participation habits provided less opportunity to explore and express identity options than discretionary activities. The study asked 10^{th} graders to make a prototype judgment regarding their identity. The participants were asked to indicate of they were a princess, jock, brain, basket-case, or criminal (Eccles & Barber, 2003). According to the data, 28% of the students classified themselves as jocks, but not all athletes chose the jock classification. The results showed the jocks being very high in alcohol consumption, a high level of school enjoyment, and positive academic outcomes. A very interesting finding was the declining level of self-concept and school attachment by the individuals who dropped out of sports between the grade 10 and grade 12 data collection.

Marsh and Kleitman (2003) conducted a study to asses the effect of high school athletic participation on a number of Grade 12 and postsecondary outcomes (e.g., school grades, coursework selection, homework, educational aspirations, self-esteem, university applications, subsequent college enrollment, and eventual educational attainment). The researchers controlled background variables and parallel outcomes from Grades 8 and 10 in a large, nationally representative, 6-year longitudinal study. The study was an

extension of previous research in hopes of improving methodological issues plaguing athletic participation studies. The researchers also hoped to introduce new theoretical perspectives to the body of athletic participation research.

The researchers hypothesized sport participation would increase identification and commitment to school and school values which would improve the likelihood of positive outcomes. The researchers also hypothesized team sport and interscholastic sport would have a greater impact on outcomes than individual and intramural sport (Marsh & Kleitman, 2003).

The study was based on the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS). The NELS was sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) for the Department of Education. The purpose of the NELS was to provide data about critical transitions experienced by young people. The data was collected in four waves from a nationally representative sample beginning with the base year sample of Grade 8 students in 1988 (Marsh & Kleitman, 2003).

School athletic participation variables, the independent variables of the study, were represented by total number of athletic activities in Grades 10 and 12, participation in intramural activities, participation in extramural athletic activities, participation in individual sport activities, and participation in team athletics (Marsh & Kleitman, 2003). The researchers used multiple regression analyses (linear, nonlinear, and interaction terms) to determine the effect of athletic participation on Grade 12 and postsecondary outcomes, the dependent variables of the study.

Study findings indicated participation in high school sports had a positive effect on 13 out of 21 Grade 12 and postsecondary outcomes. The results had broad

generalizability because of the large and nationally representative sample and methodology (Marsh & Kleitman, 2003). The authors believed they made an impact in the area of research by utilizing improved methodology and both hypothesizes were validated.

Ryska (2003) conducted a study to examine the multivariate relationship between the sport involvement factors of task motivation, ego motivation, sport confidence, athletic identity, relative autonomy and the scholastic competence perceptions of 235 high school student-athletes. The researcher explained that much discussion has occurred around the role of sport participation in the development of an individual's cognitions, affect, and behavior outside the realm of sport. Ryska also noted the need for further empirical studies on the topic because few previous studies have clearly supported the hypothesized relationships between adolescents' sport involvement and how they think and act within the scholastic setting.

The sample for the study was 235 public high school students (males = 128, females = 107) from the southwestern United States (Ryska, 2003). All of the participants were starting members of one or more of their school's athletic teams. Participants were diversely represented in terms of age, school year, sport, and ethnicity. Participants were selected randomly from two high school districts from three major metropolitan areas in the Southwestern United States. Questionnaires were distributed to small groups of student-athletes prior to scheduled practices. The instrument used was the Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire. The instrument was developed to measure individual differences in the tendency to internalize ego and task motivation orientations within competitive sport. The instrument utilized a Likert type scale.

The data were analyzed by canonical correlation analyses and provided two quality multivariate relationships. First, greater ego orientation, exclusive identity, and low autonomy were related to low academic and social acceptance among males and low academic and behavioral conduct competence among females (Ryska, 2003). Secondly, greater levels of task orientation, social identity, and relative autonomy were associated with higher academic and behavioral conduct competence among males and higher social acceptance and physical appearance competence among females.

Darling, Caldwell, and Smith (2005) conducted a study to examine the association between participation in school based extracurricular activities (ECAs) and adolescent adjustment (drinking, marijuana use, grades, academic attitudes, and academic aspirations) among students from six high schools. The researchers focused on three major issues: (a) the potential confounding of selecting ECA participation by better adjusted students, (b) variability in the strength of the association between ECA participation and adjustment as a function of adolescent demographic characteristics and activity type, and (c) the role of peers as mediators of the association between ECA participation and adjustment.

The study was a secondary analysis of a larger survey study of the contribution of non-school factors to academic performance, psychosocial development, and problem behavior (Darling et. al, 2005). The larger study was conducted at nine schools in California and Wisconsin from 1987-1991. Questionnaires were used to collect the data and focused on family and peer relationships, crowd membership, extracurricular activities, and neighborhood residence. Participating schools were purposively selected

to include participants from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds, community types, and ethnic and racial backgrounds.

According to Darling et. al (2005) extracurricular activity participation was measured based on student reports of activity participation at school during the current school year. In the first year of the study students were asked to check which of 20 types of extracurricular activities they participated in and asked to name the single most important school based extracurricular activity they participated in during the current school year. The students who checked they participated in an activity and named a single most important activity were classified as participants. Those who did not check off or name an activity were classified as non-participants. In year two, students were asked how many hours they typically spent on school-sponsored extracurricular activities and which activities were most important to them. Students were classified as participants if they indicated spending time on school sponsored extracurricular activities or if they named an activity. Students who did not indicate spending time on activities and did not name an activity were classified as non-participants.

For descriptive purposes, the most important activities were placed into four categories: sports, performing groups, leadership groups, and interest clubs. These four categories were then coded into sport and non-sport (Darling et. al, 2005). The participants self-reported on grade, gender, parents' education, and racial/ethnic background. The participants were asked to report how often they used alcohol and how often they smoked marijuana since the beginning of the school year. The researchers used three measures to assess academic adjustment. Students' self reported their last term grades in certain subjects, attitudes toward school were measured using a six item

scale, and academic aspirations were measured by asking adolescents the highest level they expected to reach in school.

The primary findings reported by the researchers included adolescents who participated in ECAs reported higher grades, more positive attitudes toward schools, and higher academic aspirations. These findings were present when demographic characteristics and prior adjustment were controlled for (Darling et. al, 2005). Alcohol and marijuana use were not independently associated with ECA participation. The adjustment association did not vary by demographic characteristics. Interestingly, those who participated in non-sport ECAs reported consistently better adjustment than those who did not participate in ECAs and those who participated in sports.

Somerset (2007) examined the relationship between academic achievement and physical activity or participation in sports. The researcher discussed the increasing number of obese children in the United States and the cutting of physical education programs and funding. The cuts in curriculum and funding were meant to increase the academic performance of the students but are not being supported by research.

The study was conducted with a sample of 214 sixth graders in a public school in western Michigan (Somerset, 2007). The students were divided into two groups. One group was a physical education class and the other was a computer science class. Both classes met for 55 minutes for an entire semester. The researcher measured height, weight, body mass index, physical activity outside of school, academic grades, and fitness instruction time in physical education classes. Physical activity was measured in intensity and duration; academic achievement was measured from standardized test scores and grades in math, English, science, and world studies.

The researcher found enrollment in physical education was not related to academic achievement scores. Students who participated in organized physical activity or athletics outside of school were found to have higher grades and academic scores (Somerset, 2007). The study suggested a positive relationship between physical activity and academic performance, especially sports participation outside of the school setting.

Race and Gender Influence on Future Outcomes and Social Class

Within the context of high school sport participation and social structure, race and gender play large roles in the literature and overall scope of the topic. Melnick and Sabo (1992) conducted a study to examine the educational effects of interscholastic athletic participation on a national, stratified, probability sample of African-American and Hispanic boys and girls. The data were drawn from the High School and Beyond Study, a federally sponsored project under the guidance of the Center for Education Statistics, United States Department of Education (1987). The study was a two year longitudinal analysis based on a questionnaire given to 3,686 minority youth who were sophomores in 1980 and seniors in 1982. The independent variable was athletic participation, and the dependent variables were senior year popularity, extracurricular involvement, grades, achievement test performance, dropout rates, and educational expectations. The control variables were socioeconomic status, school location, and sophomore measures of the dependent variables. Multiple regression analysis was used.

The researchers found a few significant findings. Athletic participation was found to be unrelated to grades and standardized test scores (Melnick & Sabo, 1992). In some school locations athletic participation significantly lowered dropout rates. High school athletic participation was unrelated to educational expectations of the seniors. Perhaps

most importantly, the researchers painted a very vivid picture of high school sport participation having more influence on social issues than academic indicators such as grades and standardized test scores.

Spreitzer and Snyder (1990) conducted a study to determine the relative prominence of sports within the black and white subcultures. According to the authors, race relations have attracted great attention among sport sociology scholars. Much of the previous research focused on the exploitation of Blacks by the sport establishment for their skills while restricting their access to leadership positions (Spreitzer & Snyder, 1990). This study focused on the structural level of race relations in sport. The researchers focused, in particular, on the differences between the races with respect to informal and vicarious involvement in sport, variability in the meaning of sports, attitudes toward the function of sports, and overall orientation to sports. The researchers noted previous researchers who were of the opinion sports are particularly important in the Black community in providing social integration. Sports were seen as building social networks and binding individuals to the community. It was suggested Black males spend large amounts of time honing athletic skills with the belief they can become professionals, the Black family and community tend to over-reward achievement in athletics relative to other forms of achievement, and Black males view sports participation as a way of proving their manhood.

Spreitzer and Snyder (1990) developed their survey in conjunction with an Advisory Panel consisting of sport administrators and social scientists. The design was multi-staged. The first phase consisted of qualitative research designed to generate hypotheses and develop topic areas for the second phase. The second phase surveyed

four populations: (a) the general public, coaches (high school, college, amateur, and professional), (b) sportswriters, (c) broadcasters, and (d) sports doctors. Fifty trained interviewers conducted telephone interviews for a period of four weeks. The data involved a sample of 1,159 United States citizens ages 14-75. The data were analyzed with multiple regression, analysis of variance, and analysis of covariance. The findings confirmed a greater extent of sports involvement among Blacks after controlling for age, education, income, and size of city. The researchers interpreted the findings as reflective of a distinctive subculture as contrasted with a "culture of poverty" phenomenon.

Ewing (1995) conducted a study to examine the effects of high school athletic participation on the future wages of Black males. The article was written in the wake of the Chicago Board of Education making cuts of from $750 to $6,700 from athletic budgets of its 64 high schools, while Toledo schools had discontinued non-varsity sports altogether. School systems which required students to contribute financially for the right to play sports were also prevalent. Ewing argued Black males were hit especially hard by such situations, thus providing the need for the research.

The model for the study was developed by the author and utilized athletic participation based on individual utility maximization which reveals the economic rationale for participating in high school athletics (Ewing, 1995). The framework was intended to offer information on the wage-athlete relationship. The author maintained athletic participation affected wages two ways. First, athletics may enhance productivity by teaching teamwork and discipline. Secondly, employers may notice athletes have certain desirable skills that are generally unobservable, such as an enhanced work ethic.

Ewing (1995) utilized the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) to collect the data. The NLSY contained information on a group of respondents interviewed on an annual basis from 1979 until the date of publication. The sample for the study consisted of an unspecified number of Black males who worked for pay in the year prior to the 1986 or 1992 interviews. The term athlete was used as a dummy variable and was constructed so it took on the value of one (1) if the respondent participated in high school athletics and zero (0) otherwise. Variable definitions and descriptive statistics were presented in tables and briefly in the narrative. According to the descriptive statistics the average wage of Black males was higher for those who participated in high school athletics than for those who did not.

Gems (1995) developed an historical account on the development of basketball among African-Americans in the Midwest. The article examined the relationship basketball had with the Black sports network of the East and the larger white society. The article also examined how Blacks were granted entry into the white sports circles while maintaining particular values associated with the Black community.

While the primary role of the article was to provide an historical account of the development of basketball in Chicago, the article also presented descriptions of social structure and the role basketball participation played in it (Gems, 1995). For example, the researcher provided a detailed account of the equality thought to be available to Blacks upon coming to the North. These opportunities, however, were hardly equal to whites who rested atop an already established social hierarchy. Whites were in positions of power and "ordained the cultural norms and values which all subordinate groups were given the choice of accepting, rejecting, adopting, or adapting" (Gems, p. 137, 1995).

The article chronicled the rise of Black teams and their development of basketball into the fabric of African-American culture of Chicago. Such teams, developed primarily by middle class groups such as YMCAs, attracted white audiences, but never truly broke down racial barriers and tension. Playing basketball, however, proved to be a method of transcending the African-American community and allowed the players to gain much admiration in the Black community (Gems, 1995).

Videon (2002) conducted a study to examine how various individual and contextual characteristics were related to the likelihood of interscholastic athletic participation. The researcher was particularly interested in how different social groups are impacted by sport participation and the impact sport participation has on students' educational outcomes. Previous research indicated sport participation had not benefited all groups equally. The author hypothesized if the benefits of sports were magnified for individuals with certain characteristics, and female and male athletes vary in their composition of these characteristics, there would be an expectation of differences in the effects of sport by gender. Videon also hypothesized sport participation will have greater academic outcomes and more positive effects on boys than girls, who will also be more likely to participate in sport.

The researcher analyzed data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. The data were from a database of high school students in the United States and were stratified by region, urbanicity, school type, ethnic mix, and school enrollment (Videon, 2002). Data were collected from students, parents, and school administrators by a self-administered in-school questionnaire. The dependent variables of the study, listed as outcome variables, were participation in interscholastic sports, unexcused absences

from school, curriculum track, academic achievement and grades, and academic expectations. The independent variables, or predictor variables, were academic aptitude, parental encouragement for college attendance, demographic characteristics, and contextual variables.

The researcher used multiple regression models to explore the unique contributions of the sociodemographic and contextual variables to sport participation (Videon, 2002). The most important findings of the study centered on girls being significantly less likely than boys to participate in sport. The researchers also found many of the positive outcomes resulting from athletic participation were influenced by participants already being better students and coming from intact homes. The findings also indicated a more positive effect on academic outcome in boys than girls, especially with African American participants.

James (2003) conducted a study to examine the commonly expressed ambition of Black/African Canadian youth, particularly males, to win athletic scholarships to universities in the United States. The study also sought to examine why such students believed it was realistic for them to obtain a scholarship when stacked against such difficult competition from their counterparts in the United States.

The researchers utilized an interpretive case study design and developed a focus group of five Black/African Canadian male high school basketball players who attended schools in a suburban area outside of Toronto (James, 2003). The focus group discussions were tape recorded and lasted approximately 2 hours. With the exception of one basketball player, all aspired to win basketball scholarships in the United States.

The participants reported to have attended specific schools for better basketball opportunities and employed strategies to be publicized to coaches in the United States. An important tenet of this study was the argument that the experiences of these students, and the strategies they used in an attempt to realize their goals were a part of the Canadian multiculturalism discourse which constructed Black youth as good athletes (James, 2003). This concept was exemplified in the study because the students identified their basketball participation with Blackness and masculinity and basketball participation became a way for them to potentially achieve their educational and career goals.

The study conducted by James (2003) was critical to the overall discussion of the role sport plays in an individual's place within the social structure of the community. Although it was not discussed, the researcher could have done a better job of doing a follow up study on the participants to see if they achieved their academic, athletic, and career goals.

Miller, Melnick, Barnes, Farrell, and Sabo (2005) conducted a study to address the unclear relationship between high school sports participation and positive academic outcomes. Using a longitudinal study of approximately 600 adolescents in western New York, the study examined gender and race specific differences on the impact of athletic involvement on school grades and school misconduct over the two years of the study. The study also examined the differences between adolescents who labeled themselves as jocks, athletes, and non-athletes with significance being placed on the rather significant difference between the behavioral aspects of jocks v. athletes.

The study used the Family and Adolescent Study which collected data in six waves over a seven year period from western New York adolescents and their families

(Miller, et. al, 2005). The regionally representative sample consisted of 699 households which contained at least one adolescent between age 13 to 16 years and at least one parent. Data were collected by private interview and questionnaire and a 71% response rate was reported. Black families were over represented because of the racial differences hypotheses. The researchers in the study being reviewed used data from Waves 1 and 3.

The analysis included four sociodemographic measures (Miller, et. al, 2005). These measures included two dimensions of athletic involvement and two academic outcomes. All independent variables were from Wave 1 and all dependent variables were from Wave 3. Family socioeconomic status, race, gender, and athletic involvement were all independent variables and student grades and school misconduct were dependent variables. The researchers used descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis.

Results of the study indicated female and Black adolescents who identified themselves as jocks reported lower grades than those who did not. Female athletes reported higher grades than female non-athletes and jocks reported more misconduct such as skipping school and being sent to the principal's office. The researchers also provided an intriguing discussion on the difference between jock and athlete and the negative connotations to the term "jock."

Effects of Athletic Participation on Leadership Ability

Dobosz and Beaty (1999) conducted a study to examine the relationship between adolescents' participation in athletics and their leadership skills. The study was framed around leadership development being important for society and the belief that youth will become the next business and government decision-makers. The primary objective of the study was to determine whether involvement in high school interscholastic athletics was

related to leadership ability. A secondary objective was to determine gender differences in the leadership ability of high school athletes. The researchers defined leadership as the capacity to guide others in the achievement of a common goal.

The data were collected from a sample drawn from a predominantly college-preparatory public high school in suburban Chicago. Thirty athletes and 30 non-athletes were chosen at random and participants were operationally defined by those who had competed on an athletic team every year of enrollment at the school (athlete) and those who had never participated in interscholastic athletics (non-athlete) (Dobosz & Beaty, 1999). Leadership skills were measured by the 50-item Leadership Ability Evaluation (LAE), which was designed to measure leadership ability, behavior, and style. Each item included a leadership problem with four possible responses and the instrument took approximately 15 minutes to complete.

The data were analyzed using independent t tests with a priori significance level of .10. The most important finding was that high school athletes outscored their non-athlete peers on the leadership ability measure (Dobosz & Beaty, 1999). Although the finding was not statistically significant, females outscored their male counterparts on the leadership ability measure. This finding contradicted other research and is an implication for further research (Dobosz & Beaty, 1999).

Friendship Networks and the Need for Masculinity among Boys

Nixon (1992) examined how structural social network analysis can be an effective way of conceptualizing and explaining why risks of pain and injury are accepted in sport. The discussion the study provided on social network analysis in very valuable to the study of high school athletic participation and social structure. The researcher provided

great detail on the concept of how structural social network analysis can create a clear picture of the exact conditions existing when athletic decide to play with pain. The researcher provides in depth analysis on the cultural and interpersonal messages which lead to such a decision to play with pain.

The researcher maintained the study of social network analysis will not only shed light on the conditions encouraging individuals to play with pain, but will also begin to rectify both the limited sociological attention of social issues in sport and the limited discussion of social networks and their relationship to sport (Nixon, 1992). The social network approach presented in the study incorporated ideas about the social networks of sport systems and the role of sports networks in a variety of messages and means of social support in athletes. Paramount to the study of high school sport and social structure, the researcher, defined a social network as a set of relations among persons, positions, roles, or social units. Social network analysis, furthermore, focuses on webs of interaction directly or indirectly linking members of social networks in a specific sports setting or athletic subcultures.

The researcher used qualitative document mining to provide thick description of the various athletic subcultures and social networks. Specific to the study, the researcher described a "culture of risk" deeply embedded in serious athletic competition and subcultures (Nixon, 1992). Because of this "culture of risk" athletes are increasingly willing to risk pain and injury due to interactions with the structural features of sports networks.

Nixon (1996) conducted a study to determine if athletes belonging to the same friendship network, longtime and high level sport participation, participation in a contact

sport, and being male were associated with a higher threshold for pain in sport and in everyday life. The researcher operationally defined *expressed pain threshold* as the level of pain people say is required for them to seek medical help. While much of the pain discussion is not applicable to the study of high school sport and social structure, some of the other aspects of the study are quite important. The overall rationale of the study was that pain and injury experiences in sport and other places within society, and how individuals communicate about them, are mediated by cultural and social influences. According to prior research, it is assumed individuals determine meaning of pain and injuries in terms of cultural messages from the social networks of significant others. Such relationships with close friends would likely influence how individuals interpret and react to pain and injury.

The researcher tested a number of hypotheses, but one was specific to the study of high school athletic participation and social structure. The researcher hypothesized close friendship networks with higher proportions of athletes would be more likely to discourage efforts to seek medical help for sport related pain and everyday pain (Nixon, 1996).

The researcher conducted the study in spring of 1992 and surveyed students at a medium sized southern university (Nixon, 1996). The sample was obtained from introductory sociology students and members of eight women's and ten men's varsity athletic teams and the coed cheerleading team. A total of 413 students participated, but the sample was not completely representative of the population because of a slightly higher percentage of athletes and women. The researcher did not explain data collection methods, but did report a response rate of approximately 50%. The researcher used

Pearson correlation as the technique of analysis and tested each hypothesis by two-way cross tabulation.

The hypotheses relevant to the study of high school sport and social structure indicated students in more heavily male and athletic friendship networks expressed higher threshold for pain therefore accepting the hypothesis. Furthermore, the researcher called for more research to document how pain is interpreted in varying social networks and in different types of sport and non-sport settings.

Davison (2000) conducted a study to discuss the lives of 11 adult males and qualitatively examine the ways in which masculinity was cultivated through physical education and youth sport. The researcher maintained some of the obvious lessons of masculinity took place in the physical education class in schools. The goal of the article was not to generalize or sum up the experience of masculinities and bodies in schools. The participants' stories were meant to bring to light that something as normal as physical education and youth sport can be strange, complicated, and potentially problematic. The research could be classified as critical theory. The author purposely set out to shed light on the potential problematic context of activities such as group showering, comparing physical attributes, and comments from teachers that are rarely spoken about as being problematic.

The demand to be athletic and to "measure up" to a masculine standard was central to the participants' experience (Davison, 2000). Through their descriptions, participants often referred to the word "jock" when attempting to explain masculine ideals. "Jocks" were said to be good looking, athletic, participants in a variety of sports, and the example of masculinity.

The data were based on interviews with 11 adults in Western Canada. The participants responded to advertisements posted in libraries, community centers, and local entertainment newspapers (Davison, 2000). Of the 11 people interviewed, 10 self-identified as "men," and one self-identified as "trans-gendered." The participants ranged in age from 18 to 58 years old. Gender and sexuality were the prime analytical focus of the study. The research was based in a feminist post-structuralist methodology which required the researcher to be reflexive throughout the research process. The researcher classified this by explaining his own experiences with physical education in the article.

Through his critical theorist perspective, the researcher painted a vivid picture of boys being emotionally and physically embarrassed by Physical Education teachers, group showers, feelings of lack of safety, subjection to being made fun of by jocks, and concerns regarding body image (Davison, 2000). Because the article focused primarily on Physical Education classes it served only as an example of a societal problem of boys being forced to carry out masculine ideals. This article is applicable to this theoretical framework of this dissertation because of the masculinity expectations within high school sport participation.

Summary

In terms of the overall scope of high school sport participation and social structure, context proved to be a driving factor in the role high school sport played on a number of variables. Findings depicted high school sport participation as both positive and negative influences on individuals' character. Evidence included high school sport as having moved beyond pure character building and more toward power, profit, and

prestige. Most importantly, high school sport had positive and negative effects on a wide range of social outcomes based on context.

Examples of Research Design on Topic

This section provides a description of the various research designs utilized in the literature on high school sport and social structure similar to those used in this study. In addition, sampling techniques and data analysis techniques are also discussed. The purpose of the research methods and design section was to present an overview of qualitative research methods used to analyze high school sport and social structure.

Qualitative Methodology

An example of the study of social structure is the in-depth ethnography, *Learning to Labour,* by Paul Willis. Willis conducted the study between 1972 and 1975 and focused on non-academic working class boys in England. Over the years, it has become a tool in developing a better understanding of the social effects of schooling in America and abroad (Willis, 1977). Through the use of interview, group discussion and participant observation with the boys, the researcher followed the individuals through their final two years of school and first few months of employment. Willis (1977) analyzed the inner meaning, rationality, and dynamic of the cultural processes and how they contribute to the development of the working class and the overall development and maintenance of social order.

Wilson and White (2001) conducted an ethnographic study on an inner city recreation/drop-in center for youth. The researchers discussed the nonthreatening yet unstructured tendencies of such centers as they provide a quality place for youth to play sports and hang out in an otherwise high-risk urban area. While much research has been

produced on the recreation centers reducing the risks encountered by their users, very little research has been conducted on the manner in which the youth navigate and negotiate the social process of the youth center.

Wilson and White (2001) provided insight through the use of an ethnographic design which showed how youth maintained an informal culture of nonviolence by creating a set of "tolerance" rules. These "tolerance" rules allowed very diverse groups to co-exist in the youth center.

Participant observation, observation, and interviews were used to gain insight into the culture of the youth recreation center. These methods are very much in line with traditional ethnographic research which is intended to obtain an in-depth understanding of cultural groups (Wilson & White, 2001). The study drew heavily on Lofland and Lofland's (1984) methods of studying group meanings (rules, typifications), relationships (hierarchies, cliques), and roles (organizational, social, formal). Just as in the study of social structure and high school sport participation, the social processes examined by Wilson and White (2001) were related to the larger social conditions existing outside the research setting for these youth.

The primary researcher conducted all the observations and interviews at the center. The second researcher served in the capacity of data coder. The two researchers teamed to discuss findings and interpretations following each fieldwork session. The use of two researchers and conferring in the analytic process helped to clarify the data and reduce subjective ness (Wilson & White, 2001). The researchers utilized thick description throughout the narrative of the study. Participant observation and observation typically took place in the gymnasium are which served as the epicenter of all activity at

the youth center. The primary researcher most often observed during the 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. slot, which was the most active time for the recreation center. The researcher conducted most participant observation and observation from the bleachers.

Throughout the data collection process, the researcher developed a good rapport between with some of the more extroverted youth (Wilson & White, 2001). As time went on, the youth did not seem to notice the researcher and were uninhibited about being observed. Observation techniques varied due to the diverse population and settings at the center. There were also vast differences in the day to day social makeup of the center. Sometimes the researcher was a participant observer when he participated in the basketball games. Generally observation sessions lasted 1 to 2 hours and were followed by writing field notes. Over the course of data collection, nearly 80 members were observed with informal discussions occurring with 10 of them. In total the researcher visited the center 18 times over the first four months of the study and dropped in on occasion over the following four months. The researcher also interviewed 10 staff members with a focus on two staff members' informants who worked most closely with the youth groups.

Cranham and Carroll (2003) examined whether high school students ethically justify bullying behavior within a school context. The study also aimed to determine whether bullies intend to cause harm to others justify their actions. Furthermore, the study aimed to understand how students interpret social norms such as friendship and popularity within the context of their school experience. Bullying behavior has been defined as an act of aggression against another person who is either physically and/or

psychologically weaker than the perpetrator. The behavior occurs over a period of time and has the intention to cause harm to the victim.

The study utilized semi-structured interviews to examine the specific roles of ten students within the bully/victim paradigm (Cranham & Carroll, 2003). The ten students (six males and four females) were ages 10-14. The researcher used a purposeful sample on the basis of teacher records. A portion of the participants were selected because they were thought to be passive bystanders. Participants were selected from one state high school in a capital city in Australia. The school was selected because of its representation of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

Interviews were conducted individually and tape recorded. The duration of the interview was approximately 20-30 minutes. Data was derived inductively from the respondents to obtain their own construction of experience, meanings, and realities (Cranham & Carroll, 2003). Such a process adheres to the basic premise for the grounded theory of qualitative data collection and analysis.

The researchers found student understanding and interpretation of what ensures an individual's popularity was very much determined by aspects of the contextualized social rules of the school (Cranham & Carroll, 2003). Students maintained they must exhibit attributes that did not differentiate them from the majority but also must comply with dynamic constructs within smaller groups. These attributes were found to be most prevalent in academic achievement and appearance in terms of the large group. Within the contexts of smaller groups, individuals reported they must conform to certain stipulations which also influenced the individual's popularity. Much bullying occurred when an individual failed to fully grasp the dynamics of small groups and how this

worked against him/her, ultimately, in the large group context. Fundamental differences in terms of ethics and the acceptance of bullying varied within groups.

The researchers explained the findings to be contextual to the school and the students in the school. They argued that the ethical standards and values of a community are the accumulated effects of all the individual members of that community (Cranham & Carroll, 2003). Schools are considered to be micro-communities and the findings are reflections of the particular school population at that time.

Summary

The major streams of the high school sport participation and social structure literature were addressed in this literature review. These streams included (a) a description of social structure, (b) the evolution and current state of high school sport participation, (c) social and ethical issues and high school sport, and (d) examples of research methods and design.

The description of social structure section addressed the following: (a) an overview of the social structure theory and theorists, (b) an overview of functionalism and the structural functionalist perspective, (c) description of gender and social norms in American high schools, and (d) practical examples of social structure.

The state of high school sport participation has changed dramatically in a variety of contexts. The evolution and current state of high school sport participation section included articles discussing: (a) high school sport development and participation trends, (b) social changes in youth sport participation, (c) the role of parents on a variety of sport participation issues, (d) the role of coaches and their behavior and (e) a discussion of the role of sport in society.

This review of literature also presented a section on the social and ethical issues of high school sport. This section presents studies addressing issues such as the effects of athletic identity and motivation goals, the effect of sport on building character, the relationship between high school sport participation and leadership and academic outcomes, and other examples high school sport participation social norms. This section is important to the overall study of high school sport participation and social structure because it provides insight on the individual traits which are present in high school athletes.

Finally, the review of literature presented articles on qualitative research designs utilized in the literature on high school sport and social structure. In addition, sampling techniques and data analysis techniques are also discussed. The purpose of the research methods and design section was to present an overview of qualitative research methods and design which have been used to analyze high school sport and social structure.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was to examine three high schools and their boys' basketball programs from a social structure context. The study utilized three high schools from vastly different socio-economic contexts in the lower Midwest of the United States. This topic of research is significant because of the because of the growing perceived importance, publicity, and scope of high school sport and growing promotion and marketing (Gerdy, 2003). The socially defining aspects of sport participation are ultimately playing an increased role in an individual's ability to graduate high school, attend college, obtain a job, enter into marriage and contribute to society (Williams & Kolkka, 1998).

The perceived level of importance of boys' basketball in the geographic region of the study is also vital to the overall scope of the research. This chapter includes the following sections: (a) an overview of the research design, (b) a description of the study's research questions, (c) a discussion of the site selection process, (d) a discussion of the participant selection process, (e) a description of the data collection procedures, (f) an overview of the field study, (g) a description of the data analysis procedures, and (h) a discussion of the trustworthiness of the data. Figure 3 is a flow chart depicting the research process.

Design

The matters of context and depth of analysis were important to the study of high school boys' basketball and social structure. The use of qualitative comparative case study design allowed the researcher to analyze each school site in great depth and compare and contrast the differences and similarities among the urban, suburban, and rural contexts.

Qualitative design is appropriate because the study proposed to understand and explain the meaning of a social phenomenon in the natural setting (Merriam, 2001). The design also allows the researcher to understand the phenomenon of the high school boys' basketball by examining the varied experiences of the specific players within the cases (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

The researcher collected data from two boys' basketball players to develop detailed portraits of participants from each team. Data were collected from the head boys' basketball coach of each team to assist in the development of a detailed profile of the specific team within the context of the school community. In addition, data were collected from the principal of each school, the athletic director of each school, the parents of boys' basketball players, and non-coaching teachers to develop a detailed profile of the specific team within the context of the school community and its social structure. The selection of the participants ensured a broad range of accounts and triangulated the data to increase its trustworthiness. Approval of the study was granted by the University of Louisville Internal Review Board.

Research Questions

The researcher designed the study to answer the following research questions:

1. What social groups comprise the social structure in these suburban, rural, and urban high schools?

2. How does boys' basketball affect a team player's membership within the matrix of social groups in these suburban, rural, and urban high schools?

3. How does boys' basketball participation provide opportunities or limit attainment of upward mobility within these suburban, rural, and urban high schools and beyond?

4. How does the socio-political context of boys' basketball participation differ across these suburban, rural, and urban school settings?

Site Selection

The researcher used a purposeful sampling method to select the sites for the study (Merriam, 2001). Purposeful sampling methods are consistent with qualitative design because they are known to discover what occurs in the field, the implications of what occurs, and the relationships linking occurrences (Merriam, 2001). The researcher, specifically, used a typical sample to select schools in the urban, suburban, and rural category of high schools.

The schools were selected because of the economic, geographic, and demographic characteristics. The schools selected for the study were in or within close proximity to a large metropolitan city in the lower Midwest. The city has a large county wide school district with 22 high schools. The urban school selected for the study, King High School (pseudonym) was part of this district. The school is located in a section of the city known to be economically depressed and with a high percentage of minority residents.

Several surrounding counties have developed into suburban regions. One county, in particular, has developed a reputation as a wealthy suburb catering to the city's

business leaders and their families. The suburban school selected for the study, Rockefeller High School (pseudonym) was one of three high schools in this particular suburban county. Rockefeller High School was known to cater to some of the most economically privileged students in the metro area and enrolled primarily white students.

Just beyond the suburban counties, a number of rural communities exist. Some of these rural communities are economically depressed and include the students from farms and very small towns. The rural school selected for the study, Cornwell High School (pseudonym) is a combined Jr. /Sr. High School in the same building and serves students from a rural area.

Participant Selection

The researcher selected two boys' basketball players, the head boys' basketball coach, the principal, two non-coaching teachers, and two parents of boys' basketball team members at each of the three sites.

The Basketball Players

The boys' basketball players were selected based on extensive conversations with the head boys' basketball coach regarding the context of the team. In all three cases, priority was given to senior members of the boys' basketball team because of the length of time they most likely had been a part of the team and within the school community. The researcher developed this criterion because it was vital to the study to collect data from basketball players who were fully immersed in the basketball team at the specific school.

The Boys' Basketball Coach

The boys' basketball coach at each school was integral to the completion of the study. After gaining permission from the superintendent and school principal the coach had to provide extensive access to his program. While much data were collected from the coach, he also assisted in the overall coordination of the study by providing practice and game times and background and assisting in the coordination of data collection with the other participants. The boys' basketball coach was vital to the overall interpretation of the socio-political context of the boys' basketball team at each school.

The Principal

The principal at each school granted the initial access, after superintendent approval, to approach the boys' basketball team to conduct the study. The researcher determined the principal to be the best asset in determining the climate of the school and ultimately the role boys' basketball participation plays in the social structure of the school community. The principal at each school also assisted with coordinating the study and granting access to interview two non-coaching teachers.

The Non-Coaching Teachers

At each site, the researcher collected data from two non-coaching teachers. The non-coaching teachers were selected after conferencing with the principal and boys basketball coach. The principal and coach were helpful in selecting non-coaching teachers who were interested in the study and articulated the culture of the school. The non-coaching teachers were vital to the interpreting and describing the overall social structure of the school community. The non-coaching teachers also provided an objective look at the place the basketball players held within the social structure and were

able to comment on the positive and negative skills the basketball players obtained through participation in the sport.

The Parents

The researcher developed the criterion of attempting to interview the parents of the boys' basketball players who participated in the study. This assisted the researcher in evaluating the socio-political context of the boys' basketball team in each school community. Collecting data from the parents, however, was also vital to the determination of whether or not basketball participation assisted in the development of positive or negative life skills for each of the players who participated in the study. It was hypothesized that the parents played a role in the decision of the player to participate on the team and many of the decisions associated with the students' present and future academic and social status.

Data Collection

The researcher utilized three methods of data collection: interview, observation, and mining of documents. The use of these three methods of data collection triangulated the data which ultimately led to trustworthiness of the data. Interview served as the primary data collection method, while observation was secondary and assisted in the clarification of data that emerged from the interviews. Mining of documents was the third method of data collection and served as a clarification technique for data collected by both interview and observation. The study was grounded in the social structure literature and high school sport participation literature. The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview of two boys' basketball players, the head boys' basketball coach, the school principal, the athletic director, two non-coaching teachers, and parents of the

boys' basketball players to determine the socio-political context of boys' basketball participation and how it related to the social structure of each school community. Semi-structured interview was used because it allowed the researcher to collect data while utilizing a conversational approach. When appropriate the researcher conducted follow up interviews with the participants. The researcher conducted interviews with the same participants at each school: (a) King High School (urban), Rockefeller High School (suburban), and Cornwell High School (rural). Interview data was recorded on an audio tape recorder and transcribed by a professional transcribing service as soon after the interview as possible.

In addition to interview, the researcher used observation at boys' basketball practices and team meetings, boys' basketball games, and other school activities and events to interpret the socio-political context of the boys' basketball team and its place within the social structure of each school community. In many cases the researcher used observation to align the data obtained from an interview of one of the participants.

The researcher used mining of documents to confirm data collected through the interview and observation portion of the data collection. The mining of artifacts also allowed the researcher to develop a better interpretation of the school community, the role boys' basketball played in the school community, and the overall place of the school within the geographic community in which it resides. The researcher utilized artifacts such as the school newspaper, community newspaper, school and athletic websites, high school basketball websites, and artifacts provided by the participants.

The Field Test

The field test provided the researcher the opportunity to examine the precise wording of the interview protocol, observation methods, and mining of document techniques prior to collecting data at the three school sites chosen for the study. For the field test, the researcher used a purposeful sampling technique and chose Pointe East High School and its boys' basketball team. Just as with the three schools selected for the study, the researcher conducted interviews, observations, and mined artifacts at the school. The researcher interviewed two boys' basketball players, the head boys' basketball coach, the athletic director, two non-coaching teachers, and parents of the boys' basketball players. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews of all of the participants and one follow up interview when appropriate.

Data Analysis

The units of analysis for this study were the schools and the boys' basketball teams. There were two levels of analysis. The researcher first analyzed each school individually and provided a description of the socio-political context of boys' basketball participation and interpreted the role the basketball players played within the social structure of the school community. The second level of analysis involved a cross case analysis of the teams from the urban, suburban, and rural context.

The researcher utilized the work of Wolcott (1994) to report the findings of the study. Wolcott's system of *description, analysis, and interpretation* was utilized in both the within case and across case analysis.

Description addresses the question, "What is going on here (Wolcott, 1994)?" The researcher utilized *description* to provide: (a) an overview of the specifics of each school

(case), (b) provide vivid representations of observations made by the researcher at each school, (c) present interview data accumulated by the researcher at each school, and (d) describe documents mined by the researcher at each school.

Analysis is the next step in the process. Wolcott (1994) maintains that *analysis* addresses the identification of essential features and the systematic description of interrelationships among them. Wolcott also said that *analysis* can be used to evaluate and address questions of why a system is working or not working and possible solutions to the system. In this study, the researcher used *analysis* to provide deeper details of the collected data and the categories which emerged. The researcher also used Wolcott's (1994) *analysis* to evaluate how the data collected pertained to the proposed interview and research questions. The *analysis* phase was crucial to both the within case and cross case analysis process.

Interpretation is the final piece of the system. Wolcott (1994) maintains that *interpretation* addresses questions of meanings and contexts. This step was vital to the study because it allowed the researcher to place findings in the broader context of society as a whole. The researcher drew interpretation from both the within case and cross-case analysis procedures with the goal of making recommendations for future research and what impact such research has on the overall state of high school sport in the United States.

The researcher used constant comparative analysis to analyze the data. The constant comparative method of data analysis was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The constant comparative analysis method was used to develop grounded theory. A grounded theory consists of categories, properties, and hypotheses that are linked

conceptually (Merriam, 2001). Grounded theory is conducive to the qualitative tradition of inductive, concept building research and therefore appropriate for this study. Constant comparative analysis utilizes multiple repetitions of analysis of interview data, observation data, field notes, and documents. From these multiple analyses, the data are organizes into themes which leads to further questions and analysis. Comparisons of the data were constantly made within and between levels of conceptualization until a theory were formulated (Merriam, 2001).

After the first interviews of the participants the data were transcribed by a professional transcription service and placed into categories according to the properties which emerged. The researcher, furthermore, developed a set of codes which described each category and assisted in the placement of data into the categories and subsequent categories. After a thorough analysis of the categories which emerged from the data, the researcher developed a set of themes.

After the initial themes were developed, the researcher developed a second round of interview questions for some of the participants. The second round of data collection was developed to reinforce the researchers understanding and interpretation of the data. In addition, the researcher sought to develop new categories and themes from the second round of interviews and observations. After completing the second round of data collection, the researcher once again placed the data into categories. The researcher then took the categories and placed them into the existing themes while developing additional themes which emerged from the second round of data collection.

The researcher used a number of strategies to assist in the data analysis phase. The researcher utilized field notes and "theoretical memos." A "theoretical memo"

allowed the researcher to better understand data which had been collected from a variety of methods. "Theoretical memos" assisted in the synthesis of data from across several sources on an emergent theme (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The researcher also took copious field notes throughout the entire data collection process. The use of field notes allowed the researcher to systematically record his impressions, thoughts, intuitions, and emerging hypotheses (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The researcher maintained a "running record" throughout the process which was an account of the descriptive data observed and also dialogue about the data. The researcher also created a number of "observer comments" which consisted of emotional reactions to events, insights, methods (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

The researcher used a number of "visual displays" during data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). These visual displays allowed the researcher to present the data in a visual form and to help conceptualize emerging themes. The visual displays were especially helpful during the cross-case analysis of the three teams from the urban, suburban, and rural settings. The researcher used a number of flow-charts, graphs, maps, and matrices to assist in the analysis of data.

Trustworthiness of the Data

According to Rossman and Rallis (2003) "trustworthiness of the data" is judged on two sets of standards: (a) does the study conform to standards of acceptable and competent practice? (b) does the study meet standards for ethical conduct and sensitivity? Much like reliability and validity to quantitative researchers, "trustworthiness of the data" serves as a measure of both for qualitative researchers. Rossman and Rallis (2003) brought forth several strategies that assisted the researcher in the development of

"trustworthiness of the data:" (a) triangulation, (b) prolonged engagement, (c) member checks, (d) use of a critical friend, (e) use of the community of practice.

The researchers triangulated the data by using multiple sources of data, multiple points in time, and a variety of methods (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Triangulation requires the use of at least three sources to confirm data. The researcher triangulated data for the study both within each specific team and school community and through the across case analysis of the three teams and school communities. For all three research questions, the researcher confirmed data through the use of interview, observation, and mining of documents.

The researcher spent several weeks with each team and school that participated in the study which helped fulfill the "prolonged engagement" requirement. "Prolonged engagement" is measured by being present in the field for a long period of time and spending a substantial amount of time with participants (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The researchers also worked with the participants of the study to perform "member checks." This process involved taking data back to the participants for them to elaborate, correct, or disagree with. When possible, the researcher took actual interview transcripts or detailed field notes back to discuss with the participants.

Another attempt to obtain "trustworthiness of the data" came in the form of a "critical friend." The researcher often turned to another student who was working on a qualitative dissertation to assist in any modification of decisions, development of categories and themes, and an overall interpretation of the data (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The researcher also leaned on a "community of practice" with valued colleagues to develop emerging theories, discuss ideas, and assist in the synthesis of the information.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to examine three high schools from a social structure context in answering four research questions:

1. What social groups comprise the social structure in these suburban, rural, and urban high schools?

2. How does boys' basketball affect a team player's membership within the matrix of social groups in these suburban, rural, and urban high schools?

3. How does boys' basketball participation provide opportunities or limit attainment of upward mobility within these suburban, rural, and urban high schools and beyond?

4. How does the socio-political context of boys' basketball participation differ across these suburban, rural, and urban school settings?

Within Case Analysis

This section provides a detailed account of each case. The researcher provides a discussion of the context of each case and presents the findings of research questions one, two, and three. The findings of research question four is included in chapter five because it provides a synthesis of the findings of all three cases.

Rockefeller High School

Rockefeller High School represented the suburban school for the study. The Boys' basketball coach Bobby Reynolds laughed as he described the suburban characteristics, specifically the high economic aspects at RHS, "There is also the

Ridgeview population – where the girls' have the latte's and come in five minutes late to school and say they had to stop at Starbucks" (Reynolds – Int 1).

Context

The drive to the RHS campus followed the path of city turning to countryside. Large subdivisions and plush lawns were the norm and entrances to country clubs were commonplace. Sport utility vehicles were the transportation of choice and upon entering the building the student body looked similar to one another in terms of attire and skin color. Most of the jobs in the community were white collar in nature. The school occupied one of the wealthiest counties in the state and sat in the shadows of large homes with perfectly manicured lawns (RHS – Obs 1).

Setting. The school was going through an extensive renovation project, including the construction of a new gym. Despite the construction, the school remained clean and well kept. Because the school was previously a middle school, the hallways were narrow when crammed with high school students. The students, however, seemed well behaved and proceeded in an orderly fashion (RHS – Obs 3).

A few parents milled around the front office each time the researcher arrived at the school. Attendance at the basketball games, expensive gifts provided on senior night, and the description of the players' parents as being successful and occupying powerful positions in their chosen professions exemplified the parental support (RHS – Obs 4). The parents were competitive and expected the same from their children. Coach Reynolds described the parents, "It is who our parents are. Seventy five percent of them are extremely driven people and people who are concerned with winning – who does and who doesn't" (Coach Reynolds – Int 2).

The school did not operate on a bell system and the administration trusted the students to travel between classes without incident. Entrance into the school was easy and the doors were not locked, including side doors which the researcher often left through after conducting interviews and observations. The parking lot was unattended on days when the researcher was at the school. Upon arriving at the school the researcher was asked to sign in at the front desk and given a visitor pass (RHS – Obs 1).

In its fifth year of existence and with an enrollment of approximately 800 students, mostly white, grades nine through 12. Rockefeller High School distinguished itself as one of the top-scoring high schools in the state on several standardized assessments. Two of the cornerstones of the school were high academic standards and a vast array of athletic and extracurricular opportunities for the student body. The student body was 50% male and 50% female and the school boasted a miniscule dropout rate of 0.26% (school snapshot).

Per school board policy, the grading scale did not have a "D" classification and only provided letter grades of A, B, C and F. The school boasted a mean composite ACT score of two points higher than the national average in 2007 and had National Merit Scholars and Governor Scholar recipients. The school matriculated students to colleges and universities across the country with a high number of private schools, including Ivy League institutions. Ninety- five percent of the students entered some form of college after graduation (RHS - school snapshot).

The Coach. An energetic coach, Reynolds, led the boys' basketball program. Coach Reynolds fit all of the coaching stereotypes. He was a master of phrases associated with coaching and athletics and full of energy and even dressed the part with

his RHS polo shirt and closely cropped hair. Coach Reynolds prided himself in making boys' basketball a focal point of the school and was proud of the feeder system of elementary age kids who will one day play for him at RHS (RHS – Obs 2). High School principal Leslie Petty discussed the building of the basketball program, "It all starts with Bobby Reynolds. He is trying to establish and build a program. He is literally building from the ground up, from elementary age to middle school to high school. He wants a total program" (Petty – Int 1).

The Season. The team finished the season with a solid 21-9 overall record and capitalized with two wins in the state tournament. RHS defeated two county rivals during the season. One star player and a small group of senior role players led the team. The star player was getting attention from some small colleges to play basketball and eventually signed with a small NAIA program (RHS – Obs 2). The team played in a small gym built for the middle school, but upgraded the season following the completion of the study when construction on the new state of the art gym was completed. The team would have its own locker room facility and amenities at that time (RHS – Obs 2).

Findings for Rockefeller High School

Below the researcher presents the data for Rockefeller High School pertaining to research questions one, two, and three. There are subsections representing the specific findings of each research question at each school.

Research Question One: What Social Groups Comprise the Social Structure of this Suburban High School?

Research question one addressed the presence of social groups at each school. Identifying the social groups at each school helped to determine the social pyramid at

each school and address the social benefits and negative aspects associated with group membership answered by research question two. Below are two subsections specific to Rockefeller High School. The first subsection is a discussion of the school's social pyramid and the second addresses the influence of parents on social group membership at RHS.

Discussion of Social Pyramid. The social groups at Rockefeller High School were: (a) jocks, (b) academics, (c) Goths, (d) high economic, (e) redneck, and (f) band and choir. See Figure 1 for a summarized account of the data provided by study participants. Figure 2 shows the social "pyramid" present at RHS based on the social and academic benefits associated with membership in each social group. Basketball player Craig Jones provided his assessment of the social groups, "I mean you definitely have the jocks. They break down by sports and overlap. You also have rednecks, Goths, and definitely the band" (Craig Jones – Int 1). Teacher Theresa Stone named several of the groups, "I have students tell me that this is the 'jock' table, then there are the band kids, also the academic kids, and there are the kids that are wealthy" (Stone – Int 1). Parent Hugh Thompson summarized some of the social groups at RHS, "There are just the normal cliques: Athletes, academic types, outsiders, gothic types" (Hugh Thompson – Int 1).

The "academic" and "jock" social groups received the most perceived social and academic benefits followed by the "high economic" students and the "band/choir" students. Dual membership existed in the "academic" and "jock" social groups. Science teacher Thomas Chang described the social benefits of the "jock" social group, "Being a part of the jocks helps them to make friends because many of them are known just

because of what they do in terms of athletics. Their name is already out there, so it is easy for them to meet other people and meet other students" (Chang – Int 1). Principal Petty discussed the "academic" social group, "We have a faction of students that are very academic oriented. So we have the high academic, driven students going to Ivy League schools and competing against the best" (Petty – Int 1).

The "jock" social group had an elevated place within the social structure of the school. An example of such elevation occurred when the researcher attended the "senior night" games at RHS. Before the boys' game there was a ceremony honoring the seniors of both the girls' and boys' basketball teams. The ceremony was lavish and included framed jerseys and pictures provided as a gift from the students' parents. After the ceremony and during the announcement of the starting line-ups the boys from RHS ran out on the court and then tossed a souvenir basketball into the student section known as the "black hole" (RHS – Obs 4).

Teacher Chang discussed the elevation of the "jock" social group, "While the other groups like band and choir are rather well known here, it is the athletes that generally have more of a spotlight shined on them" (Chang – Int 1). Parent Hugh Thompson explained the elevation of the "jocks," "It definitely builds confidence because the kids look up to them. I think some of the teachers do too. They support athletics. The academic team does not get the accolades that athletes do. They don't celebrate in the halls" (Hugh Thompson – Int 1).

The overall importance of winning at the school further exemplified the perceived elevation of the "jock" social group. All interviewed referred to winning being important and losing being a negative. Basketball player Jones commented on the importance of not

having a losing team, "Having a bad team is a huge negative. We would have a small crowd like the football team" (Craig Jones – Int 1). Teacher Chang also commented on the impact of losing, "A negative I can think of would be if they are having a tough year. A losing season. The students can really be hard on them when they are losing" (Chang – Int 1).

The "jock" and "academic" groups received more positive than negative benefits while the "redneck" and "Goth" students obtained substantially less social and academic benefits, if any. Coach Reynolds commented on the "redneck" group, "You do also have my little redneck group of special education kids. They love the camouflage and know exactly when deer hunting season starts. Let's just say they don't get a whole lot of positive attention around here" (Reynolds – Int 1). Coach Reynolds also commented on the "gothic" population, "You have a small group of gothic kids, pink hair, wear black but they are a small percentage" (Reynolds – Int 1). Teacher Stone also commented on the negativity associated with being a member of the "Goth" social group, "There is a small group that doesn't get a whole lot of attention, but just a small group. There is not really too much negative, they just kind of keep to themselves. I guess you would call them gothic" (Stone – Int 1).

The two groups in the middle of the social structure pyramid were the "high economic" and the "band and choir" group. While these groups did not receive many benefits due to membership, they also did not receive a lot of negative aspects. Principal Petty discussed the "high economic" social group and how they tend to blend into the student body, "Some people say we have a high socio-economic social groups. I do not see that because they tend to blend in. I know we have it because I see the way they

dress, the cars they drive and the houses they live in. They receive more benefits out in the community" (Petty – Int 2). Teacher Stone also mentioned the "high economic" social group, "There are the kids that are wealthy. They hang together and where they live is important. I guess they are sort of popular but not too much." Coach Reynolds commented on the size of the band but the overall lack of benefits received through membership, "The band is huge. I would say 85 members or more. They hang together and are very connected but definitely below the athletes in social status" (Reynolds – Int 2).

Parental Influence on Social Group Membership. The traits of the parents and the overall socio-economic context of the community explained the academic success of members of the "jock" social group and the overlap between the "jock" and "academic" social groups (RHS –Obs 2). "Jocks," for the most part, were good students and did not allow the time commitments placed on them by their athletic pursuits limit them from excelling academically. The researcher interpreted this as a "mirror" of the parents and their successful careers and the overall nature of the community including the cultural importance of sport and academic success.

Coach Reynolds on the overlap between "jock" and "academic" groups:

> It all comes down to parenting and I think sports are crucial as well. Having structure whether it is ping pong, the band, or whatever, structured activity leads to accountability. This is huge for self-confidence, discipline, and work ethic. So many of the kids that struggle you start looking and they are not involved in anything. There is a common denominator of who are not involved in something and they end up struggling. People in China do not care about the score of a Rockefeller basketball game, but it touches lives. (Reynolds – Int 1)

Research Question Two: How Does Boys' Basketball Affect a Team Player's Membership within the Matrix of Social Groups at this Suburban High School?

Research question two examined how playing on the boys' basketball team in the varying school contexts affects a team player's placement within the social groups of the high school. An important component to the studying of social structure is how group membership dynamics change and whether or not individuals move from group to group and if dual membership exists. In addition, the question addresses the positive and negative aspects acquired based on the synthesis of basketball participation and the associated group membership. The following subsections are specific to Rockefeller High School: (a) role of basketball in the players' lives, (b) discussion of "jock" and "academic" membership, (c) positive aspects of "jock" membership, and (d) negative aspects of "jock" membership.

Role of Basketball in Players' Lives. Basketball participation, overall, played a large role in the life of members on the team at Rockefeller High School. The two most frequent answers throughout the interview process were being a part of the basketball team at RHS meant "everything" to the members of the team or that basketball "is my life." Basketball player Jones commented, "Basketball is what I have always played. It is a big part of my life. I used to play baseball but don't any more" (Craig Jones – Int 1). Team member Thompson also discussed the reasons he played basketball, "It is just so important. It's a great feeling. You do a good job you play good basketball, people cheering you on" (Mark Thompson – Int 1)

Discussion of "Jock" and "Academic" Membership. The boys' basketball team fell into the "jock" social group; however, many of the boy's basketball players had dual

membership in the "jock" and "academic" social groups. Membership in the "jock" social group brought popularity along with a level of prestige to the members of the basketball team. Principal Petty described the popularity associated with being a "jock," They get nice sportswear. They get sweatshirts and shoes. They have notoriety because their picture is in the paper and their name is in the paper and their picture in the yearbook. People come to the games and stand up and cheer. If that doesn't make them feel special nothing will" (Petty – Int 1). Basketball player Thompson discussed the prestige of putting on the RHS jersey, "Basketball provides an opportunity. If you play and you get a jersey it's kind of like people recognize you a different way. It's a conversation starter" (Mark Thompson – Int 1). Parent Thompson succinctly expressed a level of prestige associated with playing basketball at RHS, "Playing basketball means he is the 'Big Man on Campus" (Hugh Thompson – Int 1).

Positive Aspects of "Jock" Membership. Being a part of the basketball team and ultimately the "jock" social group enabled the members to gain an edge in terms of relationships with others at the school because of the visibility gained by membership in the social group. Coach Reynolds discussed the edge gained through "jock" membership, "They are very well liked and that helps with the other students and teachers. They are the popular kids. Because they play ball they are invited to all sorts of things and are very socially accepted" (Reynolds – Int 1).

Basketball participation helped socially with dating, invitations to parties, and an overall sense of popularity at the school. When speaking of his boys' basketball players Coach Reynolds said, "Our guys have an advantage socially. In terms of who gets the girls, who is invited to the parties, who catches a break here and there? Yeah, that is our

guys. It would be boys' soccer and our basketball team, both are high up there" (Reynolds – Int 2). Parent Marsha Jones commented on the social edge generated by being on the team, "Let's just say if Craig Jones is walking down the hall next to a student who does not play basketball. Other teachers, students, whoever are going to have a better chance of knowing Craig because he is on the team" (Marsha Jones – Int 1).

The "jock" social group received the most perceived positive benefits of all of the social groups. When asked about the benefits associated with being a member of the "jocks" senior basketball player Thompson said, "I almost get a sense of power. I like that people know what I am doing. People always come to the games. It is also like the younger people look up to me. Everyone looks up to me more as an athlete than anything else" (Mark Thompson – Int 1). Basketball player Jones agreed, "You are known a lot more because you are on the basketball team" (Craig Jones – Int 1). Teacher Stone also commented, "Socially, especially during the season, they are very popular. But it does have to do with how successful the team is" (Stone – Int 1).

Negative Aspects of "Jock" Membership. The perceived negative aspects associated with being a member of the "jock" social group were: (a) losing, (b) time commitment, and (c) punishment by coaches.

Basketball team member Thompson discussed the downside of *losing*, "*Losing.* Especially losing to Southwest. That is the big one because people talk about that game for years and years to come. They always talk to me about it. It puts a lot of pressure on you" (Mark Thompson – Int 1). Teacher Stone commented on the *time commitment*, "The main negative I see is that it takes time away from their studies" (Stone – Int 1).

Coaches often disciplined athletes for poor behavior rather than school administrators. According to boys' basketball player Thompson, "If I get in trouble I would rather not get sent to Coach Reynolds. It's almost like the teachers kind of hang that over my head and pretty much just say that. If I am even remotely screwing around they'll just tell me to knock it off otherwise I'm going to get suspended from the team" (Mark Thompson - Int 1). Coach Reynolds added, "Sure they get sent to me. Just because the teachers know I can handle things. I do a thing called "breakfast club" and the word has spread that rather than a day in detention all I have to do is call Coach Reynolds and its over. It's called breakfast club but it ain't coffee and doughnuts" (Coach Reynolds – Int 1). Coaches disciplining the players was interpreted by the researcher as tougher on the players in the short term but could be perceived as a benefit to them in the long term because they avoided much of the formal disciplinary procedures at the school.

Research Question Three: How Does Boys' Basketball Participation Provide Opportunities or Limit Attainment of Upward Mobility Within this Suburban High School and Beyond?

Research question three was specific to participation on the boys' basketball team and factors associated with participation. These factors included whether playing boys' basketball provided opportunities within the school for the team members. The question also addressed if basketball was a positive or a negative in preparing a team member academically and socially for life after high school. Below are four subsections specific to Rockefeller High School. These subsections include: (a) a discussion of basketball participation, (b) how basketball prepares participants for life after high school, (c)

negative aspects associated with boys' basketball, and (d) a discussion of basketballs place within socio-political context of RHS.

Basketball Participation Discussion. Being a member of the boys' basketball team had a higher level of importance to the players than academic success. Playing basketball, furthermore, was perceived as an overall positive aspect in an individual's life and increased self discipline which carried over to academic and other pursuits. Basketball participation also enhanced time management skills because of the intense time commitment associated with participation.

Parent Thompson explained the perceived self discipline obtained through boys' basketball participation, "With any of the athletics it fosters a certain amount of discipline that all coaches require. Also, a certain amount of teamwork, leadership, self improvement, and learning to become a role-model" (Hugh Thompson – Int 1). Coach Reynolds added to the self discipline discussion, "Playing sports provides structure and that structured activity provides accountability, self confidence, self discipline, and work ethic" (Reynolds – Int 1). Principal Petty touched upon the discipline and time management benefits, "I think what athletics brings is a discipline, and time management and we hold athletes and all extracurricular activity students to a higher academic standard" (Petty – Int 1). Parent Betty Jones also commented on discipline and time management, "Basketball helps with discipline in all areas of life and also learning how to divvy up time and multi-tasking" (Betty Jones – Int 1).

Mark Thompson discussed the overall positives of being on the team:

> It helps me to become a leader. Especially this year because I am captain of the varsity team and like especially going into a professional job. I'm going to lead people that way. So it's just going to prepare me for stuff and pressure situations on the court and stuff like that. I want to say it's

> almost like a small test to see how you did when you were real little. I mean like not in a sense like right now buy just... especially like pressure being put on you and all that stuff and seeing how you handle it. It definitely helps me with communicating, especially when I just go out and play in the park or something like that. I communicate better than I would if I didn't play basketball at all. (Mark Thompson – Int 1)

A final perceived positive in terms of academics were the eligibility requirements placed on the players by the state's high school athletic association and the school district. "It's almost to the point where if I keep my grades up I keep playing. If my grades go down, I can't play. That's just it. I want to play so I keep my grades up," Thompson said (Mark Thompson – Int 1). Principal Petty concurred, "I think that basketball is motivation for them to be eligible and during basketball season they really straighten up. Their behavior is better because they know if there is an issue I will be contacting the coach. When it is outside of the season the grades and behavior are worse" (Petty – Int 1).

Preparation for Life after High School. Being member of the boys' basketball team at RHS was perceived to have a positive impact on an individual's ability to prepare for life after high school. Participating in basketball, specifically, was thought to teach lessons through competition, time management, and other factors beneficial in many facets of life. Principal Leslie Petty commented, "Being a part of the boys' basketball team helps with things like discipline, time management, and setting goals" (Petty – Int 1). Principal Petty also discussed benefits provided by basketball participation, "Being on the team, any team, provides a positive outlook on life and that kind of things is a benefit. A kid who is not participating in something, let's face it, they are not going home and doing homework all night. They are doing, lots of them anyway, are making decisions they do not need to be making" (Petty – Int 1).

Basketball participation was perceived to be vital in developing a sense of goal setting and goal attainment. Basketball participation, overall, instilled a level of self discipline viewed a positive light by study participants. Such discipline would lead to better decisions and a greater level of success for years after high school ended.

Principal Petty discussed goal setting and self discipline:

> It starts with the coach's vision and goal setting. I think if you set realistic goals that are achievable and some that maybe are a little bit of a stretch, they are learning that right there through hard work, 'I can get to another level.' I feel that has to carry over in life and they learn you do not win at everything. How many undefeated teams are there? Very few. And so many times coaches will talk about winning a championship because of a lost game a few months earlier. That can be a turning point. The team learned from that loss and worked on some things. So I think the success in life is not tied to the win/loss record, this success is in how to win, learning how to lose and how to work harder than you ever thought you could before because everyone of us could work harder than we ever thought we could (Leslie Petty – Int 1).

Negative Aspects Associated with Boys' Basketball. Despite the overwhelming positive perception toward boys' basketball participation at RHS a few perceived negative aspects emerged. The biggest negative was time commitment which was also cited as a positive. Not only were the students' required to attend practices and games throughout the season, but a large amount of time in the summer and throughout the off season. This commitment took time away from family, friends, and academics. Boys' basketball player Jones said, "The time commitment is very tough. It can be hard. We practice at 6:30 A.M some mornings, on some holidays, and we spend a lot of time away from friends and family" (Craig Jones – Int 1).

Coach Reynolds explained the issue of time commitment:

> It is a big time sacrifice. We had a kid – a 6 foot 6 kid – his daddy played basketball, big time basketball, division one basketball, and he decided not to play this year because of the time commitment during the summer. He

> wanted to hang out at the Ridgeview swim club, he wanted to swim, and he wanted to do other things. During practice he played as hard as any kid I ever had. But when the summer rolls around he knew it was weeks of non stop basketball and then you go directly into skill sessions. He thought about it and just felt he didn't need it. He wanted to enjoy thanksgiving, he wanted to hang out. It is a huge sacrifice for families. Some kids go home at 3:30 P.M. and our kids are sweating their butts off at basketball practice. I feel sorry for some of the sophomores. I mean, the ones that are good. Our JV games are Monday and Tuesday, and our varsity games are Thursday and Friday. That is a lot of mental wear and tear and physical wear and tear. Think about it. We get home from a game at 10:00 P.M. and you still have two hours of homework left and you haven't even eaten yet. (Coach Reynolds – Int 2)

Despite the overwhelming time commitment, being a member of the boy's basketball team at RHS was perceived to be an overall benefit to the participants in gaining academic success and preparing for life after high school.

Coach Reynolds explained basketball's role on time management:

> Logic would say that it couldn't happen. People would say you can't balance it all. It would seem logical that more time working on academics would mean better students. That is not the case. My experience has been the kids who pay sports are held accountable, have a lot of structure and do better in the classroom. Kids who have ended up quitting and felt sports took up too much time, want to spend more time with their girlfriend, end up struggling with academics. Nine out of 10 times they end up going straight down hill. I am surprised about how disciplined our athletes are. They will stay up late and come in early. They sneak in some library time or study before school. These kids can really cram. (Coach Reynolds – Int1)

Basketball's Place Within Socio-Political Context of School. The boys' high school basketball team held a relatively realistic place within the socio-political context of RHS. The team had an elevated status in the eyes of teachers, administrators and other students at the school. This "slight" elevation came from two factors. First, was the recognition associated with being a part of the boys' basketball team. The players were more easily recognized by others at the school and were set apart by attire in the form of

team issued sweatshirts and t-shirts throughout the week and a shirt and tie on game days, grade checks throughout the season, and the perceived importance of basketball in the region (RHS – Obs 3).

The elevation in status was rather slight, however, as members of other extra curricular activities were also positively seen socially within the school. Teacher Chang discussed the place of basketball at the school and within society, "It's basketball and it is very, very important in this state. I think we look at basketball even at Rockefeller a little bit differently than we look at our successful speech teams and academic teams and what not. I think basketball is a level above" (Chang – Int 2).

The "black hole" was the student section at boys' basketball games. This was a very powerful social setting and membership in the "black hole" ensured an elevated place socially within the school. The section was embraced by students, teaches, and administrators. School principal Stone said, "I wonder why they go? Do they go because the boys' are playing or do they go because all of my friends are going to be at the black hole. I don't know why they go. Some of them probably don't know there is a game going on, but there is a level of camaraderie" (Stone – Int1).

The Black Hole was proof of the overall importance and status of boys' basketball at RHS. The Black Hole represented the stardom and importance placed on high school athletics in suburban settings. While the Black Hole existed for girls' basketball and football, interviews, observations, and the school newspaper found it less important and placed its social meaning exclusively with boys' basketball.

Cornwell High School

Cornwell High School represented the rural high school in the study. Teacher Kelly Willis provided a description of the Cornwell High School community:

> We are surrounded by cornfields. A lot of kids live on farms. In this area there is only one big business and that is the casino boat. Kids turn 16 and that is like gold. You get a job at the boat, you are set for life, except for the athletes because they don't have time to work outside of sports and school so they get to focus. They have done that since second or third grade since the city ball and they deserve all the recognition they get because it is something they have worked at. (Willis – Int 1)

Context

The school and surrounding community exemplified "rural" United States. The drive to campus took the researcher off an interstate highway and onto a small two lane state highway. The break from the city was almost immediate and corn fields and country homes became the norm. With the exception of one of the counties largest employers and sense of identity, a casino boat (which incidentally did not travel onto the nearby river), it would be very easy to assume a metro area to be hours away (CHS – Obs 1).

With the rural area came signs of small town values and characteristics. Many lawns had United States flags in them and billboards had pro-Christian messages on them. For a rural area there was an abundant amount of churches. All of the churches were Christian. Some of the houses were well kept, others were run down with debris scattered about the properties. Houses had animals such as live stock, horses, chicken, cats and dogs. Some of the dogs seemed to be housed for hunting purposes and were kept in pens, others were on chains, and still others ran loose (CHS – Obs 1).

The only town that fed into Cornwell High School had a population of 200. It was depressed economically as many of the houses showed wear and there were no grocery stores. Gas stations carried a few grocery items. The town had an American Legion, and a couple of churches but very few businesses existed. One item noticeable to the researcher was the presence of a sign introducing visitors to the high school and in particular the school's nickname. The sign showcased recent accomplishments by the school's baseball team and girls' basketball team (CHS – Obs 1).

Setting. The school itself is a rather large campus considering its small enrollment and contained a middle school and a high school at the same campus. The building's atmosphere was reserved as teachers, students, and administrators went about their business quietly and without fanfare. There were no parents present and most of the students looked alike with t-shirts and jeans. There were various items posted on the walls consisting of student work and items promoting school spirit. The school was, overall, rather clean but the lighting was bad which created a dark atmosphere (CHS – Obs 3). The school gym was a source of pride to the school and a large part of the school campus in terms of space. The school gym seated nearly 1800 people which was large when considering the population of the area.

According to the school snapshot, Cornwell High School had an enrollment of 700 students grades seven through 12. The school was 98% white, 1% Asian, and 1% Hispanic. Seventy four percent of the students paid for lunch while seven percent paid a reduced amount, and 19% did not pay. Students attended college at a relatively high rate but many do not finish. There is pressure on the students to stay close to home in the rural community and while a metro area is close by, it seems miles away to the students.

Coach Ryan Tschetter commented, "The next state over could invade and we would have no idea" (Tschetter – Int 1).

The Coach. The head boys' basketball coach, Tschetter, was a tall, athletic man with a goatee and a confident demeanor. While not exactly outgoing in nature; he was positive with his players and had a unique relationship with them characterized as more of a peer than an authoritative figure. His office was messy with books, videos, clothes, towels, papers, and furniture scattered about. It had a lot of furniture and basketball players tended to mill around the office and visit with the coaching staff (CHS – Obs 2).

The Season. The team finished the season with a 9-15 record. It had a moderately successful run in the state tournament where it won two games. These were typical results for the program in the years prior to the study. The coach struggled with the average results, but the boys on the team were rather indifferent to it. On one observation the researcher witnessed the coach being nervous about the night's game because of the opponents' record and style of play. Before the game the researcher overheard players on the team saying they did not know the name of the team they were playing and did not know if they were having a successful season (CHS – Obs 2).

The mediocre results had an impact on the attendance at games and the overall sense of pride in the community regarding the team (CHS – Obs 3). Crowds were small and consisted primarily of family members of the basketball players. Rather than cheering and being positive about the games, most were vocally negative and maintained negative body language (CHS – Obs 3).

Findings for Cornwell High School

Below the researcher presents the data for Cornwell High School pertaining to research questions one, two, and three. There are subsections representing the specific findings of each research question.

Research Question One: What Social Groups Comprise the Social Structure of this Rural High School?

Research question one addressed the presence of social groups at each school. Identifying the social groups at each school helped to determine the social pyramid at each school and address the social benefits and negative aspects associated with group membership answered in research question two. Below is a discussion of the social pyramid at Cornwell High School.

Discussion of Social Pyramid. Four social groups emerged from the data: (a) jocks, (b) country, (c) uninvolved, and (d) Goths. Figure 3 provides an account of the data provided by each study participant. Teacher Kelly Willis provided an overall example of the social groups at Cornwell High School, "Kids call some of them jocks, even the cheerleaders. Then you have just the average kid, then there are the geeks or the antisocial kid that does not participate in school. Then you have the hoodlums and that has a lot of special education kids, behavior issues, and are socially unacceptable" (Willis – Int 1). Principal Mike Kemper detailed the presence of various social groups at his school, "We have a very small portion of what they call the Gothic, very small portion of that, pretty big portion of what the kids would call hicks because we are rural and a lot of farming and the jocks and that is our main group. Two main groups would be 'hick' and the 'jocks' I guess, but they are the same sometimes" (Kemper – Int 1). Basketball player

Trip Hilton provided an example of the best time to see the different groups, "You really notice all the different groups at lunch when they all sit together" (Trip Hilton – Int 1). Figure 3 shows this hierarchy.

The "jocks" received the most perceived social and academic benefits at Cornwell High School. Figure 4 shows the social "pyramid" present at CHS based on the social and academic benefits associated with being in each social group. The "jocks" received respect, popularity, admiration, and recognition through membership in the social group. Basketball player Braden Burgan commented on obtaining respect and admiration through "jock" membership, "I guess from the younger kids you get looked up to a little bit because you are an athlete. I think from all the kids you get respect and you know they like to be, I think, involved around you" (Braden Burgan – Int 1). Teacher Natalie Braun discussed the recognition received through "jock" membership, "Recognition. Everybody knows who they are. Other kids seem to gravitate towards them because they see them as some kind of representative or leader in the school. Whether or not they are, I do not know" (Braun – Int 1). Basketball player Hilton provided an example of the popularity associated with being a "jock", "Everyone knows you. You always have someone to talk to and they have something to talk to you about. The games are important and we are the ones that play in the games" (Trip Hilton – Int 1).

The categorization of the "country" social group was mixed. Some participants referred to all of the students at the school being "country kids." The "country" social group, however, was a specific group within the school. This social group wore "farm" and "western" clothes, worked on family farms, listening to country music, and driving large pick up trucks (CHS – Obs 3). Some of the members of the group both male and

female participated in athletics, but the majority did not and maintained their image as being "country." Coach Tschetter discussed the "country" social group, "You do have your, obviously, you know your farmers, your rednecks. I mean basically almost hillbillies" (Ryan Tschetter – Int 2). Basketball player Burgan commented on the "country" social group, "Yeah we have some country kids. Country dressed people and that sort of thing. They more or less stick together." (Braden Burgan – Int 1).

Cornwell High School also had a group of "uninvolved students." This social group was rather large and comprised of students who did not really have an identity based on social groups. They did not identify themselves with a particular sport, academics, extra-curricular activity, or neighborhood. Many of these students were rather weak academically and leaving the area to better them in the future seemed unlikely. "It is just the kind of average kid that kind of fits in and don't really have a name," Willis said. (Willis – Int 1).

Beneath the "uninvolved" social group in the hierarchy of Cornwell High School were a relatively small group of "Goth" students. Individuals in this group received few social or academic benefits and membership hindered the group from earning social and upward mobility within the context of the high school. Teachers, administrators, and other students lacked interest in the students and the feeling was reciprocated. Teacher Willis called the Goth students, "the lowest realm" (Willis – Int 1). Principal Kemper discussed the "Goth" social group, "There are very few of them and they basically keep to themselves" (Kemper – Int 1).

Research Question Two: How Does Boys' Basketball Affect a Team Player's Membership within the Matrix of Social Groups at this Rural High School?

Research question two examined how playing on the boys' basketball team in the varying school contexts affects a team player's placement within the social groups of the high school. An important component to the studying of social structure is how group membership dynamics change and whether or not individuals move from group to group and if dual membership exists. In addition, the question addresses the positive and negative aspects acquired based on the synthesis of basketball participation and the associated group membership. Below are three subsections specific to Cornwell High School. These subsections include: (a) a discussion of "jock" and "country" membership, (b) positive aspects of "jock" membership, and (c) negative aspects of "jock" membership.

Discussion of "Jock" and "Country" Membership. An important component to the studying of social structure is how group membership dynamics change and whether or not individuals move from group to group and if dual membership exists. In the case of Cornwell High School students did not move too much from group to group. The most likely movement of groups was the "jock" group to "country" group and vice versa. The "jock" and "country" social groups were the most likely place to find the boys basketball team at Cornwell High School. While a few of the boys' on the team had dual membership in the two groups, members of the team overwhelmingly belonged to the "jock" social group. Basketball player Trip Hilton said, "I am more in the athlete than the country bunch" (Trip Hilton – Int 1).

Positive Aspects of "Jock" Membership. By being a part of the "jock" social group the boys' basketball players received a number of perceived benefits and advantages. These benefits and advantages included obtaining respect, admiration, popularity, and recognition from others at CHS. At CHS the "jocks" seemed to have such an elevated status that regardless of their win and loss performance and social and academic skills they were firmly at the top of the social pyramid.

Basketball player Hilton described some of the advantages, "I get respect from everyone. The other kids who don't play, you know, I think like to be involved and around you. You get a lot of recognition" (Trip Hilton – Int 1). Hilton continued, "You get your name out around town, around the school and you know when that happens I guess you start getting a lot of respect from more people outside of the school and stuff like that" (Trip Hilton – Int1). Basketball player Burgan also commented on the advantages associated with being on the team, "You definitely get respect" (Braden Burgan – Int 1). Teacher Willis discussed the advantages associated with being a part of the "jock" social group, "They are given social opportunities that the other kids do not have through the school" (Willis – Int 1). Teacher Braun commented on the recognition associated with being a member of the "jocks," "Recognition, Everybody knows who those guys are. Other kids seem to gravitate towards them because they see them as some kind of representative or leader in the school. Whether or not they are, I do not know" (Braun – Int 1). Teacher Braun also discussed the gaining of popularity, "Popularity. I think they probably get a little more attention from teachers because you have got a coach who is concerned whether the kid is going to flunk off the team or not,

so they get more attention to see what their grades are as opposed to kids who don't play" (Braun – Int 1).

Negative Aspects of "Jock" Membership. Several perceived negative aspects were associated with being a part of the "jock" social group. Cornwell High School exemplified the presence of a "jock stereotype" within the school. The most consistent aspect of the "jock stereotype" was that members of the social group were not capable of doing well academically, were not held to the same standards in terms of behavior and academics, and that being a part of the social group overall held the kids back. Teacher Braun discussed the academic performance of the "jock" social group, "When you are a jock it is not cool to be smart and not cool to study and do your work. So a lot of them do not perform as well as they could in school because of that perception" (Braun – Int 1).

Another perceived negative aspect associated with being a part of the "jock" social group was that the actions of the members were "under a microscope" and mistakes magnified. This was especially true of other students who felt the "jocks" were held to a different standard academically and behaviorally, as teacher Kelly Willis commented, "The other kids really stereotype them and don't think the "jocks" want to socialize with them. There is a jealousy there and a wall between groups because of the stereotype" (Willis – Int 1). Basketball player Burgan said, "Sometimes people will like magnify what you do. Like you do something that's like wrong or something, they will make it like it's a huge thing just because you are on the basketball team" (Braden Burgan – Int 1).

Research Question Three: How Does Boys' Basketball Participation Provide Opportunities or Limit Attainment of Upward Mobility Within this Rural High School and Beyond?

Research question three was specific to participation on the boys' basketball team and factors associated with participation. These factors included whether playing boys' basketball provided opportunities within the school for the team members. The question also addressed if basketball was a positive or a negative in terms of preparing a team member academically and socially for life after high school. Below are six subsections specific to Cornwell High School. These subsections include: (a) a discussion of basketball participation, (b) positive aspects associated with basketball participation, (c) preparation for life after high school, (d) negative aspects associated with basketball participation, (e) the influence of the community, and (f) a discussion of boys' basketball's place within the socio-political context of CHS.

Basketball Participation Discussion. Basketball participation, overall, played a large role in the life of members on the team at Cornwell High School. The players' spoke about being a part of a "family atmosphere" on the team and how important that was to them. Coach Tschetter said, "First and foremost is the family atmosphere. We preach once in always in and no way out. Once you are a part of my family you are a part of it. You know we don't say "team" in huddles we say 'family'" (Tschetter – Int 2).

The basketball players were fond of the recognition being a part of the team generated. Basketball player Hilton explained the recognition, "It helps. Teachers know who you are. Students, especially the younger ones know who you are. Everybody knows who you are in the school, ours is so small, everybody knows everybody, but they

seem to talk to you more when you play basketball" (Trip Hilton – Int 1). The boys' basketball players participated because they loved the sport of basketball. "I just love to play," basketball player Burgan said when asked why he played basketball.

Positive Aspects of Basketball Participation. In terms of doing well academically, overall, boys' basketball participation helped team members. It should be noted, however, that this was not overwhelming as some participants were either undecided on whether or not being on the boys' basketball team assisted with academic performance while one participant felt it hindered the players academically. An example of this uncertainty was stated by David Hilton (Trip Hilton's father), "I think overall it helps him. But you could also say that it hurts him because it takes up a lot of time and they come home from practice or games and they are dead tired. It is kind of hard to sit down and study after that" (David Hilton – Int1). Teacher Braun agreed, "It hurts a few of them that are capable of doing really well academically. They are pressured to be cool instead. It gets into that "jock" thing. It takes them from being an "A" student to being a "B" or a "C" student (Braun – Int 1).

Principal Kemper discussed the overall recognition associated with being a part of the boys' basketball team, "More than anything, they are looked up to. Especially by the underclassmen. This state is seen to be, you know, 'basketball heaven'" (Kemper – Int 1). Principal Kemper also addressed the negatives associated with being on the basketball team by saying, "The primary negative is that they are always in the spotlight. If you mess up a little bit it's magnified" (Kemper – Int 1)

The eligibility requirements to participate were the primary reason playing basketball assisted in academic performance. Teacher Willis said, "It definitely helps.

There is very little motivation for kids other than athletes to do well in school. A lot of those kids, unless their parents are involved, do very well in school. We get a lot of that here. I would say 75% of the parents here are very apathetic toward education. Playing sports make them be eligible" (Willis – Int 1). These requirements are set by the state's high school athletic association and are the same for each school. Basketball player Hilton said, "Academically, I mean I gotta keep my grades up for one to play. You know you don't want to get in trouble and you want to stay on the team and you just want to be as good a student as you can be."

Principal Kemper described the benefits of basketball participation:

> I have always said that clubs, groups, organizations, things that have high accountability and high standards, it's always a plus. I use the phrase around here numerous times that basketball is better for student "A" then student "A" is for basketball. I say this because he knows he has to be academically eligible, he knows he has to be smoke and drug free, he knows he has to have all of these things with makes you a better person to begin with. It's those high standards and accountability that they abide by to be able to play. So I have always said the benefits out weigh the negative aspects. Some would argue that the amount of time and the importance placed on athletics, especially basketball and football would hinder the individual, but I disagree. (Mike Kemper – Int 1)

Preparation for Life after High School. Being a part of the boys' basketball team was perceived to assist the participants in preparing for life after high school. The most discussed aspect was learning how to work as a team. The participants believed teamwork developed by playing basketball carried over to other parts of the players' lives, especially entering the workforce.

Teacher Willis discussed basketball assisting with life after high school:

> I think the camaraderie of being on the team is a real positive in that they have to be able to get along with others. We see on a daily basis kids who are not a member of an organization and they struggle. They are not going to know how to act when they graduate and they get in an environment

> that they have to hold a job and work with a group of people. The teamwork really helps. A lot of the athletes do not just get on the team when they are 17 years old. They have been doing this since elementary school so that is a real positive thing and the team work is really embedded. (Kelly Willis – Int 1).

Being a part of the boys' basketball team assisted in the development of communication skills. Being better communicators assisted the players in developing for the future. Principal Kemper said, "Everywhere you go you have to communicate. In basketball you have to communicate on and off the floor. On the floor you have to communicate defensively and offensively and you have to be able to get along with others regardless of the situation" (Kemper – Int 1). Basketball, furthermore, instilled a sense of discipline in the boys' on the team helping them prepare for future endeavors. Parent Burgan said, "I think it is good for him. It helps teach him respect for others and self discipline. I think it is very good for helping prepare him for the future after school" (David Burgan – Int 1).

Negative Aspects of Basketball Participation. Being a member of the boys' basketball team at Cornwell High School created a few perceived negative aspects. The most common negative aspect was the overall time commitment associated with being on the team. Principal Kemper stated, "The biggest negative is just time commitment. It is so time consuming because now it takes so much time in the summers and holiday seasons. It changes plans for families, they have to go to camps. It just takes so much time" (Kemper – Int 1). Many of the participant's spoke of an overall sacrifice member of the team make in regards to spending time away from family and friends, difficulty in managing playing the sport and navigating academic responsibilities.

The participants discussed the inability to have a job, especially during the actual school basketball season as a negative aspect. Parents of the players mentioned this and in some cases playing basketball kept the boys' from assisting on farms owned by their families because of time commitment and fatigue. David Burgan discussed the strain associated with his not being able to help on the family farm, "I farm for a living and farm boys you would like for them to be able to help work on the farm and it takes a lot of time and there are times when he does not have time to help or he is too tired. That is a downside to it" (David Burgan – Int 1).

Principal Kemper on time commitment:

> The commissioner of the state high school athletic association is pushing for creating a one week or two week moratorium on athletics over the summer. I said jokingly that rather that one week or two weeks it needed to be the whole summer. Let kids be kids. In this rural setting by they time they are doing basketball in the summer and playing baseball you just can't be a kid. It's tough to be a kid at a small school, but that's my opinion. (Kemper – Int 1)

Influence of Community. It was impossible to ignore the pressure from the community both inside and outside of the school. Because of the rural nature of the school and surrounding community, the high school boys' basketball team embedded into the culture of the area and the community identified itself with the overall success or failure of the boys' basketball team. Teacher Willis explained, "I think at the ball games, the parents and members of the community treat athletes badly. That does not happen to those kids who do not participate in sports. They do not get screamed at during a ball game" (Willis – Int 1).

The pressure from the community led to another negative aspect associated with being a part of the boys' basketball team. As mentioned earlier in this section, Cornwell

High School had a rather substantial "jock subculture" and "jock stereotype." While this was seen to be true on a number of fronts, the most common was that because individuals played on the boys' basketball team they were expected to act a certain way. Unfortunately, the behavior was sometimes detrimental to their overall development and included pressure to drink alcohol, party, and act poorly in school. Teacher Braun commented, "There is pressure to drink and party. To my knowledge it is not smoking dope or anything like that, just drinking. Seems to be a big deal" (Braun – Int 1).

Because the boys' basketball players were representatives of their school and ultimately the entire community, their behavior was often heavily scrutinized and poor decisions magnified both inside and outside of the school. Teacher Willis said, "If they get in trouble at school and maybe it is something really minor, it is a bigger deal than if some of the uninvolved kids do it" (Willis – Int 1).

Basketball's Place within Socio-Political Context of School. The boys' basketball team at Cornwell High School held an elevated place within the social structure of the school. The members of the team were perhaps the most recognized members of the school. Teacher Willis said, "There is an admiration for the basketball players. They have worked very hard to get where they are and they continue to want to be successful and we do not see that with a lot of the other kids because there is not a lot to motivate them" (Willis – Int 1).

This elevated place was mostly positive; however, because of the negative perception of the "jock stereotype" present at CHS, being a member of the team was not without challenges. The teachers at the school had a "slightly" negative tone to their comments when discussing how the boys' basketball team was perceived at the school.

Teacher Braun said, "To the majority of the students these are the popular guys and everybody knows them, but you have a few who do not like them because they are "jocks" but for the most part they are popular and influential. They have power just because they can put a ball through a basket" (Braun – Int 1).

King High School

King High School represented the urban school for the study. Coach Russell Hughes described the King High School community:

> We have a lot of students that have to go home and their parents are not home and they have to go home and baby sit their siblings, whether it be male or female. They have to go home sometimes during our practice time and just go home or sometimes their parents will call them in school and tell them they can't go to practice because they have to pick their little brother up at the bus stop or watch him. In other words, there are a lot of parents who are putting their sons in a dark position and I do not think it is fair on any student or student athlete to have to go through what they have to go through at home" (Coach Hughes - Int 1)

Context

The school and surrounding community exemplified "urban" life in the United States. The drive to campus followed freeways and busy city streets. Concrete and steel were in abundance. The researcher passed an international airport, several strip malls, and many fast food restaurants. The school was approximately one mile from a very busy street with large shopping centers and car dealerships. After turning off of the major street, however, the situation changed. Houses were run down, restaurants advertised very low costs for meals, and the convenient mart had bars on the windows as did a few of the homes. Trash and debris scattered the area, especially near the convenient mart and restaurants. The researcher noticed several adults and kids milling around with no apparent place to go. Some of the kids were of school age and the

researcher wondered why they were not in school. Nearly all of the people were African-American with a few being white (KHS - Obs 1).

Setting. The school was located in an economically depressed part of the city and the school had a reputation of being low performing. The researcher's first trip to the school did not erase those images. The school was dirty on the outside and needed updating. Parking was not available, so the researcher parked in an area not designated for parking on most trips to campus (KHS - Obs 1).

The doors to the main entrance were locked and the researcher called the office on an intercom. After a brief discussion with the person on the other end of the intercom the door was unlocked for the researcher to enter. Once inside the front door the researcher observed a large, crowed room which served as a common area between the cafeteria and the main office. The researcher arrived on the first trip to campus at one of the lunch periods. The school seemed hectic with students moving about rather quickly and clumped into small groups. There were several teachers and school personnel in chairs and standing outside of the cafeteria presumably on duty. The students yelled when speaking to one another and dressed in a dress code consisting of blue and khaki pants and polo shirts. Virtually everyone the researcher saw was African - American with the exception of a few Hispanic students and white teachers and school staff (KHS – Obs 1). The school, in reality, was 60% African-American, 34% white, and 5% Hispanic. Approximately 900 students attended the school (school snapshot).

The researcher's first meeting was with an assistant principal who was helping with logistics. While waiting for the assistant principal the researcher observed a small group of male students being disrespectful to office staff over medication. When the

researcher was talking to the assistant principal she engaged in a couple of conversations on the hand held communication device and listened to it frequently to monitor conditions in the cafeteria. It was obvious to the researcher she felt she needed to be in the cafeteria. (KHS – Obs 1).

The school's gym seated approximately 800 people and lacked quality lighting. The banners reflected success in various sports many years before but very little success in recent years. After school students, especially basketball players, congregated outside of the gym and talked to other students. All athletic teams and physical education classes shared the locker room facilities. The gym was not a source of pride for the school (KHS – Obs 2).

The Coach. The head boys' basketball coach, Russell Hughes, was a tall athletic man in his mid to late 40's. He was dressed in a warm up suit and basketball high tops and had a confident demeanor. The coach seemed to have a positive relationship with his players and took pride in being considered a role model and father figure to most of them. He also communicated on a hand-held communication device and played a role in all of the lunch periods and the overall discipline of King High School (KHS – Obs 2).

The Season. The boys' basketball team finished the season with a record of 10-15 and failed to win a game in the state tournament. Despite the lackluster record the team possessed a lot of athletic talent. It had one of the better players in the city in forward Jamar Walsh. Attendance was low at the boys' games and only a couple of parents attended the games. One of the parents served in a "booster club" capacity by providing concessions at the games because no one else would. Teacher support was even less prevalent and administrators attended on a schedule out of necessity. The overall lack of

support was a consistent theme amongst the players, parents, and coach interviewed for the study (KHS – Obs 3).

Findings for King High School

Below the researcher presents the data for King High School pertaining to research questions one, two, and three. There are subsections representing the specific findings of each research question.

Research Question One: What Social Groups Comprise the Social Structure of this Urban High School?

Research question one addressed the presence of social groups at each school. Identifying the social groups at each school helped to determine the social pyramid at each school and address the social benefits and negative aspects associated with group membership answered in research question two. Below is a discussion of the social pyramid of King High School.

Discussion of Social Pyramid. The social groups which emerged from the data were different in nature than the other two schools in the study. Students at KHS grouped themselves based more on race and ethnicity than by interests and activities. The social groups at KHS included: (a) athletes (segmented by sport), (b) African Americans, (c) Whites, and (d) Hispanics. The Hispanic students were known as "ESL" because English was their second language. Figure 5, is an account of the data provided by each study participant.

> A discussion of the social groups at King High School from boys' basketball coach Russell Hughes:
>
> Basically you are going to have an African-American population that is going to stay together and then you are going to have the Caucasians who are going to stay together, the Latinos and we have ESL students (English

> as a second language) so they are going to stay together. You have a few mixed together but the overall population is that at a school like this, they still group together. In the lunchroom, if you walk in there right now, you are going to see mostly African-Americans sitting together, mostly Caucasians who are going to be sitting together (Hughes – Int 1)

While race and ethnicity constituted the primary social groups at KHS, an additional group of "athletes" which were segmented by sport and crossed gender, racial, and ethnic lines to some degree also existed. Principal Michael Dudley discussed the social groups at KHS and emphasis on sport, "Well, you have your ESL students that kind of hang together as a group. You also have your basketball teams and football team. The cheerleaders and everybody kind of pick and choose which one of those sport groups they associate with" (Dudley – Int 1). Figure 5 shows the social hierarchy at KHS and the data which developed it. Figure 6, in addition, shows the social "pyramid" present at KHS based on the social and academic benefits associated with being in each social group.

The "athlete" social group received the most social and academic benefits at King High School. This social group, however, was segmented by what sport the athlete participated in. The basketball team, as previously discussed, did not socialize with the football team. There was actually a rivalry between the two groups according to a few of the study participants. The rivalry was not always healthy. Basketball player Marcus Bruce discussed the rivalry, "Only the basketball players hang out. It is not like basketball and then you also hang out with football. It don't go like that. Basketball hangs out with basketball, football hangs out with football, baseball, and so on" (Bruce – Int 1). Most of the participants placed the "athletes" into an elevated place within the social structure of KHS, but some did not. The teachers, in fact, reported negative

behavior and overall negativity associated with the role basketball played in the life of the team members. These assertions are discussed at length later in the section.

The remainders of the social groups at KHS reflected race and ethnicity. One step below the "athletes" on the hierarchal ladder was the "African American" social group. This social group earned social and academic benefits because of their involvement with activities such as the drum line, marching band, and through friendships with athletic teams, especially basketball and football.

Teacher Patrice Pike discussed the "African American" social group:

> With the African American students here there are many different clicks, and I would think that the clicks would be very similar to what you would see from white students at maybe a suburban school. You have your kids who are really into their studies and then you have the kids that are more into you know just an average social life where they might go to some dances, they hang out together at lunch. But this school is very interesting because I see, I mean I used to teach on the other side of town and the African American students here seem to take over the click status of the white students over there. The African Americans, especially the males will get respect based on their skills at whatever sport or if they are in the drum line or in the band most of them get recognition based on their skills. (Pike – Int 1).

Study participants indicated a significant number of "white" students who formed their own social group. These students existed below the "athletes" and "African American" students on the social ladder and had little opportunity to participate in the activities associated with the other two groups. Some of the white males did participate in baseball, but most white males took part in what was called a "gothic" lifestyle. Teacher Pike commented, "Most of the white males tend to be Gothic here and they usually hang out together" (Pike – Int 1). Teacher Pike discussed some other white students, "Some are on the drum line and they will kind of hang with them" (Pike – Int 1). Teacher Brandie Ernst commented on the white males at the school, "There is definitely some

kind of racial separation. I have noticed the white males tend to lump together" (Ernst – Int 1). Basketball coach Hughes discussed the sport of choice for the while students, "Some of the white kids play baseball."

Below the "white" social group in the hierarchy of King High School were a relatively small group of "Hispanic" or "ESL" students. These individuals received very few social or academic benefits through membership and obtaining upward mobility rarely occurred. Basketball player Jamar Walsh commented on the "Hispanic" social group, "All the ESL kids, Hispanics, all those and handicaps, they are basically all on the third floor so all them are together." After discussing all of the other social groups at KHS Principal Dudley mentioned the "Hispanic" students, "And then you have the ESL population after that" (Dudley – Int 1).

An important component to studying social structure is how group membership dynamics change and whether or not individuals move between groups and if dual membership exists. In the case of King High School students did not move too much between groups. The primary reason for this was the race and ethnicity nature of how students grouped themselves. When asked to confirm that KHS seemed to group according to race and ethnicity Coach Hughes replied, "Yes, definitely" (Hughes – Int 1).

Research Question Two: How Does Boys' Basketball Affect a Team Player's Membership within the Matrix of Social Groups at this urban high school?

Research question two examined how playing on the boys' basketball team in the varying school contexts affects a team player's placement within the social groups of the high school. An important component to the studying of social structure is how group membership dynamics change and whether or not individuals move from group to group

and if dual membership exists. In addition, the question addresses the positive and negative aspects acquired based on the synthesis of basketball participation and the associated group membership. Below are three subsections specific to King High School. These subsections include: (a) a discussion of "athlete" and "African American" group membership, (b) positive aspects associated with "athlete" and "African American" group membership, and (c) negative aspects associated with "athlete" and "African American" group membership.

Discussion of "Athlete" and "African American" Membership. The boys' basketball team at KHS consisted of two social groups. Their primary membership was with the "athlete" social group, but each member of the team was also "African American." Being a part of these social groups enabled the members of the team to obtain a number of perceived advantages. These benefits and advantages included obtaining a level of prestige and popularity within the school in the eyes of other students, teachers, and administrators. Teacher Ernst discussed the popularity and prestige, "They are very popular. I have one boy specifically who is probably one of the most popular basketball players and one of the most popular boys in the school. Everybody knows who he is, everybody" (Ernst – Int 1). Basketball player Walsh confirmed the popularity, "I am popular because I am one of the big impact players on my basketball team, so everybody at school knows me, whether I know them or not. They know me, they know my name" (Walsh – Int 1).

Positive Aspects of "Athlete" an "African American" Membership. A very important part of being involved in the "athlete" and "African American" social groups was an overall sense of belonging. Many of the study participants discussed this trait.

Principal Dudley commented on the sense of belong and prestige, "It is the whole idea of being connected to the school life. It kind of gives them prestige at the school" (Dudley – Int 1). The grandfather of one of the players commented, "It is all about the unison within a group and picking a positive group. If he weren't playing sports he would probably be into a whole lot of other things that he should not be doing" (Ed Barton – Int 1). The neighborhood and at home circumstances for the boys' on the basketball team were as a whole not good. Being a part of these social groups provided an avenue for them to feel they were a part of something positive.

Coach Hughes discussed these issues:

> We try to keep them together; they sit together and even try to get some classes together. We have them sit together at games. If the JV is playing we make sure our varsity team sit together and we have done a lot of things just to try and incorporate unity and let them show that for the rest of your life, you are going to be involved in some kind of organization and so far I think it is working but for me to say it has not been difficult I would be lying. It has been difficult because they are not use to that whereas in the county schools, on Sundays, especially Sundays, you are going to sit down for a Sunday dinner at the table and then at night you are going to sit there but I could almost assure you at the families around here are not sitting down eating dinner together because you have a lot of broken homes. One of the things that I want to mention and that we have every year, but one year stands out more than others is that out of 18 basketball players, male basketball players, 17 of them were without fathers in their life and half of them were without mother so they were either staying with grandparents, staying with uncles or aunts or staying with other families and I recall on incident where one of my young men, his mother talked to him and told him about his father who had walked out of the marriage and he was now in the hospital. The mother takes the young man to see the father in the hospital. His father had a really nice job as a matter of fact; he was a mail carrier so she talked him into going to see him in the hospital so he came and told me that he was going to have to leave practice early because he was going to see his father. Now, his father had never been in his life. When he gets to the hospital they have a good conversation and he asks his father to come to one of his games. The father told him that he was too busy to come to one of his games. Told him he didn't have the time. The young man sat there and cried and he was probably one of the toughest players I had on the team

> that year out of 18 players. I told you 17 of them did not have fathers and most of them did not have any mothers so the young man shared that story with the other members of the team they all came up to me later and said, 'But coach, you are the only father that we have in our life. You are our only father figure' I could hardly believe it. (Russell Hughes – Int 1).

Teacher Pike also spoke of the positive aspects affiliated with being an athlete, "It helps with their affiliations outside of school and things that happen on the weekend. We have kids involved in gang life. Playing on a team can keep them away from that" (Pike – Int 1).

Being a member of the "athlete" social group provided assistance with academics according to several of the study participants. The eligibility standards created by the state's high school athletic association, the grade checks done by the coaches, and the overall sense of importance often allowed the members of the social group to do better academically. Teacher Pike discussed the issue of grades, "It's a small school so we can check up on them. They also tend to check up on each other. They don't want their teammates to have to sit out" (Pike – Int 1). Principal Dudley discussed the eligibility standards, "It may help them academically because they have to stay eligible so it is going to make them stay on top of their academics. What we find is that during the season they rise to the occasion and have good grades. When the season is over they slump off" (Dudley – Int 1). Membership in the "athlete" social group also provided motivation for the students because they had to have the grades necessary to potentially be eligible to participate in a sport at the college level.

Negative Aspects of "Athlete" and "African American" Membership. The researcher determined several perceived negative aspects associated with being a part of the "athlete" and "African American" social groups. King High School exemplified the

presence of a "jock stereotype" within the school. Teacher Ernst discussed the stereotype, "Their attitudes can be really bad sometimes. They know they can get away with it and so they do and they take that to their advantage. They do not care about grades so much. I might try to talk to them about their grade and they say they don't care because they have a basketball scholarship" (Ernst – Int 1). In addition, an overall sense of unrealistic expectations associated with the playing basketball would provide for the boys' both in high school and in the future existed.

> Parent Simone Brantley on her son, Marcus Bruce, who is a reserve on the team:
>
> His whole focus is on basketball. He thinks he is going to get chosen to play in the NBA and that is his focus. I have tried to explain to him that he needs a backup plan if things do not go the way he wants, he needs to major in something else. Right now, he is trying to get a sport's scholarship where he can get an academic scholarship because he is a straight A/B student depending on his mood. He is very intelligent but he is so focused on basketball and where it is going to take him. It is kind of hard for him to see outside the box. He cannot see the big picture. Everything is focused on basketball. He cannot see outside of playing basketball. He feels like that is his whole life. He does not consider things like being a doctor or a sports doctor and stuff like that. We have those conversations where if you do not get picked to play in the NBA, what happens than? Everything is about sports (Simone Brantley- Int 1).
>
> Simone Bradley discusses her son's college choices:
>
> He has been looking at different colleges and it is all focused on basketball. But I ask what if he doesn't get picked; you need to make sure that you have good classes because you need a good education. He calls colleges and asks them to come out and look at him and I think the most contact he has had with the Duke scout. His goal in life is to go to Duke for college and tries to get the scout to come look at him.

In terms of the "jock stereotype" at KHS, the athletes were not held to the same standards academically or with behavior as the other students. They often acted out in class and on school ground and were often not disciplined by school administration

according to a teacher at the school. Teacher Pike discussed such behaviors, "The negative aspects would be the basketball players covering for each other when they shouldn't and not always telling adults what we need to know to help them the best. I know a couple of boys have very obviously copied some things and so with their popularity comes the fact that they can charm some other people into doing some work for them" (Pike – Int 1). Ms. Pike continued, "Well, I think, to be quite honest, that some teachers let the athletes get away with more. That is doing the kids a disservice. You know, giving them extensions on assignments or letting them get away with behavior that is undesirable before a game or something like that" (Pike – Int 1).

Teacher Ernst discussed the negative aspects of basketball participation:

> To me personally, I think it is a negative more than a positive because of what I have seen. I know Jamar for example is very smart but he is letting that go and relying on the basketball issue and if he does not succeed in that, he has let everything else go. He has even told me that he only needs to pass English and doesn't care about the rest of his classes. He has said that and to me he is losing his education and even if he is a basketball player, that education is still valuable and what is he going to do once he has finished with his basketball career if he does not know anything else? Another negative is if they lose a game when they come to class the next day, some of them will not talk and they are in a foul mood and they are like that all day (Pike – Int 1).

Research Question Three: How Does Boys' Basketball Participation Provide Opportunities or Limit Attainment of Upward Mobility Within this Urban High School and Beyond?

Research question three was specific to participation on the boys' basketball team and factors associated with participation. These factors included whether playing boys' basketball provided opportunities within the school for the team members. The question also addressed if basketball was a positive or a negative in terms of preparing a team

member academically and socially for life after high school. The researcher focused on the boys' basketball team and how being a member of the team impacted an individuals place within the social structure of the school and the overall positive and negative aspects of such participation. Below are five subsections specific to King High School. These subsections include: (a) a basketball participation discussion, (b) positive aspects associated with basketball participation, (c) preparation for life after high school, (d) negative aspects associated with basketball participation, and (e) people and factors influencing the decision to play basketball at KHS.

Basketball Participation Discussion. The researcher also focused on the boys' basketball team and the overall positive and negative aspects of such participation. Basketball participation, overall, played a large role in the life of members of the team at King High School. The players' spoke most often about playing basketball meaning "everything" to them and the importance of the coach as a strong role model in their lives. Basketball player discussed the role of basketball in his life, "It means a lot. I would say that basketball is my life really" (Walsh – Int 1). The role of the coach was a consistent theme with most of the study participants. The coach was viewed very favorably in terms of being a much needed male role model to the boys. Many of the basketball players were not close to their fathers and did not have strong home situations.

Jamar Walsh discussed the role of his coach:

> I really think that being on the basketball team itself is preparing you for later on down the road but so is your coach. My coach talks to us everyday about things that are going to happen in life and getting us ready and prepared to be a man not only for college but after college. We just have terrific coaches that are there for us and are going to be there for us no matter if we leave or when we leave college. We just have great coaches. They talk about their childhood and things and warn us about things that are going to happen so we know how to get through. We just

> have a great staff that helps us learn how to be not just a good basketball player but a man going into the world after high school. You have to take care of your responsibilities (Walsh – Int 1).

Positive Aspects of Basketball Participation. Being a part of the boys' basketball team, overall, was a perceived positive in terms of academic achievement. It should be noted, however, that this was not universal as some participants saw basketball as being a negative factor in a participants' development academically. An example of such a negative viewpoint was from parent Simone Brantley, "I don't remember the teacher's name but the teacher feels like anybody that plays sports is a dumb jock" (Brantley – Int 1). Teacher Ernst discussed the negative impact of basketball on academics, "They use basketball as an excuse because if I ask them where their assignment is they just tell me they had basketball practice. They are also tired and it takes up a lot of their time to study at home" (Ernst – Int 1).

The primary reason playing basketball assisted in academic performance was the eligibility requirements to participate. Positive aspect basketball participation provided the members of the team were the overall social elevator from their neighborhood and home situations. Merely being on the basketball team assisted in keeping the boys away from some of the evils that non members of the team were not as easily able to avoid. Teacher Pike discussed the correlation of eligibility and keeping players out of tough situations away from school, "I had a kid last year, not in basketball but track, that was ruled ineligible. He moved back to where he was from and got killed. So it's very important for them to stay eligible and I fight tooth and nail to get them to do that" (Pike – Int 1).

Preparation for Life after High School. Being a part of the boys' basketball team was perceived to assist the participants in preparing for life after high school. The most frequently discussed aspect was the development of self discipline required for success in the work force and in making adult decisions. Grandparent Ed Barton discussed the positive role of basketball in preparing for life after high school, "I think it has helped. Anytime that you are in a school that has discipline and rules it is going to help you because you have rules on the job. Even if you own a business, you have to apply to the government. So, it helps in all different ways" (Barton – Int 1).

Being a part of the boys' basketball team was perceived to assist the players academically. Many of the participants felt if it were not for basketball the students would be significantly worse off in the classroom and not be in a position to obtain college acceptance and perhaps an athletic scholarship. Jamar Walsh said, "I think it helps because you know you want to go to college and you know if you do not have the grades to go to college then you are not going to go. Basketball is your only option to get into college for free and that is what you want to do. It pushes you harder so it makes sure you have grades and ACT scores so that you can go to college" (Walsh – Int 1).

Negative Aspect of Basketball Participation. Being a member of the boys' basketball team at King High School created one perceived negative aspect. The negative aspect was the overall time commitment associated with participation. Coach Hughes discussed the issue of time commitment, "Time and commitment are the negatives. We have a lot of student athletes that have to go home and their parents are not home and they have to baby sit their siblings" (Hughes – Int 1). Player Marcus Bruce also discussed time commitment, "I am always tired. We have a game today at 7:30pm

and if the game goes into overtime or not, the game will probably be over at 9:30 or 10:00pm then I have to go home and by the time I get there to go to sleep it will probably be around midnight. Then I have to wake up at 6:30am to catch the bus and then we have another game tomorrow." It is important to note however, that it was generally difficult for study participants to explain a negative aspect. Most cited time commitment as a negative, but also felt that the time commitment was forth the cost for the benefits basketball provided socially and academically.

People and Factors Influencing Decision to Play Basketball. Members of the boys' basketball team at KHS participated because of the love of the sport. "I love playing basketball," said Marcus Bruce. The basketball players were also influenced by family members and especially their fathers. The influence of the father was interesting to the researcher because of the large percentage of the boys' fathers who were said to be absent. In many cases, however, the father was also a basketball player and the needed acceptance from the father was overwhelming. Grandfather Barton discussed the role of the father, "He mainly plays because of myself and my son, his father Michael. I am his grandfather but I raised him. He has a different relationship with his father but his father was a basketball player" (Barton – Int 1). Jamar Walsh concurred, "My granddaddy has been a big important part of my life. My father was good when he was young but I am not going to make the same mistakes he did. He played at Northside High and had scholarship offers to Michigan State, Memphis, and UNLV but he was in the streets and it didn't work out" (Walsh – Int 1). The desire to turn basketball into something very positive such as a college scholarship or a profession was an important influence because many of the players' father's had not been so fortunate and it served as a motivation.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has the following sections: (a) summary of study findings, (b) cross-case analysis, (c) discussion of study findings, (d) implications of study findings, (e) limitations of the study, and (f) recommendations. The first section summarizes the major findings from the study's first three research questions. The second section interprets the within case data with a cross-case analyses while answering research question four. The third section discusses the study findings in relation to existing research and generalizability. The fourth section discusses the implications of the major findings in the overall context of high school sport in the United States. The fifth section discusses the limitations of the study. The sixth section discusses recommendations for coaches, school administrators, and researchers.

The purpose of the study was to examine three high schools from a social structure context in answering four research questions:

1. What social groups comprise the social structure in these suburban, rural, and urban high schools?
2. How does boys' basketball affect a team player's membership within the matrix of social groups in these suburban, rural, and urban high schools?
3. How does boys' basketball participation provide opportunities or limit attainment of upward mobility within these suburban, rural, and urban high schools and beyond?

4. How does the socio-political context of boys' basketball participation differ across these suburban, rural, and urban school settings?

Summary of Study Findings

In Chapter Four, the researcher reported his analysis of three high schools and their boys' basketball programs. The schools represented three types of schools: suburban, rural, and urban. Rockefeller High School was the suburban school, Cornwell High School the rural school, and King High School the urban school. The schools' social groups and the boys' basketball teams were the units of analysis. Below is a summary of the major findings within each school and boys' basketball program for Research Questions One, Two, and Three. After providing the summary of findings the researcher provides a cross-case analysis section to answer Research Question Four. This section provides a synthesis of the data and lays a foundation to determine how the social aspects of boys' basketball participation differ across varying socio-political contexts.

Research Question One

What social groups comprise the social structure in these suburban, rural, and urban high schools?

Rockefeller High School. The social groups at Rockefeller High School were: (a) jocks, (b) academics, (c) Goths, (d) high economic, (e) redneck, and (f) band and choir. The "jock" and "academic" social groups received the most perceived benefits and occupied the top two places in the social hierarchy of the school. Individuals held dual membership in the two groups in many cases. Below the "jocks" and "academics" were the "high economic" group, followed by the "band and choir," "redneck," and "Goth" social groups.

Parents influenced students' place within the "jock" and "academic" social groups and the attainment of dual membership in many cases. Members of the "jock" social group were good students whose sport participation time commitments did not affect their academic success. The students in the "jock" and "academic" social groups took on the vision of their parents and were "mirrors" of them. Parents placed a heavy emphasis on competition in the athletic arena and in the classroom which reflected their own successful careers.

Despite the dual membership of students in the "jock" and "academic" social groups, the "jock" social group held the highest social status at RHS. Lavish senior night ceremonies, sportswear provided for the teams, and the presence of the "black hole" cheering section at boys' basketball and to a lesser extent football and girls' basketball games indicated their status. Another indicator of the elevation of the "jock" social group was the overall importance of winning at the RHS. All participants interviewed referred to winning being important and losing being a negative aspect associated with athletic and academic endeavors.

The social groups below the "jock" and "academic" groups in the social hierarchy at RHS received less social and academic benefits. Study participants were aware of the "high economic" social group but were not able to provide substantial benefits other than the obvious economic advantages within the community. The "band and choir" social group also did not receive many social or academic benefits from membership. Similar to the "high economic" group, however, the "band and choir" group did not receive negative aspects because of membership.

Two social groups received few social or academic benefits through membership. The "redneck" and the "Goth" social groups were small but present nonetheless at RHS. The groups kept to themselves and received a small amount of attention from others at the school. The "redneck" students often fell into the special education category.

Cornwell High School. The social groups at CHS were: (a) jocks, (b) country, (c) uninvolved, and (d) Goths. The "jocks" received the most perceived social and academic benefits at Cornwell High School. The "jocks" received respect, popularity, admiration, and recognition through membership. The "country" social group was difficult to categorize because some referred to the entire student body as being "country kids." The "country" group, however, emerged as a distinct group within the school. The group wore "farm" and "western" clothing, worked on family farms, listened to country music, and drove large pick up trucks. Some members of the group had dual membership in the "jock" social group but most did not.

Cornwell High School had a group of "uninvolved" students. The group was large and comprised of students who did not have much of an identity based on social group membership. They did not identify themselves with sport, extra-curricular activities such as band, or a neighborhood within the community. Many of the "uninvolved" students were academically weak. Beneath the "uninvolved" social group in the social hierarchy of CHS was a small group of "Goth" students. Members of this social group received few social or academic benefits and association with the "Goth" group hindered social and upward mobility.

King High School. The social groups at KHS were: (a) athletes (segmented by sport), (b) African Americans, (c) Whites, and (d) Hispanics. The Hispanic students were

called "ESL" because English was their second language. Students at KHS grouped themselves by race and ethnicity rather than interests and extra curricular activities. Despite the primary classification of social groups through race and ethnicity, an additional group of "athletes" segmented by sport existed.

The "athlete" social group received the most perceived social and academic benefits at King High School. The segmentation of the social group by sport provided some key findings. The basketball team, for example, did not socialize with the football team and vice versa. There was actually a rivalry between the two teams according to some of the study participants. The rivalry was bitter at times. Most study participants placed the "athlete" social group in an elevated place within the social structure of KHS. A few study participants did not. The teachers, specifically, reported overall negativity associated with the role "athlete" membership played.

One step below the "athlete" social group on the hierarchal ladder was the "African American" social group. This group garnered perceived social and academic benefits due to involvement with activities such as drum line, marching band, and through friendships with athletic team members. The "African American" social group also contained the academic oriented students.

A group of "white" students, a minority at KHS, formed its own social group. These students existed below the "athlete" and the "African American" groups in the social hierarchy and had little opportunity to participate in activities associated with the other two groups. Most took part in a Gothic lifestyle. The "Hispanic" or "ESL" students were the group at the bottom of the social hierarchy. The "Hispanic" group

received few if any social or academic benefits through memberships and obtaining upward mobility was rare.

Research Question Two

How does boys' basketball affect a team player's membership within the matrix of social groups at these suburban, rural, and urban high schools?

Rockefeller High School. Participating on the boys' basketball team contributed to team members' membership in the "jock" social group. At RHS, however, some of the boys' basketball players held dual membership in the "jock" and "academic" social groups. Membership in the "jock" social group brought popularity and prestige to the members of the boys' basketball team. Being a member of the "jock" social group allowed the boys' basketball team to gain an edge in relationships with others at the school because of the visibility they gained due to group membership. Being on the boys' basketball team and in the "jock" social group allowed team members to achieve perceived social benefits such as dating, invitations to parties, and an overall sense of popularity.

Boys' basketball participation and membership in the "jock" social group generated a few negative aspects. These negative aspects included: (a) losing, (b) punishments by coaches, and (c) time commitment. Due to the pressure to succeed both athletically and academically at RHS, losing placed a level of pressure on the boys' basketball players not found in other extra curricular activities or with uninvolved students. While students in other extra curricular activities did have a desire to perform well, they did not operate with the crowds, exposure, and perceived level of importance as boys' basketball at RHS.

Coaches, rather than school administrators, often disciplined members of the "jock" social group. The boys' basketball team, specifically, attended a coach organized session in the early morning hours called "breakfast club" when poor behavior or academic misconduct occurred. Breakfast club was a serious of intense conditioning exercises meant to eliminate poor behavior and academic issues for the boys' basketball players. The researcher interpreted coaches disciplining the players as being tougher on the players in the short term but ultimately being a benefit in the long term because the players avoided formal school disciplinary procedures.

Time commitment was an interesting finding because it was both a positive and a negative aspect of boys' basketball participation. Boys' basketball participation took the participants away from family events, holiday gatherings, peer social opportunities, and studies. In contrast, boys' basketball participation was vital to learning time management, organization, and teamwork.

Cornwell High School. Basketball participation led to players' membership in the "jock" social group. A few team members held dual membership in the "jock" and "country" social groups but most were exclusively members of the "jock" social group. Membership in the "jock" social group provided the basketball players with a number of perceived benefits and advantages including: (a) respect, (b) admiration, (c) popularity, and (d) recognition. Members of the "jock" social group held an elevated status regardless of the success level of the team on the playing field and were firmly at the top of the social pyramid.

Several perceived negative aspects existed due to "jock" membership. Cornwell High School had the presence of a "jock stereotype." This stereotype was multi-faceted.

Some study participants believed the "jocks" were not capable of doing well academically. At CHS, some study participants also felt the "jocks" avoided the same standards of behavior and academics, ultimately holding some members back from reaching their full potential. Members of the "jock" social group's mistakes were magnified and their behavior was "under a microscope" because of their elevated social status within the school. This was especially true of the students and teachers who felt the "jocks" were held to a different academic and behavioral standard within the school.

King High School. The boys' basketball players at King High School were members of two social groups. Their primary membership was in the "athletic" social group. Each member of the boys' basketball team, however, was also "African American." Membership in these social groups provided the boys' basketball players several perceived benefits. The two primary benefits were popularity and prestige in the eyes of other students, teachers, and school administrators.

Membership in the "athlete" and "African American" social groups provided the basketball players an overall sense of belonging which was absent in other aspects of their lives. The neighborhood and home situations for most of the players were not ideal and basketball provided them a way of participating in something positive.

Another perceived positive associated with being a member of the "athlete" social group was the eligibility standards created by the state's high school athletic association. The "athletes" also submitted to grade checks performed by their coaches. Members of the boys' basketball team pressured each other to stay eligible. Because playing college sport was a motivator to some of the "athletes," college athletic eligibility was important.

A series of perceived negative aspects associated with "athlete" and "African American" group membership emerged. King High School exemplified the presence of a "jock stereotype." The "jock stereotype" took the form of bad attitudes toward teachers and academics and an unrealistic expectation of what basketball participation would provide them in the future. Players felt playing basketball in college and at the professional level was realistic no matter what their current academic or athletic success. Members of the "athlete" social group were not held to the same standards academically or behaviorally as other students. "Athletes" acted out in class and on school grounds and faced different discipline procedures according to one teacher at the school.

Research Question Three

How does boys' basketball participation provide opportunities or limit attainment of upward mobility within these suburban, rural, and urban high schools and beyond?

Rockefeller High School. Boys' basketball participation, overall, was a perceived positive aspect in the lives of team members. Being a member of the team, however, was more important to the players than academic success. Despite the higher level of importance placed on basketball participation, the athletes' increased self discipline carried over into academics. Basketball participation at RHS also enhanced time management skills. Another perceived positive aspect of basketball participation was the presence of eligibility requirements placed on the players by the state's high school athletic association and the school district.

Boys' basketball participation had a positive impact on team member ability to prepare for life after high school. Participants learned time management, self discipline, and other life lessons from competition. Basketball participation also developed a sense

of goal setting and goal attainment. Basketball helped the players make better decisions and promoted a greater level of success after high school ended.

Basketball participation led to a few limitations as well. While also a positive, the time commitment associated with playing on the team was also a negative. Team membership required attendance at practices and games throughout the season, during the summer, and throughout the off season. The time commitment also took time away from family, peer activities, and academics.

Cornwell High School. Basketball participation, overall, played a large role in the lives of team members at Cornwell High School. Being on the boys' basketball team provided a "family atmosphere" which was a positive to both the players and the coach. Playing basketball provided recognition for the participants and they enjoyed this attention.

Boys' basketball participation, for the most part, assisted team members in doing well academically. Study participants disagreed to some degree, however, on basketball leading to success in the classroom. Some study participants were undecided on the relationship while one study participant passionately argued basketball participation hindered academic success. According to study participants, eligibility standards were the primary reason playing basketball assisted academic performance.

Boys' basketball participation was perceived to assist the participants in preparing for life after high school. Teamwork was the most frequently discussed aspect for such preparation. Developing teamwork assisted the players in other parts of their lives, especially entry into the workforce. Basketball assisted with developing communication skills. Communication skills also prepared team members for life after high school.

Playing on the boys' basketball team instilled self discipline which helped players prepare for future school and work endeavors.

Boys' basketball participation created a few limitations for the members of the team as well. The most common limitation was the overall time commitment. Team membership required the players to spend time away from family and friends, and caused difficulties in fulfilling academic responsibilities. Study participants discussed the inability to hold a job, especially during the basketball season as a limitation. Many lived on family farms and playing on the team caused the family hardship because of the lack of labor. The boys were not able to effectively help on the farms due to time commitment and fatigue.

A unique aspect of Cornwell High School was the interest and pressure applied on the boys' basketball program by the community outside of the school. The boys' basketball program represented the community against other communities and the team's successes and failures mattered to the citizens. Some study participants felt the pressure and spotlight from the community fueled the "jock stereotype" at the school and led to drinking and partying by basketball players and members of the "jock" social group. The community pressure also led to the heavy scrutiny of the basketball players' behavior both in and out of the school.

King High School. Basketball participation played a large role in the life of members of the boys' basketball team at King High School. The players spoke about basketball meaning "everything" to them. The head coach was a strong role model in their lives. For most of the basketball players the coach was their primary male influence. Players were not close to their fathers and did not have strong home situations.

Being a part of the boys' basketball team at KHS, overall, was a positive in terms of academic achievement. The researcher discovered, however, some study participants saw basketball as a negative factor in team members' development. Playing basketball played a role in team members being viewed as "dumb jocks" who could not perform well academically. Playing basketball, in contrast, assisted in the academic performance of team members due to the eligibility requirements. Basketball provided members of the team an overall social elevator from their neighborhood and home situations, especially during the season.

Playing boys' basketball at KHS assisted participants in preparing for life after high school. Basketball taught the boys self discipline required for success in the work force and in making adult decisions. Playing basketball assisted the players in obtaining academic qualifications necessary to potentially be eligible to play basketball in college. Playing basketball was one way for students at KHS to hopefully obtain a college education.

Playing basketball at KHS also created a few limitations for the participants. The primary limitation was the time commitment. Students were fatigued and often had to leave practice or games and care for young siblings and in some cases their own children. This situation left little time for socializing, academic, on family activities. Most felt the time commitment was worth the cost because of the benefits basketball provided socially and academically.

Cross-Case Analysis

In the previous subsections the researcher reported a summary of study findings for each case for Research Questions One, Two, and Three. In this subsection the

researcher contrasted the findings across the three cases in a broader context and answered Research Question Four. The researcher interpreted the social groups at each school to be mirrors of the socio-economic situations found in the surrounding communities.

Social Group Discussion

In each case, a social group composed primarily of members of the schools athletic teams existed. RHS and CHS both had a "jock" social group and KHS had an "athlete" group, indicating importance placed on sport in each school, the surrounding community, and the overall geographic region. Each case contained a social group representative of a primary characteristic of the surrounding area. The "high economic" social group, for example, was representative of the Rockefeller High School community. The "country" social group was representative of the Cornwell High School community, and the "African American" social group was representative of the King High School community.

Contribution of Outside Influences

Each case had an outside influence contributing to molding the social structure of the high school. At RHS parents affected the students' choices to be a part of both the "jock" and "academic" social groups. The financial and occupational successes of the RHS parents played a role in the overall influence on winning and striving for success at the school. The parental involvement at RHS was a means of striking a balance between athletics and academics and keeping both in proper perspective.

At CHS the community surrounding the school viewed the boys' basketball team as representing the community and paid attention to the team's results. Some community

members who attended the basketball games were vocally supportive but felt negatively about the team. This community attention placed pressure on the boys' basketball team at CHS led to some positive, but mainly negative situations.

At KHS most players were products of difficult neighborhoods and poor family situations. These situations created obstacles which members of the boys' basketball team had to overcome. Some viewed basketball as a way for the boys to escape the troubling situations and for the most part it did in the short term. The difficult situations, however, were interpreted as enhancing the "jock stereotype" and what the unrealistic expectations of what basketball would allow the team members to accomplish. Lack of parental support played larger part here.

Dual Social Group Membership

In all three cases boys' basketball participation placed team members into the social group associated with participating in athletics. Within all three cases, furthermore, the boys' basketball players held dual membership in one additional social group. At Rockefeller High School, for example, boys' basketball participation contributed to the placement of some team members in the "jock" social group while some also belonged to the "academic" social groups. At Cornwell High School, the boys' basketball team occupied a place in the "jock" social group while some players also belonged to the "country" social group. At King High School all members of the boys' basketball team held dual membership in the "athlete" and "African American" social groups.

Social Elevation of "Jocks" and "Athletes"

Membership in the social group relating to sport participation at each school consistently allowed the boys' basketball players to obtain an elevated place within the social matrices. The elevation of the "jock" and "athlete" social groups at the three schools was consistent with social and cultural norms present at most high schools across the country and consistent with the geographic region of the three schools in the study (Frey & Massengale, 1988). The elevation of the "jock" social group was the least prevalent at RHS and the boys' basketball team had the most realistic place within the social structure of the school when compared to the other schools because of the balance achieved between athletic and academic pursuits. RHS did not have a "jock stereotype" affiliated with members of the "jock" social group. At both CHS and KHS a "jock stereotype" existed and the schools perpetuated that culture.

Eligibility Standards and Time Commitment

At all three schools the eligibility standards set by the state athletic association provided basketball players with increased opportunities to succeed academically and ultimately become more prepared for life after high school. RHS and its district reinforced this with local policies. The same eligibility standards may potentially serve as limitations for basketball players because they set the bar low and did not push the students to strive for peak academic performance. KHS and CHS were both examples of this to some degree.

Basketball participation was reported to help the players develop time management skills providing opportunities for better academic success and preparation for life after high school but to a lesser extent at KHS and CHS. While the researcher

agreed with the assessment, he agreed with some of the study participants who maintained the overall time commitment associated with playing boys' basketball, especially at CHS and KHS, was actually a limitation to the participants both academically and in preparing for life after high school.

Discussion of Study Findings

This section has two subsections. The first subsection addresses the generalizability of the study and discusses applicability of the findings to different regions of the United States, different sports, and different genders of the participants. The first subsection connects the findings of the study to the existing research.

Generalizability

A common critique of qualitative research is the generalizability of the results. This study was no different. However, by framing the study of the social structure and high school sport literature, and careful construction of study design and methodology, the researcher has taken steps to assist in generalizability. By framing of the study in the sociological work of Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton the researcher has taken steps necessary to assist in generalizability. In addition, the use of Wolcott's (1994) *description, analysis, and interpretation* helped to generalize because of the depth of analysis.

The study was generalizable to similar metro areas across the United States. Generalizability, however, increases with the use of the most popular sport in the metro region, and a similar selection of suburban, rural, and urban schools often associated with metro areas. Factors such as race, ethnicity, economics, should be taken into account when using this study to generalize to settings across the United States.

Selection of participants was inexact and perhaps limited the overall generalizability of the study because of the differences between the participants at each site. The researcher was forced to rely on the head boys' basketball coach to assist in the selection of many of the participants in the study, including basketball players themselves. Another limitation of the study was the use of only boys' teams, the use of only the sport of basketball, and only studying high school sport.

Students not involved in extra-curricular activities, specifically sport should have been interviewed. In many cases the interviews with parents were inconsistent and interviewing uninvolved students would have provided some stability. Another issue the researcher encountered was the need to find schools similar in winning and losing and tradition of basketball excellence or mediocrity.

Connection to Existing Research

According to Jary and Jary (1991), social structure typically refers to: (a) entities or groups in definite relation to each other, (b) enduring patterns of behavior or participants in a social system in relation to one another, and (c) institutionalized norms or cognitive frameworks that structure the actions of actors in the social system. According to Sage (1998), social structure explained the patterned relationships connecting different parts of society to one another. It was important to study high schools from the social structure perspective to understand how socio-economics, social group membership and norms, and boys' basketball participation affected the social movement and social placement of team members. The researcher determined a distinct social structure at each school and how group membership and basketball participation affected placement in the social matrix.

Another study of social structure is the in-depth ethnography, *Learning to Labour*, by Paul Willis. Willis conducted the study between 1972 and 1975 and focused on non-academic working class boys in England. The book is a tool used to understand better the social effects of schooling in the United States and abroad (Willis, 1977). Like Willis (1977), the researcher in the present study used interview, participant observation, and document mining in the naturalistic settings of school, basketball practice, and basketball games.

Like Willis (1977), this researcher analyzed the inner meaning, rationality, and dynamic of the cultural processes and how they contribute to the opportunities and limitations provided by boys' basketball participation in three varying contexts and the influence of social structure. The researcher, for example, studied each team in the natural setting of the suburban, rural, and urban contexts. Upon analyzing the data, the researcher determined how the cultural and socio-economic differences in these varying contexts influenced the boys' basketball players place within the social structure of the school communities. These findings were important as the researcher applied this study to previous studies and human perception representing conflicting view points on the benefits of high school sport participation (Frey & Massengale, 1998; Gerdy, 2003; Videon, 2002).

Two distinctly different views on the role of high school sport in the overall development of the participant existed in the literature. According to Videon (2002) scholars and popular folklore have long extolled the benefits of high school sport participation for the high school aged adolescents. Sports participation teaches life lessons, increases self esteem, and builds interpersonal and leadership skills (Videon,

2002). According to Rees and Miracle (2000), sport in schools was credited with teaching values of sportsmanship and fair play. It also taught values of sportsmanship and fair play, increase educational aspirations, and a greater sense of community and group cohesion. Coakley (2000) maintains sports are more than merely wins and losses but transcend a part of the social lives of many people. According to Sage (1998) sport is assumed to provide an avenue of upward social mobility in United States society.

A growing body of research, in contrast, casts doubt on the win-at-all cost culture of school based elite athletic programs. Such research has questioned the academic and character development benefits associated with high school sport (Gerdy, 2003). Frey and Massengale (1988) discussed how the desires for profit, power, and prestige have replaced character building as guiding values in high school sport. According to the authors a significant mismatch exists between how cultures perceive school sport and the actual structure of school sport. Frey and Massengale (1988) maintain the structure of modern school sport does not permit the implementation of values traditionally associated with it.

This study is important because it moved the discussion forward on both sides of the school sport debate. In the three settings studied evidence emerged which showed basketball participation was a positive influence in terms of social placement within the school. While common attributes of development for life after high school were reported, evidence also emerged suggesting basketball and social factors surrounding it were actually detrimental to the social and academic development of the participants. An example of such detrimental factors were the overall time commitment of boys' basketball participation and to a lesser extent eligibility standards. The study provided

support to high school sport providing benefits to participants but most benefits were perceptions of the participants and were general in nature. Examples of such benefits were time management, decision making, teamwork, and self discipline. The study provided support for both sides of the debate with the specific socio-economic and cultural values of the schools being an overriding caveat.

The design and methods used to study high school sport must be specific to the socio-economics and cultural values and norms associated with the schools and their surrounding communities. It is nearly impossible to provide substantial insight on the overall value of high school sport to the individual without taking into account such factors as geography, type of school, perceived importance of sport in the chosen community, gender, race, and ethnicity. These findings, for example, are consistent with Sabo, Melnick, and Vanfossen (1993) who conducted a study based on the assumption "succeed in sport, succeed in life" but found mixed evidence of sport helping with academics and success in life. Sabo (1993) found high school sport participation to positively affect the postsecondary status of white males and to a lesser extent suburban white females and rural Hispanic females. High School sport participation had little or no effect on the college attendance behavior of black males or females. Findings suggested high school athletic participation played no role in occupational status and promotions.

The three schools in the study were quite different. The suburban school represented high economic students, quality parental support, and a quality balance of academics and athletics. The rural school represented hard working, lower to middle class people and small town values. Basketball was a very important aspect of the fabric

of the community. Boys' basketball players were quite important at their high school but the presence of a "jock stereotype" at the school brought questions to whether basketball provided opportunities for the participants at the school and beyond. The urban school represented primarily African-American students from challenging neighborhoods and home situations. Boys' basketball was important at the school, but academics were often not important to the players. All of these factors illustrated that the individual school contexts of the school were very important when determining the overall value of high school sport to the individual. These characteristics and findings led to a number of implications.

Implications of Study Findings

This study has important implications for all involved in high school sport and the schools and school districts sponsoring it. Participation in high school sport is at an all time high (Anonymous, 2007). National networks such as ESPN frequently televise high school games. High school sports have their own magazines and web sites. Having a better understanding of the social impact of high school sport, especially high profile sports such as football and basketball is vital to meeting the needs of every high school athlete in this country. While considering these factors the primary implications of the study were: (a) the role of socio-economics and communities surrounding the schools, (b) the role of parents and neighborhood situations, (c) the presence of "jock stereotype" within the school community, (d) the issue of time commitment, and (e) the effectiveness of eligibility standards for high school athletes.

The Influence of Socio-Economics

Evidence from this study suggests possible effects of the socio-economic characteristics of the schools and the surrounding communities as indicators of the overall healthiness of high school sport participation. King High School, for example, was in an economically depressed part of the metro area and the students' lives reflected that. Many students took public transportation after basketball practice and took care of siblings due to work obligations of their family at night.

At KHS, players placed basketball higher in importance than academics and thought playing basketball would bring college scholarships and opportunities to play professionally. This finding was consistent with Spreitzer and Snyder (1990) who found that sports built social networks and bound individuals to the community. The researchers suggested Black males spend large amounts of time honing athletic skills with the belief they can become professionals and the Black family and community tend to over-reward achievement in athletics relative to other forms of achievement, and Black males view sports participation as a way of proving their manhood. Ewing (1995), found that African Americans who participate in high school sport make higher wages in the work force.

At Cornwell High School, the rural school used in the study, basketball served a source of pride for the community and provided entertainment. At Rockefeller High School, the suburban school, the competitiveness and occupational success of the parents carried over to the importance of athletics and ultimately "winning" both of the playing field and in academics. These findings implied the various outside influences on the

boys' basketball teams were present and influenced the benefits and limitations associated with participation.

The Role of Parents and Neighborhood Situations

The study provided evidence that the role of parents, the influence of the community surrounding the school, and the factors of broken families and neighborhoods were important when examining social group membership and the role boys' basketball plays in providing opportunities and limitations for the participants. At Rockefeller High School parents were involved in the lives of the basketball players and provided a proper balance between athletics and academics. Parents and guardians were aware of these unrealistic expectations but did not intervene. At Cornwell High School boys' basketball transcended the school community and played a significant role in the fabric of the community surrounding the school. This contributed to the social elevation of the boys' basketball players and pressure on them to win games. It also led to players' misbehaving at times and participating in adult behavior such as drinking. The elevated economic standards and white collar nature of the community contributed positively to finding a harmonious mix between athletics, academics, and social lives. These findings are important to anyone associated with high school sport and athletes who participate in high school sport because a variety of factors could be at play when determining if high school sports positively impacts student lives. The findings also indicate the impact of poverty and socio-economics.

The "Jock Stereotype"

Each school had a distinct presence of a "jock" social group or an athletic subculture. The primary friendship networks for those social groups were within the

group. Students at all three schools wore school issued athletic gear which marked them as being a part of the "jock" or "athlete" social group. Students at all three schools in the "jock" or "athlete" social group sat together in the school cafeteria and in class when possible. In all three schools this social group had an elevated social status. This finding is important because the study produced evidence of this occurrence not being entirely positive in relation to the upward mobility of the student. Evidence from the study indicated high school boys' basketball participation was perceived to assist in placing individuals into the "jock" or "athlete" social group and one other social group at the school.

The Issue of Time Commitment

The study provided an engaging discussion of the positive and negative aspects regarding the time commitment associated with high school basketball participation. At all three schools, playing on the boys' basketball team was a substantial time commitment. This time commitment took time away from family functions, the development of friendships, and academics. This time commitment emerged as both a positive and negative across the three cases. A fine line exists when determining whether the time commitment is a negative or if it creates a higher level of time management skills for the participants. Conventional wisdom and even some scholars put forth nothing but positive benefits for high school sport participation (Sage, 1998; Videon, 2002). The potential negative affects of time commitment on a high school athlete's ability to excel academically potentially limit his or her ability to prepare for life after high school. School personnel and parents should continue to examine the time commitment placed on high school athletes.

The Issue of Eligibility Standards

Eligibility standards existed at each school for athletes. Most states now have such standards, but none more known than the "No Pass, No Play" rule created in Texas where athletes were removed from teams when a class was failed (Ferguson, 2004). The state high school athletic association typically set these standards but Rockefeller High School also had standards provided by the school district. In this study, eligibility standards were both positive and negative in terms of assisting the study participants academically.

The standards succeeded in establishing a level of academic performance for the players to represent their school in athletic competitions. At Cornwell and King High School, however, the standards were viewed as the minimum standard to play basketball. Consequently, some students did not aspire to academic excellence beyond these eligibility standards.

Limitations

A common critique of qualitative research is the generalizability of the results. This study was no different. However, by framing the study of the social structure and high school sport literature, and careful construction of study design and methodology, the researcher has taken steps to assist in generalizability. Even though three cases were used and the urban, suburban, and rural nature of them seemed to increase the likelihood that a generalized statement on the role high school athletic participation plays in the social structure of a high school community, generalizability was difficult to obtain. However, through the framing of the study of the sociological work of Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton the researcher has taken steps necessary to assist in generalizability.

Selection of participants was inexact and perhaps limited the overall generalizability of the study because of the differences between the participants at each site. The researcher was forced to rely on the head boys' basketball coach to assist in the selection of many of the participants in the study, including basketball players themselves. Another limitations of the study was the use of only boys' teams, the use of only the sport of basketball, and only studying high school sport.

Students not involved in extra-curricular activities, specifically sport should have been interviewed. In many cases the interviews with parents were inconsistent and interviewing uninvolved students would have provided some stability. Another issue the researcher encountered was the need to find schools similar in winning and losing and tradition of basketball excellence or mediocrity.

Recommendations

This section connects the findings of the study to every day practice for coaches, school administrators, and researchers. The first subsection pertains to coaches and addresses topics such as methods and role of the coach in varying socio-economic contexts. The second subsection addresses school administrators from athletic directors, to principals, to central office administration. The fourth subsection addresses recommendation for researchers in moving the research topic forward.

For Coaches

This research showcased many unique aspects of high school sport participation, particularly with a high profile sport in the United States such as basketball. All three coaches in the study spent a large amount of time with their players. The coaches extended a great deal of influence over the players. The coach at King High School

played a role of "father figure" to many of his players, the coach at Cornwell High School exemplified a "peer like" relationship with his players, and the coach at RHS often handled the school related discipline of his players. Coaches should be aware of the level of influence they hold over their players and strive to use that influence in a positive manner.

The issue of time commitment proved to be both a positive and negative aspect associated with high school basketball participation in the study. Coaches should be mindful of their role in determining the amount of time devoted to basketball participation. Coaches should keep sport in the proper perspective and view it as a way of creating opportunities for their players. Coaches need to understand the substantial amount of time devoted to high school sport participation can be detrimental to participants when a proper balance does not exist.

Coaches often "preach" the values of "team" and pride themselves with consistency when treating each player the same. Coaches must realize each player is different, comes from a different background, and has unique life experiences. Coaches should take the time to get to know each player on an individual level and use this knowledge to make appropriate decisions for the individual while being mindful of the overall goals of the team.

The study found that outside factors such as parental involvement, difficult home situations, community influence and neighborhood play a role in the opportunities and limitations associated with high school basketball participation. These factors also influenced social grouping within the school. Coaches need to be aware of the unique

characteristics associated with the community surrounding the school and the level of perceived importance the sport he or she coaches holds within the region.

Each school in the study showed a clear social group of "jock" or "athlete" students. Each school also displayed an elevated place for these groups within its social matrix. Coaches should be aware of this information and attempt to keep their players grounded. Coaches should also be mindful of this and provide opportunities for their players to socialize with members of other social groups to better prepare them for life after high school. It is the responsibility of coaches to also provide realistic playing aspirations for their athletes and put sports and academics in the proper balance. Not every player has the ability to play professionally and coaches should monitor this.

For Administrators

School districts and administrators often promote a number of extra-curricular activities provided at their schools, including athletic teams. Schools often budget hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to the development of top notch athletic programs. A current trend in the education process is educating the "whole" child with sport playing a role (Gerdy, 2006). As a part of this process, administrators should be mindful of the social effects of high school sport participation and social groupings within their school(s). Administrators might use research to inform their policy development and decision making in attempt to keep high school sport in the proper perspective. Administrators, for example, can use scholarly research to examine the issue of time commitment extensively.

Administrators should be aware of the influence coaches have on the athletes playing for them. A proper amount of professional development should be required of

the coaches. A large percentage of the professional development should pertain to making high school sport an integral part of the educational process. Hums and McLean (2008) found the majority of high school athletic associations to have the word education on their mission statements, implying sport plays a role in the education process. This aspect of high school sport seems to be losing to a win at all cost and financially driven model (Frey & Massengale, 1998).

Administrators might work with coaches and other school personnel to have a solid understanding of the roles high school sport plays in the community and region surrounding the school. Administrators should use this knowledge to make informed decisions regarding sport. Administrators need to also be aware of any at home or neighborhood issues associated with individuals in at their school(s).

Administrators should work with the state high school athletic association to provide the best possible eligibility standards for the athletes at their school(s). This study found that eligibility standards, while mostly a positive aspect of high school sport, can also be a negative aspect when students do not strive to do well academically. In come cases in this study, students merely did enough in the classroom to be eligible. The eligibility standards in most states and school districts are quite low and often do not equal colleges' entrance requirements.

Administrators should be dedicated to hiring the highest caliber of coaches to work with the athletes. Administrators might tailor hiring procedures to employ coaches interested in placing high school sport in the proper perspective in the life of an athlete and committed to preparing the child for life after high school. Administrators must give serious consideration to scaling back on the overall time and resources devoted to

athletics, without eliminating them, to properly reflect the place athletics should hold in the educational process. It is also important for administrators to begin addressing these issues earlier at the elementary and middle school levels in an attempt to create a different culture before the students arrive at high school.

For Researchers

Qualitative or interpretive research allows researchers to engage study participants in a naturalistic setting. It is imperative to study the highly contextualized nature of high school sport in this fashion. By utilizing the naturalistic setting, researchers encounter issues due to the nature of working with human subjects. This section intends to assist researchers in utilizing interpretive research to study high school sport. The researcher calls upon experiences which occurred throughout the study, specifically managing working with multiple sites, and collecting data pertaining to high schools and high school students.

The doctoral student of today often has a fulltime job, a significant other and children, and balances studies with these other responsibilities accordingly. The nature of interpretive research requires the researcher to travel to the naturalistic setting of the study. In this study the researcher had to balance interviews, observations, and document mining at three high school sites. Being organized and communicating well with the sites is necessary for a study to be successful.

The researcher should prepare for the process to not always go as scheduled. Individuals will miss interview appointments, scheduled observations will change due to weather and routine occurrences. Being flexible is a must for the interpretive researcher, especially when working in schools. When entering the field, the researcher must react to

the events at the school and with the study participants. If the study design is solid and the research questions constantly kept in mind, the researcher can handle virtually any changes made to the data collection process.

When working with multiple sites, as the researcher did for this study, organization of the interview and observation schedule, and ultimately organization of collected data, is important. When possible the researcher should schedule interviews at times when observations are also available to develop a sense of the true context of the school or site. For this study the researcher, when possible, completed data collection in its entirety before moving to the next case. This was not always possible and some overlap occurred but the researcher succeeded in finishing the majority of trips a site before moving to the next site. After collecting data at a site, time management and organizing the data was important. The researcher made use of a recorder, electronic copies of the audio files, and ultimately employed a transcriptionist to speed up data analysis.

The researcher encountered some difficulty when preparing to collect data from high school students who were typically under 18 years of age. The "human subjects" protection programs, while necessary, required a few additional steps to interview and observe high school students. The researcher succeeded in navigating the "human subjects" process by working cooperatively with his advisors and communicating with the university staff responsible for the program.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study produced notable findings and produced more questions for research. There is a need for more interpretive studies into the social aspects of high school sport.

Quantitative studies, mixed method, and longitudinal studies would also be helpful in the future. Specifically, however, there is a need to replicate this study in a variety of contexts. Through replicating this study, researchers could account for differences based on: (a) geographic region, (b) gender, (c) race and ethnicity, (d) differences in sport, (e) school enrollment, and (f) community features just to name a few.

This study should be replicated in different geographic regions throughout the country. Such replication would determine how contextual, cultural, economic, and social differences among people across the country change the role of sport on social status in high schools. Similar studies are needed to explore differences in gender, race, and ethnicity in terms of how sport participation affects the social positioning within the school. Studies should examine both genders using both traditionally popular sports as basketball, volleyball, and football, as well as, less traditionally popular sports like cross-country and tennis. The study could also be replicated with other extracurricular activities such as band and choir. More research is needed on the affects of race and ethnicity on sport and social structure.

The size of the schools and community features are important to future studies. Research is needed in schools of varying sizes to determine how size affects sport participation and social group membership. The same can be said for towns and cities of all sizes and characteristics.

The purpose of this study was to examine three high schools and their boys' basketball teams from a social structure context and answer four research questions. The study answered four research questions. The first question addressed the social structure of the three schools. Each school contained a group associated with sport participation

called "jock" or "athlete." The second research question examined how boys' basketball participation affected social group membership and the associated positive and negative aspects. At each school, boys' basketball assisted in "jock" or "athlete" group membership. Boys' basketball players, however, had dual membership in two social groups at each school. The third research question examined how boys' basketball participation offered opportunities or limited upward mobility within the school and beyond. All three schools showed boys' basketball as an overall positive in this regard, but questions of how much occurred at the rural and urban school. Research question four served as a cross-case analysis regarding the role of boys' basketball within the social structure of each school.

The influence of socio-economics was a primary finding of research question four and ultimately the study. The findings contributed to the knowledge base that will allow high school basketball coaches and school administrators address social issues pertaining to the students who participate. The findings, furthermore, moved research forward concerning high school sport benefits and limitations and the social implications of high school sport.

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FIGURES

Figure 1. Research Process

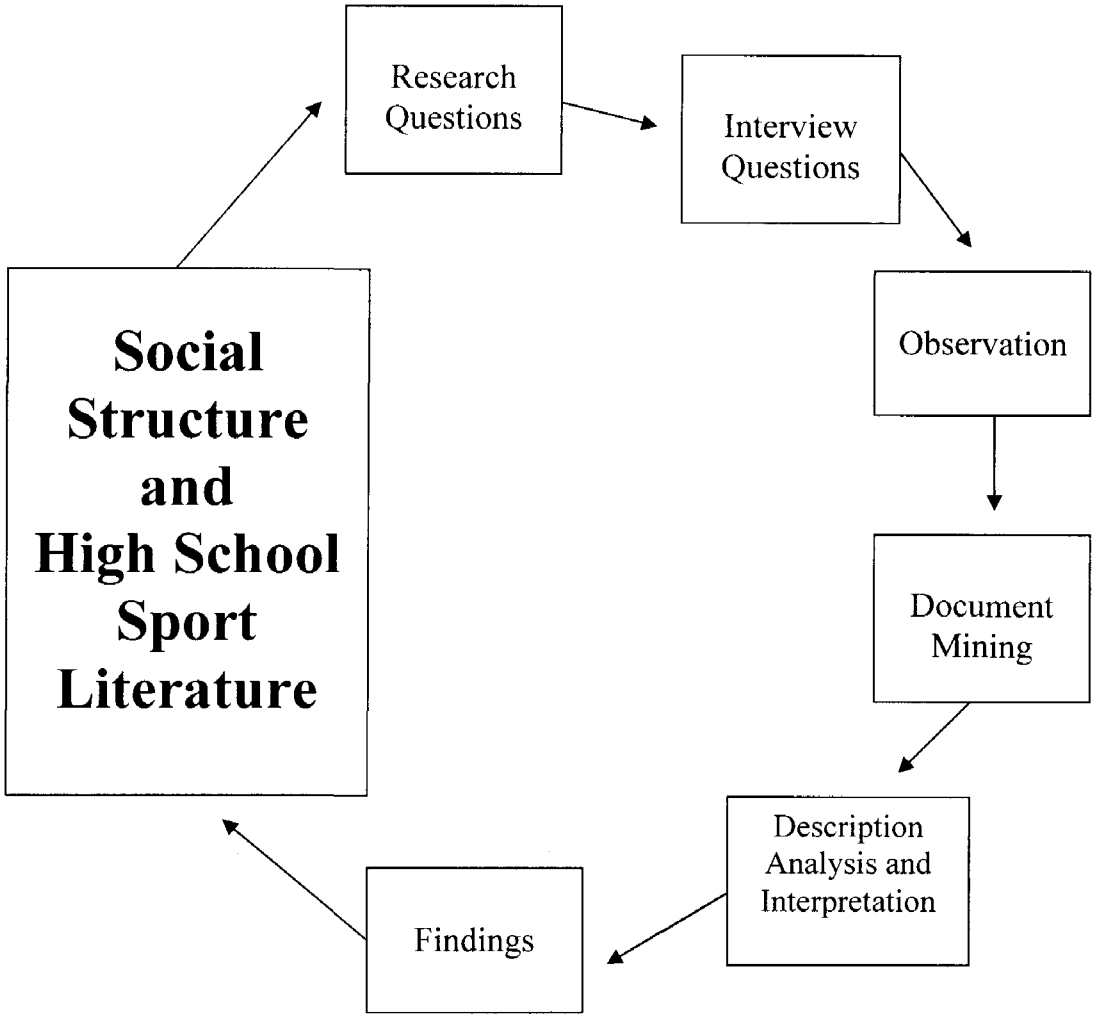

Figure 2. Rockefeller High School Data Analysis Matrix

Codes	Player 1	Player 2	Coach	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Principal	Parent 1	Parent 2
1	Cheerleaders Jocks Less Popular Rednecks Goths Drama Academic	Jocks Skaters Goths Band Geeks People that hang out with the jocks Recknecks Band and Chorus	Jocks (by sport) Goths Rednecks Wealthy Artsy Band and Choir	Jocks (by sport) Wealthy Gothic Artsy Work oriented (redneck?) Christian	Jocks (by sport) Band Goths Academic Band and Choir	Academic Redneck Jocks (overlap with Academic) Wealthy Gothic (only two) Everyday kids	Jocks Band Goths Academic	Jocks (by sport) Band
2	Jocks Academic	Jocks	Basketball team part of Jocks and seem to hang together year round Basketballl on top of the Pyramid	Jocks Academic	Jocks Academic Not sorting as much over the last two years	Jocks Academic	Jocks	Jocks (basketball) Christians
3	New to team Cut last year Teachers give more time More friends Prestige Popularity Go on trips	Power Popularity Younger students look up to me Representing NO Teachers don't treat differently	Popularity Invited to the parties Not in the classroom Get sent to me when problems occur	Friends Recognition from teachers Recognition from other students Status elevated within each group	Entity Get through the day Make friends Name recognition Sports teams more recognized than the other activities	No special treatment Nice sports wear Notoriety People come to the games Goals Breakfast Club	Keeps out of trouble Camaraderie Discipline Family atmosphere Self confidence Work ethic Time management	Popularity Notoriety Helps with girls Prestige
4	Smaller crowd than football Jock stereotype Losing	Breakfast Club Breakfast club more severe than detention	Breakfast Club	Time away from studies Peer Pressure to only hang out with that group	Losing (tough year) Students give a hard time Some teachers harder on athletes Breakfast club	Poor Facilities Losing to rivals Friends ragging them Time management	Morale (losing) Too much focus on athletics vs. academics Time commitment Miss out on family and friends	Time commitment Cut last year

Figure 2. Rockefeller High School Data Analysis Matrix

	Codes **Player 1**	**Player 2**	**Coach**	**Teacher 1**	**Teacher 2**	**Principal**	**Parent 1**	**Parent 2**
5	Basketball is my life Basketball is a motivator Basketball builds confidence	Everything Played my whole life Helps with my homework Helps me with going to college Helps me socially	Everything Huge sacrafice Founding fathers	Doesn't mean much outside of their group More of an academic school	Status Internal group ego Chance to represent the school	Being part of total program Founding fathers Tradition	Big Man on Campus Pride Individual notoriety	Everything Dream Identifier
6	Depends on the teachers Must stay up late to do homework Breakfast Club Grades would not change if not on team	Keep grades up to play Grades would go down if didn't play Coach helps grades Clear not going to play in the pros	Breakfast Club Accountability Structure Self Confidence Work ethic Discipline	Motivation during basketball season Eligibility Breakfast club	Eligibility Some would fail if they didn't have basketball Most would not study more if didn't play borderline students	Believe involved students do better Discipline Time management Eligibility	Eligibility Probably lose focus if didn't play Self motivation	Helps Sees a connection Eligibility Coach's rules
7	Learn life lessons Learn dedication Provides passion and drive Would not learn these skills from academics	Leadership Prepares for job Pressure situations Communication Helps with choosing college	Most go downhill without basketball Socio-Economics and parents help	Breakfast Club Helps ego Helps goal setting Athletic scholarships	Structure Discipline	Well rounded Health benefits Goal setting Hard work Pushing yourself to the limit	Discipline Goals Life skills Learn hard work	Leadership Confidence Discipline Teamwork
8	Time commitment 6:30am practices Time away from friends Time away from family	Losing Losing to rivals Other students always talking about rival games	Breakfast Club Small things get glorified for the players Everyone knows them Huge time and social sacrafice	Time away from studies Peer Pressure Eligibility might limit attainment Huge time commitment	Loss of time Year round play Balance woud be a very good aspect	Getting beat down Coach on them Time commitment Time away Breakfast Club	Might not interact with other types of people Time commitment	Time commitment Tough to date Tough to get a job

Figure 2. Rockefeller High School Data Analysis Matrix

	Codes							
	Player 1	**Player 2**	**Coach**	**Teacher 1**	**Teacher 2**	**Principal**	**Parent 1**	**Parent 2**
9	More recognition from all groups	Black Hole Recognition Teachers know me Younger students look up to me	Jealousy from other students People know my guys - big deal	Recognition Picture in the paper Picture on the wall	Recognition - teachers check box scores Black hole Helps school atmosphere Status	The Black Hole Best student support Students go to games Popularity tougher discipline	Some teachers not on board Students look up to them Most teachers admire Popularity	Recognition No special treatment
10	Played entire life Grandfather Best Friend Entire Family	Popularity Family Mom and Dad played in college	Being a part of the team Huge parental influence	Parents Friends	Friends/Peers Coach Love of the game	Coach Teamates Parents Student body	Parents Family Friends Teamates Athleticism	Grandfather Parents Coaches Teamates Love of the game

Question	Categories	Figure 2 Cont.	Themes
1	Jocks Academic Goths Wealthy Redneck Band/Choir		Groups align with socio-economic traits of the school
2	Jocks Academic		Jocks are driven and perform academically
3	Popularity Prestige Perhaps from within social group		Jocks have elevated place within social structure
4	Losing (multiple factors) Breakfast Club Time commitment		Winning and Losing matter at RHS
5	Everything Huge part of life		Basketball large part of individal's identity
6	Eligibility Discipline Time Management		Eligibility factor is very interesting
7	Life Lessons Goals Discipline		Most feel basketball helps prepare
8	Time commitment(over whelming response) Time away from family and friends		Time commitmenent was overhelming Balance needed
9	The Black Hole Recognition		The Black Hole
10	Family Coach Friends/Peers Teamates		Matches the socio-economic traits of the school

Figure 3. – Social Structure Pyramid for Rockefeller High School

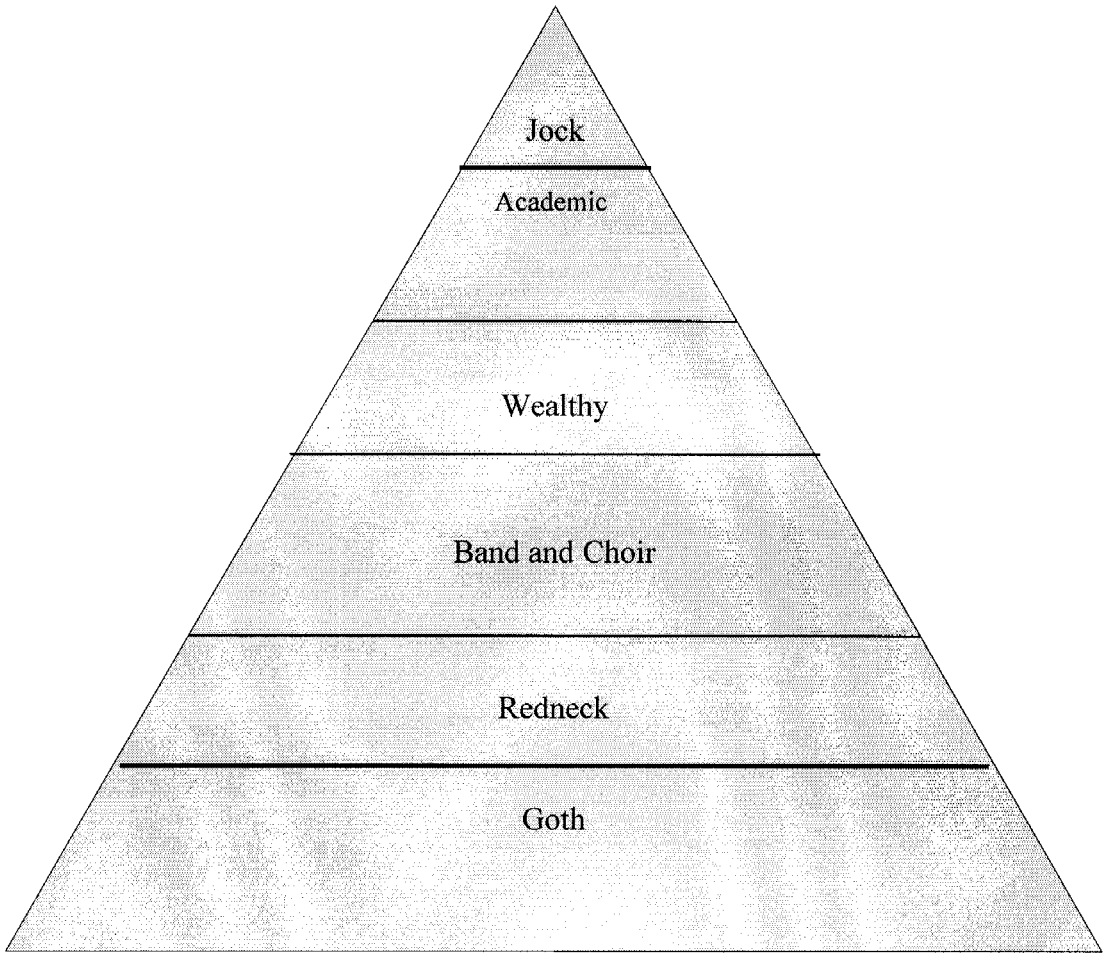

Figure 4. Cornwell High School Data Analysis Matrix

	Codes **Player 1**	**Player 2**	**Coach**	**Teacher 1**	**Teacher 2**	**Principal**	**Parent 1**	**Parent 2**
1	Jocks Uninvolved Drama Goths Country	Jocks Goths Country Uninvolved	Jocks Uninvolved Country Goths	Preps Jocks Geeks Uninvolved High Academic Country	Jocks Preps Geeks Artsy Goths	Country Goths Jocks Skaters Band	Jocks Preps Uninvolved	Jocks Uninvolved
2	Jocks Country	Jocks	Jocks Country	Preps Jocks Country	Jocks	Jocks Country	Jocks Preps	Jocks
3	Respect Admiration Recognition in the community	Respect from Teachers More responsibility Recognition Admiration	Popularity with other students	Social benefits Travel for sports and see the state Opportunities other students don't get	Recognition Students gravitate to them Popularity Extra support from teachers and coaches	Looked up to by younger kids Recognition	Don't worry about getting in trouble Athletic Conduct Code	Eligibility standards Self confidence Respect Role models in coaches
4	Losing	Jock stereotype Mistakes magnified Under the microscope	Jock stereotype Under the microscope	Jock stereotype Difficult to have work groups in class	Jock stereotype Jock subculture Not cool to be good students	Losing Mistakes magnified Under the microscope	None	Time commitment Physical stress Expense Jock stereotype

Figure 4. Cornwell High School Data Analysis Matrix

	Codes **Player 1**	**Player 2**	**Coach**	**Teacher 1**	**Teacher 2**	**Principal**	**Parent 1**	**Parent 2**
5	Love of the game Likes being active	Family atmosphere Recognition Gained a father figure in assistant coach	Family atmosphere Responsbility	Great to be in that social group Pressure Potential to play in college Recognition	Basketball very important in region Recognition Prestige	Pride Family atmosphere	Love of the game Competition	
6	Helps Eligibility standards Requires good conduct Self confidence	Undecided Helps with responsbility Requires a large time commitment Helps with time management Eligibility standards	Undecided Life skills Discipline Responsibility	Helps Motivation Eligibility Education not a priority in most homes	Does not help Eligibility is not enough Hurts a few kids who could do better academically	Helps Accountability Drug testing Eligibility standards Time management	Helps academically Makes school more interesting Makes grades a priority Eligibility Standards	Helps Eligibility standards Recognition Confidence
7	Communication Teamwork Helps prepare for college	Communication Time management Responsbility	Discipline Time management Organization Teamwork	Motivation Helps prepare for college Teamwork	Helps Teamwork Cooperation	Communication Teamwork	Respect Self discipline	Competition Self discipline
8	None	Can't hold a job Time commitment Time away from family	Jock stereotype Community pressure	Community pressure Emotional stress	Jock stereotype Jock subculture	Time commitment	Time commitment Keeps him from helping on the farm Physical stress Mental stress Pressure from community	Jock subculture

Figure 4. Cornwell High School Data Analysis Matrix

Codes	Player 1	Player 2	Coach	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Principal	Parent 1	Parent 2
9	Recognition	Recognition Respect	Recognition Jock stereotype	Recognition Jock stereotype Special privleges Admiration	Popularity Some feel held to a different standard Admired Prestige Recognition	Jock stereotype Popular Rebel Riot Under the microscope	Same as other students	Jock stereotype
10	Parents Coaches Love of the game	Coaches Teamates	Family Coaches	Athletic ability Coaches College education	Coaches Family Community status Peers	Family Peers Teamates Coaches	Love of the game Going to games as a kid Competition Coaches	Parents Coaches Teamates

Question	Categories	Figure 4 Cont.	Themes
1	Jocks Country Uninvolved Goths		Fits image of small, rural school. Lots of same types of kids
2	Jocks Country		Very elevated status within the social structure of school
3	Respect Admiration Popularity Recognition		Jock issues
4	Jock stereotype Under the microscope Mistakes magnified		Basketball as a brotherhood
5	Family atmosphere Recognition Love of the game		Some confusion over academic benefits Eligibility standards
6	Overall Helps Eligibility standards		Life skills
7	Teamwork Communication Discipline		Community influence Time commitment
8	Time commitment Pressure from community Jock subculture/stereotype		Jock issues
9	Recognition Jock stereotype		Other people
10	Parents Family Coaches Teamates		

Figure 5. – Social Structure Pyramid for Cornwell High School

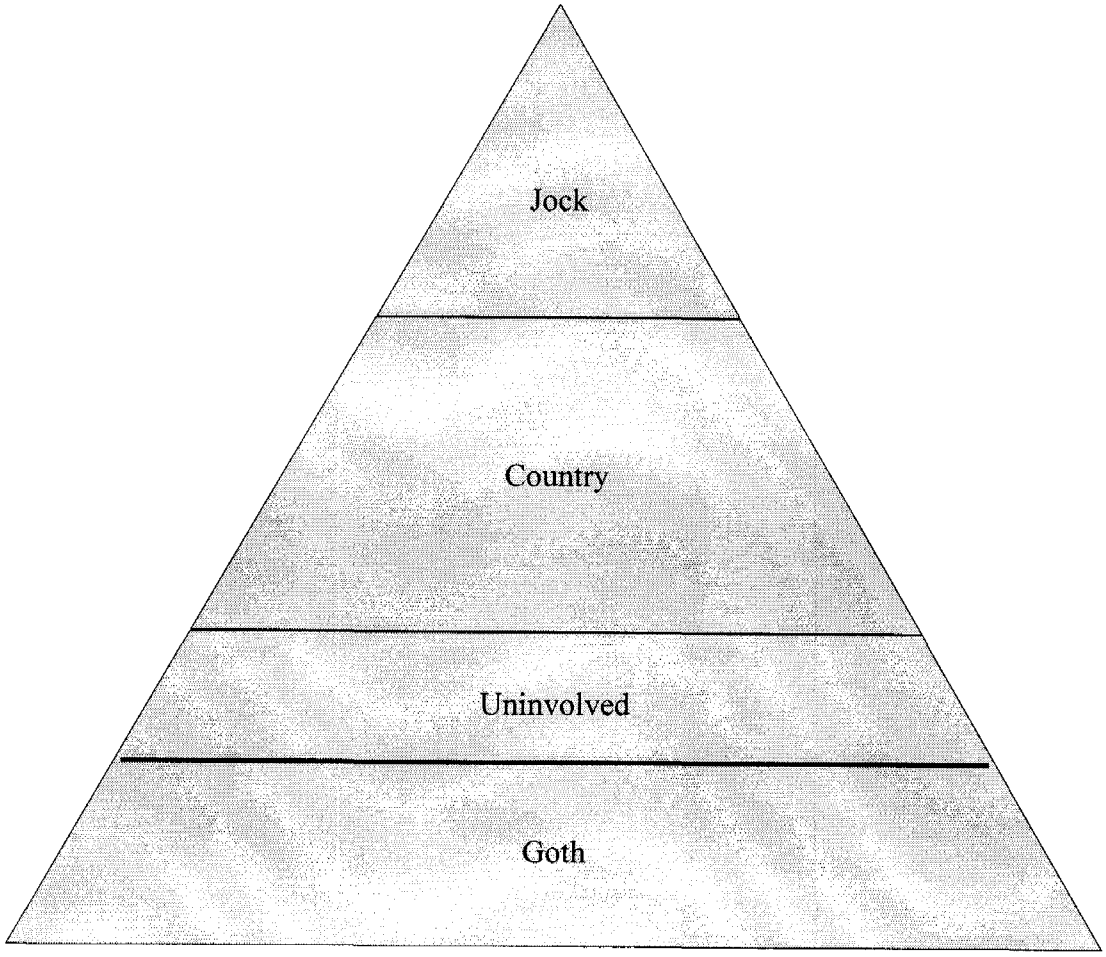

Figure 6. King High School Data Analysis Matrix

	Codes **Principal**	**Player 1**	**Player 2**	**Coach**	**Teacher 1**	**Teacher 2**	**Parent 1**	**Parent 2**
1	Hispanic (ESL) Athletes (segmented by sport) Band	Jocks (segmented by sport) Band Neighborhood Popular	Athletes (segmented by sport) Hispanic (ESL)	African American White Hispanic	White Males (Goth) African American Males (Jocks and Drumline) Jocks segmented Females	Academic African Americans (Jocks within) White Males	Athletes	Athletes (segmented by team) Neighborhood
2	Athletes (basketball)	Jocks (basketball) Neighborhood	Athletes (basketball)	African American	African American Males	Popular African American	Athletes	Athletes (basketball)
3	Sense of belonging Prestige from winning Helped with school culture	Respect Discipline Helps with academics	Team Chemistry Popularity at school	Teamwork Sense of belonging	Academic attention Teammate pressure Increased popularity Sports seen as means to stay out of trouble	Favortism Held to different behavior standard Elevated status	Helps to stay out of trouble Teamwork Helps with academics Sense of belonging	Basketball as a career Potential for basketball scholarship Eligibility Coach helps academically
4	Conflict between teams	Jock stereotype	Jock Stereotype Under the microscope	Teachers harder on them Jock stereotype	Jock subculture Jock stereotype	Poor attitude Jock subculture Basketball holds unrealistic place Eligibility	Time Commitment Teachers harder on him Losing	Jock stereotype

Figure 6. King High School Data Analysis Matrix

	Codes **Principal**	**Player 1**	**Player 2**	**Coach**	**Teacher 1**	**Teacher 2**	**Parent 1**	**Parent 2**
5	Helps develop life skills Feeling of belonging Coach as a role model	Everything	Basketball is my life Helps to stay out of trouble	Important part of life Coaches as role models	Feeling of belonging Sense of family Coach as a role model	Love of the game	Important part of life Good to be around positve people Helped him grow up	Everything
6	Undecided Eligibility NCAA standards	Helps Organization Time Management Means of getting to college	Helps Self Discipline Potential basktball scholarship	Very positive Stress academics before basketball Keep them off streets	Overall helpful Coach as a role model Intense benefit from being involved Self Esteem from dressing up	Overall negative	Overall Positive Eligibility standards	Overall positive Coach helps academically Eligibility Access to tutor
7	Teamwork Responsibility	Discipline Coach helps them with academics	Potential basketball scholarship Helps keep off the streets Coach is a role model	Time Management Keeps of streets Learn how religion helps big picture Help prepare for ACT and SAT Help earn bbal scholarships	Teamwork Self discipline Time Management	Overall negative Does not assist in upward mobility Assists with keep them in school Might help with discipline	Self Discipline Rules Basketball as a career Job skills	Self Discipline
8	Losing hurt school culture	Time commitment Fatigue Tough to have a job	Time commitment	Time commitment No support at home	Jealousy from other students Jock subculture	Poor academics Jock subculture	Time Commitment	Tough to see beyond basketball Thinks basketball will be a career

Figure 6. King High School Data Analysis Matrix

	Codes							
	Principal	**Player 1**	**Player 2**	**Coach**	**Teacher 1**	**Teacher 2**	**Parent 1**	**Parent 2**
9	Reflection of the coach Recognition Popularity Held to a higher standard	Respect	Popularity	Representatives of the school Higher level of accountability	Recognition Pride Student jealousy	Academic special treatment Behavior special treatment Mostly as a normal student	Mostly as a normal student Part of the KHS family	Recognition Large part of school life
10	Love of the game Coach Father	Family Stay out of trouble Means of getting to college Love of the game	Grandfather Father Athletic ability	Love of the game Alumni	Athletic skills Peers (positive and negative) Family (especially father)	Love of the game Aspirations of career Health aspects	Grandfather Father Means to help his mother later in life	Love of the game Family

Question	Categories	Figure 6 Cont.	Themes
1	Athletes (segmented by sport) African American White Hispanic (ESL)		Social groups broken down by race and ethnicity
2	Athletes (basketball) African American		Athletes and African Americans have elevated place
3	Prestige/Popularity Sense of Belonging		Being an athlete not entirely positive
4	Jock Stereotype		Basketball way out of poor home situations
5	Everything Coach as a role model		Primarily Positive
6	Overall Positive Eligibility Social Elevator		Time Commitment is a negative
7	Self Discipline Academics		Basketball is a social elevator at KHS
8	Time Commitment		
9	Recognition Popularity Elevated Status		
10	Love of the game Family (Father)		

Figure 7. – Social Structure Pyramid for King High School

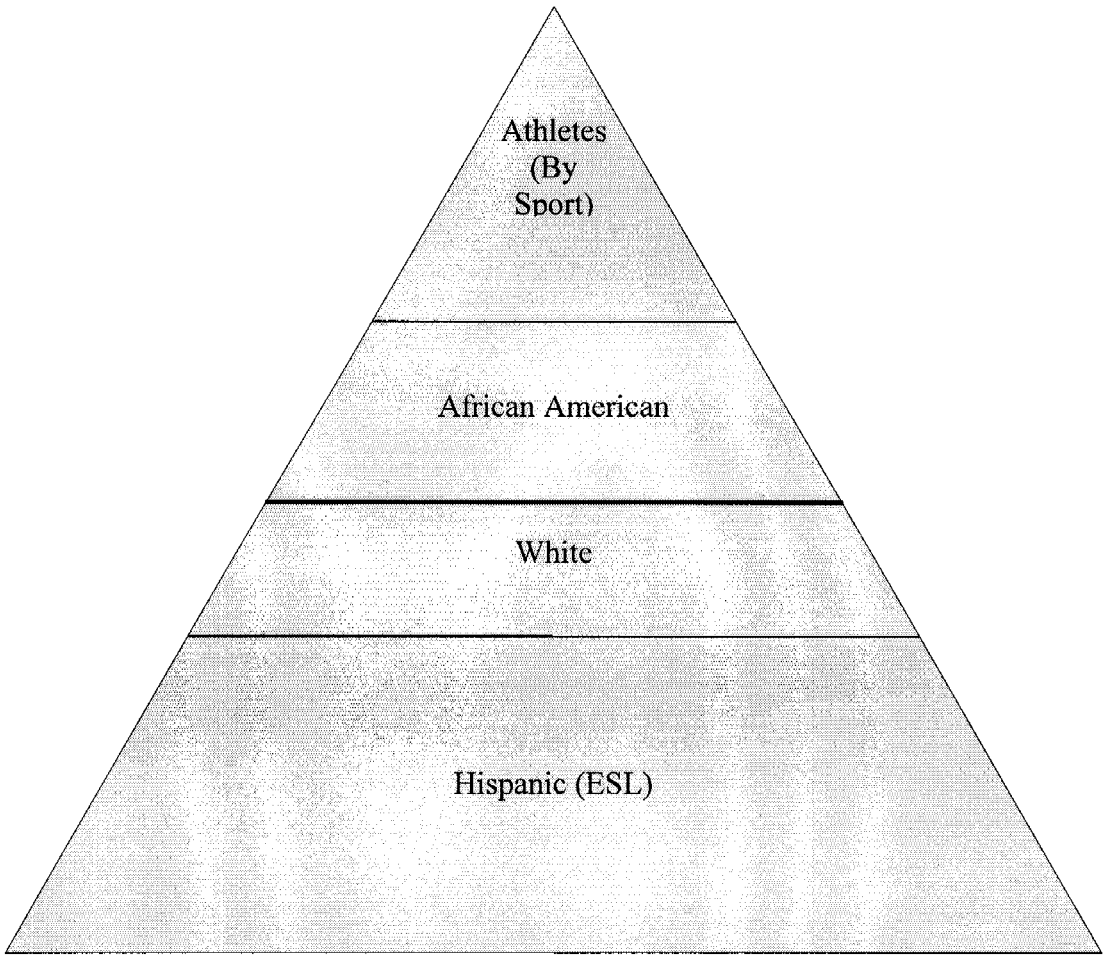

Figure 8. – Interview Questions

These questions remained essentially the same for the basketball players, coach, principal, non-coaching teachers, and parents at all three schools. All probe and subsequent questions fell under the framework of these questions using a semi-structured, conversational format.

Social Structure and High School Basketball Questions:

1. Do social groups exits at your high school?
2. What social group(s) do you belong to?
3. What benefits do you receive from being a member of that group(s)?
4. What negative aspects come from being a member of that group?
5. What does playing boys' basketball at your high school mean to you?
6. Does playing boys' basketball at your school help you achieve success in school?
7. Does playing boys' basketball at your school help you achieve success in life?
8. What negative aspects come from playing boys basketball at your school?
9. What does playing boys' basketball at your high school mean to other students, teachers, and school administrators?
10. What people and factors influenced your decision to play boys basketball at your school?

Curriculum Vitae

Jason K. Miller

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Phone: (502) 558-8801 (Business and Personal)
Email: jason.miller@louisville.edu (School)
miller@sta.usta.com (Work)

EDUCATION

University of Louisville PhD Educational Leadership and Organizational Development (Sport Administration Concentration)	Louisville, Kentucky December 2008 (Projected)
University of Louisville M.S. Major: Sport Administration	Louisville, Kentucky May 2005
Indiana University B.S Major: Secondary Education Emphasis: Social Studies	Bloomington, Indiana May 2000
Murray State University Major: History	Murray, Kentucky August 1997 - May 1998
Vincennes University Major: Political Science	Vincennes, Indiana August 1995 – May 1997

RESEARCH/SCHOLARSHIP INTERESTS

My primary research interests are the ever-growing areas of youth and scholastic sport and the influence they have on social and ethical issues and place within American culture. My secondary interests include sport governance, policy, and marketing.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2005 – present: USTA Southern Section (United States Tennis Association)

Tennis Service Representative (TSR)

- Promote and develop the growth of tennis throughout Kentucky
- Develop relationships and implement programs in all facets of the tennis industry including tennis clubs, country clubs, parks, schools, and community tennis associations.
- Meet face to face with over 100 unique tennis providers with a total of over 225 personal consultations and follow up visits
- Led implementation phase of Quickstart Tennis initiative in Kentucky – the largest promotional campaign in the history of the USTA.
- Assisted in the growth of Junior Team Tennis in Kentucky
- Assisted in the growth of Tennis on Campus in Kentucky
- Assisted tennis providers in the application, attainment and implementation of grants totally over $100,000.
- Founded and chair Kentucky Pro Leadership Team
- Coordinate special events and marketing efforts with three USTA Pro Circuit Events promoting community tennis.

2004 – 2005: USTA Kentucky (United States Tennis Association)

Adult Recreation Coordinator

- Monitored and implemented all aspects of USTA adult recreation program including USA Team Tennis, USTA Development Coach, and Welcome Back To Tennis Events
- Communicated with all Community Tennis Associations in Kentucky on Adult Recreation needs
- Made presentations to interested parties on the benefits of recreational tennis
- Attended USTA National Training conference, Amelia Island, FL, November 2004

2003 – 2005: University of Louisville

Graduate Teaching and Research Assistant

- Created syllabi, developed reading materials, developed lecture topics and taught five different activity classes per semester. Class offerings included basketball, tennis, aerobic fitness, weight training, and golf.
- Instructed one section of HPES 181 – Academic Orientation in Fall 2004
- Input data for Louisville Bats sport marketing research project for SPAD faculty member, Dr. Chris Greenwell
- Researched and input data for NCAA golf coaches study involving leadership for SPAD faculty member, Dr. Damon Andrew
- Served as research assistant on research and scholarship projects of SPAD faculty member, Dr. Damon Andrew

Summer 2004: USTA Kentucky

Adult Recreation and Marketing Intern

- Coordinated the Tennis Welcome Center promotion through USTA Kentucky
- Administered the application and awarding of grant monies to Community Tennis Associations
- Assisted with marketing and promotions efforts of USA League Tennis presented by Lincoln Kentucky State Championships
- Implemented and promoted four Tennis Welcome Center clinics at local USTA Women's Challenger Pro Circuit Event

2001 – 2003: Houston Independent School District – Grady Middle School

7th Grade History Teacher/Coach

- Taught Texas History to 185 students, served as 7th Grade Boys' Basketball Coach, and served as 7th and 8th Grade Assistant Football Coach.
- Elected to school's Site Based Decision Making Committee to develop community relations and school policies
- Worked on a consistent basis with the University Interscholastic League on eligibility and compliance issues.

2000 – 2001: Vincennes Catholic School Corporation – Rivet Jr./Sr. High School

Athletic Director/Dean of Students/Coach

- Supervised and organized 5th Grade through Varsity athletic programs. Scheduled and coordinated game, travel, and practice plans for 24 athletic teams
- Served as Varsity Boys' and Girls' Tennis Coach, Varsity Assistant Boys' Basketball coach and worked extensively with the Indiana High School Athletic Association.
- Served as second in command to the Principal, handled and implemented all student discipline policies, monitored and carried out student attendance policies.
- Served as Director of Transportation for Vincennes Catholic School Corporation.

RELATED EXPERIENCE

2008 – present	Member of USTA National Quickstart Tennis Recreational Trainer Faculty
2006 – present	Member of USTA National Recreational Coach Trainer Faculty
2003 - 2004	Assistant Men's Tennis Coach – Indiana University - Southeast
2000	Tennis Coach/Trip Coordinator – Tennis: Europe
2000	Director – Vincennes Youth Tennis Program
1998 – 2000	Staff Assistant Professional – Indiana University Tennis Center

CONFERENCES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2008	USTA Tennis Teachers Conference	New York
2008	USPTA Kentucky Workshop	Louisville, KY
2008	USPTA Southern Division Convention	Charlotte, NC
2008	USTA KY Community Dev. Workshop	Louisville, KY
2008	USTA Southern Annual Meeting	Atlanta, GA
2007	USTA KY/USPTA KY Pro Leadership	Louisville, KY
2007	USTA KY Community Dev. Workshop	Louisville, KY
2007	USTA National Staff Development	Sandestin, FL
2007	USTA Southern Annual Meeting	Atlanta, GA
2006	USTA Tennis Teachers Conference	New York
2006	USPTA Kentucky Workshop	Louisville, KY
2006	USTA Southern Division Convention	Tunica, MS
2006	USTA Kentucky Community Development	Louisville, KY
2006	NASSM Conference	Kansas City, MO
2006	USTA National Staff Development	Phoenix, AZ
2006	USTA Southern Annual Meeting	Atlanta, GA

2005	USPTA Kentucky Workshop	Louisville, KY
2005	USTA Southern Annual Meeting	Atlanta, GA
2005	USTA National Staff Development	Sandestin, FL
2005	USTA Southern Annual Meeting	Atlanta, GA
2004	USTA National Staff Development	Amelia Island, FL
2004	Grant Writing Workshop	Louisville, KY

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND ACTIVITIES

2006 – present United States Professional Tennis Association – Kentucky
- 1st Vice President of Board of Directors
- Coordinate professional development
- Assist in development and implementation of annual workshop
- Coordinate *Tennis Across America* reports

2006 – present	KHSAA Tennis Advisory Committee
2004 – present	North American Society for Sport Management
2001 – present	United States Professional Tennis Association
2003 – 2004	University of Louisville Sport Administration Club
2001 – 2003	Texas High School Coaches Association
2000 – 2001	Indiana Athletic Administrators Association
2000 – 2001	Indiana High School Basketball Coaches Association
2000 – 2001	Indiana High School Tennis Coaches Association

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS IN PROGRESS

Miller, J.K., Greenwell, T.C. & Naeger, D.J. (2005). To stay or go: The influence of location continuity on event spectator characteristics. Paper presented at the Third Annual Sport Marketing Association Conference, Tempe, AZ.

Naeger, D.J., Greenwell, T.C. **& Miller, J.K.** (2005). The influence of time and place on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Paper presented at the Third Annual Sport Marketing Association Conference, Tempe, AZ.

Naeger, D.J., **Miller, J.K.,** & Greenwell, T.C. (2004). *Kentucky vs. Indiana High School All Star Classic Marketing Research Analysis*. Prepared for the Kentucky Lions Eye Foundation. Louisville, Kentucky.

Miller, J.K., Sime, K., & Greenwell, T.C. (2008). Tennis Volunteer Motivation Study. (In Progress).