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'ONE OF THE BOYS?':  
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF GENDER RELATIONS,  
CO-EDUCATION, AND INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION  
IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

by  
Anne Flintoff (BEd; MA)

Thesis submitted to the Open University  
for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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**ABSTRACT**

**'ONE OF THE BOYS?': AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF GENDER RELATIONS,  
CO-EDUCATION, AND INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

**by**

**Anne Flintoff**

This research aimed to investigate the ways in which teacher education institutions constructed, confirmed or contested gender identities in secondary Physical Education (PE). The study centred on an indepth ethnographic study of two case study institutions, chosen to reflect the male and female history of PE initial teacher education (ITE) in Britain.

Data was collected from a term's observation in each of the two case study institutions, together with semi-structured interviews with those members of staff who had major control over decision making and policy implementation, as well as through document analysis.

Analysis of the ITE courses in both institutions showed that gender issues formed only a small part of the formal curriculum, particularly in the PGCE courses. The attitudes of PE staff revealed either apathy or hostility to the raising of gender issues in their work, although there was evidence of some staff working hard to raise such issues with students.

Despite gender forming such a small part in the formal curriculum, it was a major influence on timetabling of physical activities within the PE Subject

studies. The rationales for the timetabling revealed strong gender ideologies about the nature of physical ability and performance for men and women. Gender relations were also reproduced through classroom interaction, which was dominated by masculine identity work, by both male students as well as some of the male staff. This involved sexual innuendo and gender joking which was used to put one another down, and to undermine the confidence and skills of women students and staff. As a result, for many of the women, negotiating a gender identity in PE was a difficult and contradictory experience.

## Publications

1991 'Dance, Masculinity and Teacher Education', *British Journal of Physical Education*, (1991) 22,4, pp.31-35.

(Material from chapter six)

1992 'Feminist research and Physical Education', in A. Sparkes (Ed) *Research in Physical Education and Sport: Exploring Alternative Visions*, London, Falmer Press.

(Material from chapter three)

forthcoming 'Gender, Physical Education, and Initial Teacher Education', in J. Evans (Eds) (*Equality, Education and Physical Education*, London, Falmer.

(Material from chapter five)

forthcoming 'One of the Boys? Gender identities in Physical Education Initial Teacher Education', in I. Siraj-Blatchford (Ed) 'Race', *Gender and the Education of Teachers*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press.

(Material from chapter six)

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## INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

### The research context

The aim of this research, to explore the relationship between gender relations and initial teacher education (ITE) in Physical Education (PE), arose first and foremost out of my personal experiences and involvement in PE, as a participant, teacher and teacher educator. In particular, my initial training and early years of teaching PE in school raised a number of questions and contradictions, and I felt unhappy about many of the taken for granted, daily practices of PE. Why, for example, did we organise our PE on single sex lines, offering different activities to boys and girls? Why was I unable to interest so few of the third and fourth year girls in PE, despite huge amounts of effort and encouragement? How did *some* girls become interested and committed participants in activities such as cricket or soccer, which challenged the notion of gender appropriate activities? Why did we insist on a particular PE 'kit' for young women (short skirt and knickers) which only seemed to embarrass them, and restrict their movements? What part did I have to play as a teacher in reinforcing or challenging 'gender-appropriate' physical activities?

Access to feminist theory and a developing feminist consciousness enabled me to begin to appreciate that these concerns were best seen as 'public issues', not just as my own 'personal problems' - that is, as issues which could only be adequately explained by situating them within the broader context of a patriarchal society (1). I became increasingly aware of the role of schools and teachers in the reinforcing gender appropriate

behaviours and inequalities; at the same time, it became clear that teachers could also be important agents in the process of change.

As I moved into teaching at ITE level, I recognised the importance and significance of raising students' awareness of gender issues during their initial training. Without an awareness and understanding of how gender inequalities are reproduced through schooling and PE, students will be unable to challenge these processes through their own teaching. Certainly my own training in the late seventies had not included any attention to these issues, and yet reflecting back on these years, I could see how gender structured and influenced much of that work. To what extent were we successfully raising issues of gender inequality with students now? However, as well as recognising the significance of the nature of the ITE curriculum for intending teachers, I was also very conscious of the ways in which gender influenced and structured classroom interactions, including in my own teaching groups. I became increasingly aware that many of the processes characteristic of co-educational school classrooms, such as boys dominating the teacher's time and attention (eg. Mahony, 1985), were often happening in my own classes.

The aim of this research, therefore, was to investigate the ways in which teacher education institutions construct, confirm or contest gender identities in PE. It also aimed to identify how the practice of ITE in PE could be improved, since feminist research is not just concerned with identifying how gender inequalities are reproduced but also importantly, how they might be challenged.

Although feminist critiques of education have been wide ranging and varied, and there is now a wealth of research and theoretical material available which documents the role of schooling as an institution in the reproduction of gender power relations, there has been little work which has focused on the role of ITE. Despite an early recognition of the crucial role of teacher education in the process of challenging gender power relations (eg. Deem, 1980), it is only more recently that studies have analysed the extent to which the ITE curriculum addresses gender inequalities (eg. Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), 1989; Leonard, 1989; Skelton and Hanson, 1989). None of these studies fully explore the ways in which this curriculum is operationalised, or the ways in which gender relations are reproduced at the level of classroom interactions. Given my experiences of teaching at ITE level, I felt that this should form an important part of this research.

PE as a specific subject area has also been notably absent from feminist critiques of education. There may be several reasons for this. It may be because of the low status of PE within the school curriculum generally; because there is little perceived relationship between PE and the world of work, and the sexual division of labour, or it may simply reflect the attitudes of PE teachers, many of which are known to hold largely unsympathetic attitudes towards equal opportunities in education (Pratt, 1985).

Scruton's (1989) pioneering research which explores the relationship between PE and ideologies of femininity, demonstrates the importance of including the physical, alongside the political, social and economic in

any analysis of male power relations. She concludes that contemporary practice within girls' secondary PE contributes to the reproduction and maintenance of ideologies of femininity, based on a restricted physicality, and a passive, 'controlled' sexuality. However, her work also identified the potential which girls' PE could make to challenging gender relations, and the important role which teachers can play within this. Scraton identified in her own research conclusions that the initial and inservice training of teachers in PE in relation to gender was a crucial context for future feminist analysis. In what ways are students sensitized to gender and its influence on teaching and learning in PE? In what ways are gender ideologies challenged or reinforced through the structure, organisation and teaching of ITE in PE? Given its single sex history and development in Britain, and its relatively recent re-organisation on co-educational lines, this seems a particularly pertinent context for feminist analysis (2). The role of contemporary PE ITE in contesting or confirming gender ideologies and identities represents then, a significant, but also an under-researched area in feminist analysis of education.

The focus of this research developed both from a personal commitment and interest in the field of study, and the identification of an area of study which would contribute knowledge to feminist debates on gender and education. The two case study institutions selected as the central focus of this research reflected the separate historical development of PE ITE. Although both institutions were involved in primary, as well as secondary PE ITE, the focus of this study was restricted to secondary training. This was not because primary PE is less important, but because most of my work and experience has been with this age group. The research involved long



periods of observation which allowed for a full exploration of the influence of gender on the every day practices and classroom interactions within the institutions. A detailed description of the case study institutions including a brief history, a description of the physical environment and ethos, staffing ratios, student recruitment, and the nature of the courses, is included in Appendix Two. The following chapter breakdowns introduce the structure and organisation of the rest of the thesis.

#### **The structure of the research**

Chapter One develops the theoretical framework for the research by providing an overview of the development of feminist theory, together with a consideration of key research within the areas of education, PE and sport. The first part of the chapter explores the developing nature of feminist theory, from its early attempts to provide a critique of existing mainstream theory, towards the development of autonomous feminist theory. The range and diversity of feminist theories - one of the most characteristic features of this development - is highlighted, and the implications of this for practice explored. The second part of the chapter focuses on the development of feminist theory within the context of education and identifies the strengths and limitations of a number of major contributions in this area. The final part of the chapter considers the parallel development of feminist theory in the areas of sport and PE, and identifies key contributions and trends.

Chapter Two focuses on teachers, their work and ITE. It includes an overview of some work which, whilst not feminist, can nevertheless make useful contributions to an understanding of teachers and teaching. The first part highlights the gendered structure of the teaching profession, and the implications of this for women's career progressions, and their experiences of teaching. The second section considers the research which has focused on the process of ITE. The lack of research exploring the relationship between ITE and the reproduction of gender relations, including the particular focus of PE ITE, is highlighted.

Chapter Three considers the methodology used in the research. It describes the methods of data collection, and analyses the issues and concerns encountered in the fieldwork, including those which arose from the adoption of a feminist perspective. Feminists have produced important critiques of mainstream research methodology and have argued for the importance of feminist research methods in attempting to overcome these. This chapter assesses some of the claims made for feminist research, and discusses the extent to which these were able to be fulfilled during the process of this research.

Chapter Four describes the broader social and political context of teacher education within which this particular case study research was situated. It summarises the major changes which have taken place in teacher education over the last twenty years or so, as well as focusing more specifically on the nature of the government's recent reforms for ITE. The increasing centralisation and control over the nature of teacher education is

identified. The scope and nature of the recent reforms are assessed in relation to their implications for raising issues of gender with students.

Chapter Five focuses on the structure, content and assessment of the curriculum of the ITE courses at the two case study institutions. This chapter specifically explores the nature of the PE Studies element of the courses, both in terms of the theoretical input, and the nature and timetabling of the practical activities. It also includes an analysis of when and where students were involved in discussing issues of equality. The chapter concludes with an analysis of how students were assessed on the different courses, and how this was influenced by gender ideologies. This chapter recognises that a focus on the formal content of the curriculum alone, through an analysis of the written syllabuses, cannot provide the full picture. It argues for a critical theory of the curriculum in which its operationalisation is also considered. Chapter Six and Chapter Seven therefore describe the nature of the teaching, the classroom interaction, and the institutional ethos at the two institutions. The term 'classroom' is used in this research to describe the various teaching spaces within PE, including the gymnasium, swimming pool, fields, etc.

Chapter Six describes the nature of the classroom interactions at the first of the case study institutions, Brickhill. The ways in which male and female students negotiated a gender identity within the institution are explored and analysed. Classroom interaction was dominated by masculine identity work, which involved male students in competing physically against one another, and in boosting their own egos and status by putting down others. Women and homosexuals were used as negative reference points in

these put down, with sexuality forming a central part of the abuse. The effects of this on the actions and experiences of women students and staff are also explored.

Chapter Seven compares and contrasts the classroom interaction and institutional ethos at Heydonfield, the second of the case study institutions, with that of Brickhill. At Heydonfield, classroom observation revealed less overt 'macho' posturing by the male students. The chapter describes how gender divisions were explicitly reinforced by many of the staff, through the way in which they organised and structured their teaching, and through their interaction with men and women students. The contradictory, and often alienating experiences of the few women staff, including their strategies of 'gender management', are explored.

Chapter Eight summarizes the main findings of the research, and explores their implications for future practice. Issues of gender equality had little legitimacy in the formal ITE curriculum, particularly in the PGCE courses, with many lecturers being either apathetic or hostile to raising such concerns with students. The move to co-educational PE ITE has resulted in a male definition of PE becoming predominant. Gender ideologies are reinforced within classroom interactions, as well as through the sex differentiated, practical PE curriculum. Two central elements of male power in PE ITE are revealed; male physicality and sexuality, and the dominant forms of knowledge included in PE ITE. The second half of the chapter explores the implications of these findings for future practice, and also suggests areas where future research is needed.

CHAPTER ONE

FEMINIST CRITIQUES OF EDUCATION, SPORT

AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

## CHAPTER ONE: FEMINIST CRITIQUES OF EDUCATION, SPORT AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

### Feminist theory

Acker (1987, p.421) has described feminist theory as

..perspectives which guide one's search to answers to a central series of questions and dilemmas about sex and gender. Feminist theoretical frameworks address, above all, the question of women's subordination to men; how this arose, how and why it is perpetuated, how it might be changed and (sometimes) what life would be like without it....Feminist theories serve a dual purpose, as guides to understanding gender inequality and as guides to action.

However, feminists do not always agree on the ways in which women's subordination can be explained, or on the action necessary for women to be emancipated. The most characteristic feature of the production of feminist theory has been the breadth and variety of emerging theoretical positions, such that it may be better to think in terms of feminist theories and feminisms, rather than feminism and feminist theory. As Abbott and Wallace (1990) argue, a contested element of feminism today remains the task of producing theory which can explain the lives of different women, not just those white, middle class women who have been largely responsible for its production. For some radical feminists, the development of any feminist theory is questioned as a useful enterprise. From this viewpoint, the development of theory is seen as an essentially masculine way of working, a task which is undertaken by an elite, and which devalues or ignores women's personal experiences - which has always been at the centre of feminism.

However, as Ramazanoglu (1989a) argues, since feminism is concerned with changing society for the better, it must develop an adequate understanding of what is wrong with existing societies in the first place, as well as the consequences of pressing for specific changes, and this necessarily involves the production of feminist theory:

Feminism is then partly a lived experience, a political struggle for liberation, but it is also an intellectual activity. There is no point in engaging in political struggle if we do not have an accurate understanding of what to struggle against. This intellectual activity is the development of a critical understanding of society, and thus of the sources and mechanisms of the oppression of women. It is the development of ideas which are rooted in women's daily experiences, but it is also the impact of these ideas on these experiences. Feminist thought gives women new knowledge of social life, the power to think about our circumstances, and the power to act upon them (Ramazanoglu, 1989a, p.45) (my emphasis).

Since the development of feminist theory is not just an intellectual exercise but has the aim of changing women's lives, its adequacy must be judged in relation to its usefulness; that is, the extent to which it provides useful and useable knowledge for women. In this sense, Abbott and Wallace (1990) argue, feminist theory must be both scientifically and politically adequate. A political theory puts forward values that are seen as morally desirable, and acts as a guide to action. A scientific theory, they suggest, should have explanatory power, be well supported by the available literature, be comprehensive in accounting for all the data, and be consistent. The problem for feminism is that there is no general agreement as to what counts as evidence, what needs explaining or which explanations are most illuminating. Both Deem (1990) and Maynard (1990), for example, have highlighted the gap which exists between feminist

theoretical work, and some empirical research; very often, they argue, research has remained at a descriptive level, and has not adequately used the theoretical insights of feminism. However, whilst the debates about how feminist knowledge should be produced remain unresolved and an important issue for feminism (see Gunew, 1990, Ramazanoglu, 1989a, 1989b, Stanley, 1990), Ramazanoglu (1989a) argues that they should also be seen as issues for social science more broadly, and which feminism has simply made 'uncomfortably explicit'. Feminism, then, has developed a wide range of different theoretical positions which have directly reflected, and emerged from, the differences in women's lives (1). At the same time, it has questioned traditional mainstream theory, and the means by which this has been produced (Stanley and Wise, 1983; Ramazanoglu, 1989a) (2).

As well as having different philosophical and political starting points, feminist theories have also developed at different levels. Maynard (1990) makes a useful distinction between 'macro' feminist theory, or theoretical perspectives which address the question of women's subordination in broad terms, and 'middle range' theory, which considers particular aspects of gender relations and specific sectors of social life such as the family, or education. Recent feminist theory, she suggests, has been more likely to fall into the middle range, rather than the macro category, reflecting the desire to reinstate 'agency' in the understanding of oppression. These theories stress that it is *men*, rather than a patriarchal 'system' who do the oppressing, and allow room for the active resistance and struggle of women, and with it, the possibilities of social change. Recent feminist work in education has been much more concerned with the development of theory at this level - for example, the development of theoretical work on



masculinity and the links between this and the sexual harassment of girls and women teachers in school (eg. Halson, 1989) - although it has also been centrally concerned to develop practical classroom initiatives for teachers (see below).

There is also disagreement about the extent to which mainstream theory has any use in the development of feminist theory. Deem (1990) argues that a wholesale rejection of mainstream theory is counter-productive since this may have the effect of reducing the influence gender sociology can have on research and teaching in social theory more generally; it means that potential explanatory mechanisms, not about gender, but nevertheless useful, are lost, and it closes off opportunities for an exploration of commonalities between feminist and mainstream work. As Grosz (1990, p.343) argues, the 'emersion in patriarchal practices (including those surrounding the production of theory), is the condition of its effective critique of and movement beyond them'. The development of feminist theory relies on this emersion to provide the means by which patriarchal dominance can be challenged. Gunew (1990) argues that feminist theory must exist therefore both as a critique as well as a construct.

#### **From 'anti-sexist' towards 'autonomous' feminist theory**

Grosz (1987) argues that it has only been in the 1980's that feminists have begun to move towards a position of developing autonomous feminist theory. She suggests that the development of feminist theory since the 1960's can be seen to roughly equate with three phases of domination which she refers to as sexist, patriarchal and phallogocentric. Feminists first worked to

remove sexism from existing theories, and to develop these so that they dealt with issues and objects (ie. women) which had been previously excluded. Theories could be considered sexist by the way in which they portrayed women in negative or hostile ways, or alternatively, by the way in which theories excluded or ignored women as worthy of discussion altogether. The challenge of this work, which developed out of, and in line with, liberal feminism, was to include women and women's experiences within existing theories, whilst at the same time working to eliminate their sexism.

Later development of feminist work led to attempts to try and incorporate feminist thinking with what she calls radical but, nevertheless, *phallogentric* theories. In phallogentric theories women are oppressed by systems of representation which collapse two sexes into one, masculine model. These theories were viewed by some feminists at least, as problematic, but not irredeemable. For example, Mitchell's (1975) work drew upon and developed the theories of Marx and Freud to try and explain women's oppression, and together with other marxist feminists made important contributions to the development of macro feminist theory.

Other feminists have felt that to engage in the production of any theory was to be involved in 'playing male power games', of participating in and contributing to the very forms of male dominance that feminism should be trying to combat (Grosz, 1990, p.332). These radical feminists concentrated on raising new issues in the debate such as male violence, sexuality and reproduction, many of these emerging from the women's movement consciousness raising groups and political campaigning. Although

crucial in raising women's consciousness of their oppression, and certainly effective in ensuring an audience, the extent to which these accounts move beyond description towards explanation, and therefore towards carefully articulated social theory has been questioned by some feminists (eg. Ramazanoglu (1989a)).

Having experienced the alienation of sexist theory, and attempting to merge with patriarchal theory, Grosz (1987) argues that feminists have begun to move to a position of developing truly autonomous feminist theory. They have begun to analyse not just the contents of phallogentric theories but have also considered how the central concepts, values and methods involved in their production are tied to masculinity at the expense of the 'other', femininity.

Although useful as a framework, Grosz's (1987) overview fails to fully capture the continuing disagreements between feminists, and the complexities of the debate about the nature and production of feminist knowledge. The different theoretical positions within feminism reflect different positions regarding epistemology. Not all feminists, for example, would see the production of 'autonomous' feminist theory via the rejection of 'scientific' methods, as desirable, if indeed possible. Harding (1986), for example, has identified two feminist epistemologies - feminist empiricism and feminist standpoint epistemologies. Feminist empiricism argues that the 'scientific method', properly used, can provide adequate knowledge about women's lives. However, feminist standpoint epistemology suggests that adequate theory about women's lives cannot be produced in this way, and attempts to present a much more radical challenge

to male theory by aiming to explore feminist knowledge through a focus on women's experiences and understandings.

For Grosz, the development of feminist theory has moved beyond a feminist empiricist view to a feminist standpoint:

from a feminism which took women as its objects of analysis, using patriarchal theories and frameworks to discuss this hitherto excluded object, to a feminism which took theory as its object of investigation, using the framework of women's experiences (Grosz, 1987, p.477).

In this sense, Grosz (1990) suggests that feminists have operated in both a 'negative' way, in that they have presented critiques of existing patriarchal social theory, and in a 'positive' way, in that, at the same time, they have begun to go beyond this and pose alternatives, to develop autonomous feminist theory. She argues that feminist theory needs to exist both as a critique and a construct, since it is only by understanding how patriarchal knowledges operate - by taking what Grosz has called a 'kind of intellectual apprenticeship' with them, by critically addressing methodological issues in the development of theory, and by using what is worthwhile in patriarchal theories - that new feminist theory can develop (Grosz, 1990). As the next two sections show, feminists involved in theorising women's and girls' oppression in education, PE and sport, have operated in similar kinds of ways.

The development of feminist theory has then, been characterised by a number of positions and tensions, focusing on a variety of different aspects of women's lives and giving different explanations for their oppression.

Grosz has suggested that feminists engaged in the development of theory have moved from the adoption of an anti-sexist stance, where they sought to challenge the bias and sexism of mainstream theory, to one which has drawn on, and adapted, aspects of patriarchal theory. She argues that it is only recently that feminists are beginning to develop truly autonomous feminist theory, having realised the limitations of these two stages. However, any discussion of feminist work is made more difficult by the complex debates surrounding the link between feminist theory and research, and the tension of producing both 'politically' and 'scientifically' adequate theory.

The next section describes some of the key feminist work within the area of education, particularly that work falling into a socialist feminist theoretical framework, which it is argued is best able to explain the reproduction of gender relations through education.

#### **FEMINIST THEORIES AND EDUCATION**

Education has been, in Britain at least, somewhat of a peripheral concern in the development of feminist theory (Acker, 1987). It can be argued that feminists working in education, particularly recently, have been more concerned with practical initiatives than with the development of theory itself. As Deem (1991), for example has noted, although the 1970's and the early 1980's saw the development of a wide range of both descriptive and analytical writings about gender and schooling (eg. Bryne, 1978; Deem, 1978; MacDonald, 1980; Spender and Sarah, 1980) these have increasingly been replaced with ones which have a more practical orientation, describing

initiatives which have been taken or action research carried out (eg. Arnot, 1985; Whyte et al, 1985). These changes have to be understood in relation to the changing material and ideological context of the 1980's, where feminist issues have become increasingly marginalised, and pressure to produce more relevant work for practising teachers has been felt (Arnot, 1989a; Woods and Pollard, 1988). As Arnot (1989a, p.67/8) concludes,

If teachers, rather than academics, are the audience (the 'consumers' of such research), then theorising may seem perhaps to take too long a time and to bear little relevance to the daily concerns of practitioners. The desire to prevent new generations of pupils being channelled into narrow conventional routes and the enthusiasm of feminist teachers have all encouraged a practical approach.

The paucity of feminist theory within education - perhaps a result of the low status of sociology of education within sociology generally (see Banks, 1976) - is reflected in the way in which several major theoretical texts have either included a limited discussion (eg. Connell, 1987; Walby, 1990) or have ignored education altogether as a specific context in women's oppression (eg. Eisenstein, 1984; Mitchell and Oakley, 1986; Segal, 1987). Despite this, there is a developing body of feminist work within education, which draws on a number of different theoretical frameworks, and which analyses a variety of contexts. As the previous section highlighted, as the development of theory has become more sophisticated, feminists have drawn ideas from a range of theoretical frameworks, or have shifted their theoretical position as their work has progressed. This has also been the case for those working within education.

## **Socialist feminist theory as a challenge to radical and liberal feminism**

The concern to understand the way in which schooling is involved in the production of both class and gender relations has led to the development of socialist feminist theories of education. Although it has been argued that this perspective is dominant within feminist critiques of education (eg. Arnot, 1989a; Middleton, 1987), this is not necessarily the case in terms of empirical studies. Most of the material written within this perspective has been either in the form of theoretical arguments, historical research, or policy analysis and there have been relatively few examples of empirical work (Acker, 1987).

Socialist feminist theory of education has challenged what it has identified as the inappropriate assumptions of liberal and radical feminist theories (Arnot, 1989a). Early feminist work within education drew heavily on liberal feminism to argue for girls' rights to an equal education to that of boys (eg. Bryne, 1978; Delamont, 1983). Using the developing body of material which had begun to document the different educational progress of girls and women (eg. DES, 1975), this work argued that school processes operated to socialise girls and boys into stereotypical gender roles, that discriminatory practices restricted girls' access to resources and to particular areas of the curriculum (eg. science, or craft and technology) and that teachers' attitudes towards girls were an important factor in female underachievement and differential educational experiences.

A major limitation of this work was its reliance on sex role theory and socialisation theory, theoretical work which has now largely been

discounted (eg. Arnot, 1981; Brittan and Maynard, 1984; Connell, 1987; Middleton, 1987; Walby, 1990). As well as ignoring power differentials between male and female sex roles, the idea of a sex role which people 'acquire' unproblematically, denies the diversity of behaviour within 'masculinity' or 'femininity' and fails to capture the way in which these behaviours vary between different cultures, classes, or over time, as well as how individuals may challenge and resist such stereotypes. Liberal feminist theory also fails to locate 'gender differentiation into its social and material conditions of existence and ... in a whole range of social institutions, social contexts and agencies, of which education is only one' (Arnot, 1981, p.98).

Although it is important to recognise the limitations of the explanatory power of the liberal feminist theory, it does suggest clear and easily identified strategies for change, which are less easy to dismiss. There is, however, some disagreement among feminists holding different theoretical positions about the nature and effectiveness of such 'liberal' interventions strategies - a point taken up in more detail below.

Socialist feminist theory also represents a critique of radical feminist assumptions about the universality of women's oppression in a patriarchal society. Radical feminists vary in the way in which they conceive the basis of this oppression, with writers variously emphasising rape (Brownmiller, 1976), reproduction (Firestone, 1974) or heterosexuality (Mackinnon, 1982; Rich, 1980). Although the use of the concept patriarchy - by other perspectives as well as radical feminists - is problematic (see for eg. Beechey, 1979; Ramazanoglu, 1989a), radical feminism has been



central in using this in debates about sexuality and male violence. However, the use of this concept in ahistorical, biologically-determinist ways, and its lack of concern with the differences between women in terms of class and race, has been problematic for the development of an adequate social theory. Many argue that radical feminist work remains descriptive rather than explanatory (eg. Middleton, 1987), and that whilst it has named women's oppression, it has not necessarily explained it (Jaggar, 1983; Ramazanoglu, 1989a). Despite this, radical feminists working in education have provided two important insights into the reproduction of gender relations in education: the male control of educational knowledge, and the sexual politics of everyday life in schools, both aspects of school life which much socialist feminist work has not adequately addressed (eg. Jones, 1985; Jones and Mahony, 1989; Mahony, 1985, 1989; Spender, 1980, 1981).

Socialist feminist theory challenges the limitations of liberal and radical theory. Liberal feminism's concentration on the educational context, at the expense of locating gender relations within a wider range of structures, limits its usefulness as social theory. Similarly, much radical feminist work, whilst raising issues of sexuality and male violence and providing detailed accounts of the extent of this violence, has failed to provide adequate explanations of male domination without slipping into some kind of biological determinism, where men dominate simply because they are men.

## Using 'patriarchal' theory to develop feminist theory

As the previous section outlined, in the 1970's feminists worked to develop theory which built upon, and adapted existing patriarchal theories (Grosz, 1987). Grosz argues that these did more to bolster, rather than question, the domination of masculine intellectual paradigms, since the work developed within the constraints of patriarchal frameworks. Certainly, as Arnot (1989a, p.69) notes, 'engaging with existing frameworks for the purpose of developing new ones is a hazardous exercise, not least because it can trap one precisely into using the same questions, concepts and categories'. The various attempts to construct a 'marriage' between accounts drawing on the mainstream theories of marxism, and feminism were not always happy ones (eg. Barrett, 1986; Hartmann, 1979).

The division identified within some typologies of feminist theory between socialist and marxist feminist theory is not always clear cut when considering individual theories; many feminists writing in the late 1970's and early 1980's, adopting a marxist feminist perspective have more recently adopted a socialist feminist position for example, and feminists within both positions may start from a critique of existing social and cultural reproduction theories.

Marxist accounts of education, which sought to explain the role of schools in the reproduction of capitalist relations of production (eg. Bowles and Gintis, 1976), were rejected generally for their economic determinism (eg. Willis, 1977), and more specifically by feminists (eg. David, 1978) for their lack of attention to the reproduction of gender relations. However,

some of the more sophisticated marxist accounts, such as Althusser's (1971) theory of the school as 'an ideological state apparatus' provided, for a few feminists, more scope for the insertion of questions about gender than did analyses which centred on the labour-capital contradiction (Barrett, 1986). Deem (1978), and David (1978), for example, showed the variety of ways in which school practices reproduce definitions of femininity and masculinity appropriate to capitalist relations of production, and how ideologies of domesticity and 'familism' have underpinned the provision of women's education (Deem, 1981; Wolpe, 1976).

Wolpe's (1977) work attempts to use Althusser's theory to show how the education system is linked to the sexual division of labour, both within the family, and within the employed labour force. She analysed the curriculum, the organisation of the school, and educational state policy to explain how schools contribute to the reproduction of women's role. Like much marxist feminist work, her work has been criticised for its functionalism - that the education system functions to create the sexual division of labour 'needed' by capitalism (eg. Culley and Demaine, 1983). Culley and Demaine (1983, p.170) argue that it would be wrong to conceive the education system as having any kind of 'unity' which is affected by external forces such as the capitalist economy. Instead they argue that education should not be seen as a 'field of play of pre-given and essential interests or needs, but as the outcome of specific conditions and specific struggles'.

Wolpe's later work (1978; 1988) tries to overcome deterministic views by providing a synthesis of data provided by ethnographic or 'micro' accounts,

combined with a consideration of structural analyses, specifically class and ideologies. In this sense, she moves further towards a socialist feminist perspective in her recognition of the role of both class and gender relations within schooling, and to a sounder theory than her earlier work.

These theories, which emphasised the centrality of capitalism in gender relations, were criticised for their lack of attention to patriarchal domination and control. They could not explain, for example, why schools are involved in the creation of a sex-segregated labour force, or the subordination of women within it, or do justice to the myriad ways in which men hold power over women through control of sexuality and the threat of violence (MacKinnon, 1982). Some radical feminists have suggested that this is explained by the failure of such work to overcome its androcentricism, a result of the continued use of marxist categories and problematic. The more sophisticated cultural reproduction theories, on the other hand, provided further scope for the development of feminist theory - a development which is discussed below.

#### **Feminist critiques of male cultural reproduction theories**

Male cultural reproduction theorists, concerned with the relationship between schools and the family, and schools and paid work, argued that schools transmitted 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) or 'class codes' (Bernstein, 1977), which acted as filtering devices in the reproduction of a hierarchical society. Although these theories placed more emphasis on the importance of resistance than some of the social

reproduction theories (a concept which itself is not without its problems, see Aronowitz and Giroux, 1986) they, too, concentrated on class and, as McRobbie and Garber (1975) pointed out, had little to say about gender. If girls were visible at all, it was 'through men's eyes as 'birds', 'scrubbers' or 'hangers on' (Llewellyn, 1980, p.42). Feminists have attempted to use these theoretical analyses and redress this imbalance by developing accounts of girls' subcultures (eg. Griffin, 1985; McRobbie, 1978) and of girls' resistance (eg. Anyon, 1983).

#### *Gender codes and schooling*

One of the most useful theoretical accounts within a socialist feminist perspective is Arnot's development of a gender code, based on Bernstein's (1977) concept of class codes (Arnot, 1982). Bernstein argued that the distribution of power in society is reflected in the ways in which it 'selects, classifies and distributes, transmits and evaluates knowledge' (Bernstein, 1977, p.85). The extent to which schools organise subjects as autonomous 'units', and the amount of control pupils have over the processes within schools can be described by the 'educational code', which Bernstein suggests, is middle class.

Arnot argues that the dominant educational code is not only middle class, but is also male; schools are a major reproducer of the political and economic distribution of power between men and women, as well as between the different classes. Because control over schools has been appropriated, more than any other class, by the bourgeoisie, she stresses that 'the

dominant form of male hegemony within our society is therefore that of the bourgeoisie' (Arnot, 1982, p.82).

For Arnot, the notion of code links well with the concept of hegemony, since both describe

attempts by family and schools to 'win over' each new generation to particular definitions of masculinity and femininity and to accept as natural the hierarchy of male over female, the superiority of men in society (Arnot, 1982, p.80).

Arnot suggests that Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony, constructed to understand the maintenance of class relations, can be extended to an analysis of patriarchy. The potency of the concept of hegemony lies in its ability to explain how dominance can be achieved and maintained without the direct use of coercion. The work of intellectuals and ideology within the institutions of civil society maintains existing social relations through consent rather than coercion. However, for Gramsci, ideology was more than simply a set of ideas and beliefs, it was also those ideas as inscribed in actual social practices. As Williams notes,

hegemony goes beyond 'ideology'...What is decisive is not only the conscious system of ideas and beliefs, but the whole lived social process..It is a lived system of meanings and values..which as they are experienced as practices are reciprocally confirming. It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in society (Williams, 1977, p.109/110).

For Arnot, male hegemony operates so that schools transmit a dominant gender code but this is never a simple reproduction; different definitions of masculinity and femininity enter schools which, she suggests, can

provide a vehicle for classroom and social class resistance, as studies such as Willis and McRobbie have indicated.

The notion of a gender code allows a recognition of how the school is involved in a process of transmission of gender identities where students take an active role. The notion of 'frame' determines the degree and the type of response to this gender code. The students will produce a 'constellation of behaviours and attitudes' which can be called femininity and masculinity, drawn from a number of often conflicting and contradictory inputs such as from the family, the media, their peers and so on. . And although there will be room for *dominated* gender codes (eg. working class or different ethnic groups) as well as a *dominant* gender code, in neither do women escape their inferior and subordinate position.

Whilst Arnot's adaptation of Bernstein's class codes is theoretically useful, it is difficult to apply in empirical research. As she later suggests, although her earlier work did not develop the use of the concept of hegemony, it is here that there is potential for the development of feminist theory, since power and conflict are central to this concept.

It [hegemony] offers the prospect of lifting the mantle of pessimism which characterised reproduction theory of the 1970's, since ...it focuses attention on the dynamics of conflict, but even more importantly, perhaps, on the possibilities of change (Arnot, 1989a, p.82).

### *Hegemonic masculinity and schooling*

Since the concept of hegemony recognises the centrality of *social practice* in the reproduction of social relations, it becomes much more amenable to use in empirical research. Connell's (et al) (1982) study of families and schooling, is one of the few examples of empirical educational research which uses an analysis of practice as the key to understanding the class and gender dimensions of schooling. The study outlines the way in which schools are involved in a variety of *masculinizing and feminizing practices* which are different for each social class, and which may vary between schools.

Although there is a diversity of behaviours within 'masculine' and 'feminine', Connell (et al) argue that this variation is not random. The dominant patterns are the ones which become accepted as the 'natural' definitions of masculinity and femininity, and other definitions are positioned in relation to these. They call the dominant patterns 'hegemonic masculinity' and 'emphasised femininity', stressing however, that although hegemonic, they are not necessarily the *most common* patterns. As they point out,

not many men or boys really are the strong, cool, fit, competent macho types who populate the cigarette ads..though most men's lives are still affected by the presence and potency of that image (Kessler, et al, 1987, p.235).

As Morgan (1992) adds, variations and diversities within masculinity do need to be recognised, but not at the expense of acknowledging that these



complexities are variations on a 'deeply entrenched theme', central to which is male oppression of women.

A crucial question for feminist analyses, then, is how is masculinity (and femininity) achieved in particular ways. The range of masculinities is not random, nor freely chosen by individuals, but drawn from the 'available' forms which have become embedded into institutions and everyday cultural practices. Carrigan (et al) (1985) note that,

whilst differentiation of masculinities is psychological [in that] it bears on the kind of people men are and become..it is not only psychological. In an equally important sense it is institutional, an aspect of collective practice.... Social definitions of masculinity are embedded in the dynamics of institutions - the working of the state, of corporations, of unions, of families - quite as much as in the personalities of individuals (Carrigan, et al, 1985, p.591, my emphasis).

Patriarchal power relations are a question of relations between men, as well as between men and women, and it is this 'fissuring of the categories of 'men' and 'women' [which] is one of the central facts about patriarchal power and the way it works' (Carrigan, et al, 1985, p.590). Critical responses by some feminists (eg. Cannan and Griffin, 1990; Maynard, 1990) to the attempts of male theorists to problematize masculinity in terms of these differentials, centre on the fear that in this process, it will be men's power over women which will be marginalised and lost.

Connell (et al) (1982) argue that schools are involved in the production of a range of masculinities, with a resulting contest for hegemony between rival versions. They are just one setting involved in the construction of

masculinity. Via the processes of 'competitive grading' schools are involved in differentiating between the different, class-based, definitions of masculinity - on one hand, a masculinity based around rationality and responsibility, linked to academic success and power; on the other, a masculinity based around pride or aggressiveness, developed by the academically 'failed', which, they argue could centre on sporting prowess, physical aggression and sexual conquest.

Although schools produce a number of different forms of masculinities and femininities, they provide the context for one kind or another to become hegemonic, and are therefore involved in the process of arbitrating between different kinds, and structuring them within a hierarchy. Kessler (et al) (1987) have described these differences and hierarchies as 'gender regimes', that is,

a pattern of practices that constructs various kinds of masculinity and femininity amongst staff and students, orders them in terms of prestige and power and constructs a sexual division of labour within the institution (Kessler, et al, 1987, p.232).

using it in much the same way as Arnot's concept of a gender code.

Connell's (et al) (1982) account represents an important, detailed empirical study, and in this sense, constitutes an important development of Arnot's theoretical ideas. Their account also recognises that gender politics are worked out in a much wider notion of schooling than in the three 'message' systems of Bernstein's educational code. Informal peer-group situations, and relations between teachers, and between teachers and

pupils need to be included in the analysis too, as research such as Walkerdine (1987) and Benyon (1989) has shown. Their account also recognises that an analysis of the gendered practices of schooling must be placed within the wider context of the patriarchal and capitalist society generally, and attempts to do this by situating the analysis of the children's educational lives within the contexts of their family life, including an analysis of their parents, and their respective positions in society.

Whilst hegemonic masculinity works by legitimizing male power, this is never won once and for all, but involves a continuing struggle. Masculinity needs to be seen as an accomplishment, and something which needs to be worked at in every social situation (Brittan, 1989). That this is achieved in particular ways, is, Brittan argues, guaranteed by the naturalness of heterosexuality, by the central belief that biological differences are central to sexual and gender behaviour. Hegemonic masculinity ultimately relies on gender difference. Ideology is central to the process by which gender relations are legitimized - and particularly ideologies surrounding the physical. Indeed, Scraton (1989, p.457) has suggested that,

the recognition that ideologies of the physical contribute to the definition of woman-as-object and reinforce women's physical subordination, both at the overt level of physical violence and confrontation and at the more subtle level of self confidence, bodily awareness and the stereotyping of woman as weak and passive, should underpin all analyses of gender power relations.

Using the concept of hegemony distinguishes it from simple male *physical* control over women, although as Connell (1987) notes, 'the connection between hegemonic masculinity and patriarchal violence is close though not simple' (p.184). Feminists have long recognised the important role male physical violence has played in the social control of women (eg. Hanmer and Saunders, 1984; Kelly, 1988; Stanko, 1985). As the next section describes, more recently the concept of hegemonic masculinity - a central feature of which is male physicality - has been used in analyses of the reproduction of gender relations in and through sport.

#### *New directions for feminist theory in education?*

The development of feminist theory in education has deliberately concentrated on making girls' and women's experiences of education and schooling central and visible, in order to counteract and challenge the sexism and phallogocentrism of existing educational theory. However, as the above section has illustrated, more recently, there has been a recognition of the importance of exploring the ways in which both girls and boys are affected by gendered practices. The contribution of schooling to the social construction of masculinity has begun to be more central to some recent analyses, together with an exploration of the different strategies needed for successful anti-sexist work with boys' groups (eg. Askew and Ross, 1988; Benyon, 1989; Connell, 1989; Halson, 1991; Walker, 1988). Although in its infancy, this work is beginning to highlight the important link between masculinity, sexuality, violence and social control.

A number of feminist accounts have documented the extent to which girls and

women have to endure sexual harassment as part of everyday life in education (eg. Cunnison, 1989; DeLyon, 1989; Jones, 1985; Mahony, 1985). Kelly's (1988) work suggests an important aspect of men's gender power stems from their ability to control women through what she calls 'a continuum of sexual violence', which ranges from the commonplace and routine use of aggression, such as sexist comments or leers, to the more 'non-routine' assaults, such as rape. She argues that masculinity as currently constructed in western culture 'draws on notions of virility, conquest, power and domination and these themes are reflected in gender relations and heterosexual practice' (p.30).

The threat and reality of sexual violence causes women and girls to 'police' their own behaviour, and restricts their movements and freedom, both within the private and public sphere. A number of accounts have demonstrated how girls and women are controlled by both male teachers and pupils who explicitly 'sexualise' situations (eg. Benyon, 1989; Ramazanoglu, 1987; Wolpe, 1988). Others such as Halson (1991); Mahony, (1989), and Wolpe (1988) have identified the way in which schools reinforce and perpetuate this 'natural' conception of heterosexual relations based on female passivity and male power. Rarely do schools intervene to challenge and prevent the sexual harassment of young girls, by either boys or male teachers. They are far more likely to argue that such behaviour is 'only natural' (Halson, 1991; Measor, 1989). The links between sexuality, social control and male power, and the contribution of schooling to these raised by these accounts, has not always been fully acknowledged or explored in some socialist feminist work (3). This seems a crucial and fruitful area for further feminist enquiry within education.

Although there is now a considerable body of feminist work focusing on teachers (eg. Acker, 1989; De Lyon and Widdowson Migniulo, 1989), as the next chapter describes in more detail, we know very little about the 'gender regimes' or masculinizing and feminizing practices of ITE institutions. It would seem likely that PE ITE in particular would provide a unique setting for struggles over hegemonic definitions of both masculinity and femininity. ITE courses bring together both 'academic' and 'physical activity/sport' contexts in which different definitions of masculinities and femininities can be challenged or reinforced. Furthermore, these courses also provide legitimate contexts for directly addressing issues surrounding the construction of masculinities and femininities, and sexuality through educational practice, with students in their training.

Whilst socialist feminists have been successful in producing theories which can address both class and gender relations, they have been criticised for being less successful in adequately theorising the relationship between race, class and gender (4). Black feminists for example, have presented important critiques of some contemporary feminist work, showing it to be racist and presenting a partial, exclusive and marginalising account of black women's experiences (eg. Amos and Parmar, 1984; Brah, 1988; Brah and Minhas, 1985; Carby, 1987). More recent feminist work has begun to explore the complex ways in which race interacts with class and gender to shape girls' lives inside and outside schools (eg. Brah and Deem, 1986; Brah and Minhas, 1985; Mirza, 1992).

### **Feminists theories as 'guides to action'**

The discussion thus far has concentrated on overviewing feminist work within education, particularly work within a socialist feminist perspective. Socialist feminism's recognition that both class and gender relations are crucial in an understanding of women's oppression makes it a more adequate theory than liberal, radical or marxist feminism. However, whilst liberal feminist theory has largely been discounted, the practical strategies endorsed by this perspective cannot be so easily dismissed. Similarly, although radical feminist work is problematic in that it ignores the differences between women, it too has been able to produce some useful strategies for change.

Some discussions about feminist strategies for change have drawn a clear boundary between liberal feminist strategies in education and more radical ones (eg. Weiner, 1985; Weiner, 1986); others are less certain that such a dichotomy can be so easily identified or sustained (eg. Acker 1986; Deem, 1987a). Weiner (1985) describes the liberal feminist approaches to education as 'equal opportunities' or 'girl-friendly' approaches. These approaches are concerned with equal access for boys and girls, and with more 'moderate' strategies compared with the 'girl-centred' or 'feminist' approaches which advocate more radical strategies, such as positive discrimination and major structural changes. But, as Acker and Deem note, the goals of the liberal feminists (for example, to get women into policy and management positions) may be the same as the strategies of the radical feminist approach - getting more women in to decision making positions in order than they can introduce anti-sexist initiatives. Also, individual

situations differ. In some schools and local education authorities, 'radical' policies may be legitimately pushed, whereas in others, this will not be the case. The accounts by Taylor and Wells in Whyte (et al) (1985), for example, illustrate how gender initiatives may have very different outcomes and success rates, depending upon the particular education authority in which they are introduced.

For Deem (1987a), what matters is not so much the perspective adopted, but what actually changes in practice, and too often, there is a lack of recognition by critics of the very real constraints under which feminists work. Liberal feminist theory has largely been discounted in the development of more sophisticated and adequate accounts. However the strategies suggested by this perspective are less easily abandoned, since they provide concrete, practical strategies, attractive to many feminists and other teachers concerned with equality, about how to operate within, and change, classroom practice.

Socialist feminist accounts have not been particularly classroom or practice orientated (eg. Weiner, 1986), not surprising given the recognition within such theory that women's oppression is so complex and broad. However, some socialist feminist accounts have struggled to develop an idea of what might represent educational praxis, or feminist pedagogy, and have seen potential within the teacher-as-research model adopted within some pre and in-service work (Arnot, 1989a).



### **Summary: Feminist theories and education**

Socialist feminist theories of gender relations and education are more adequate than the liberal or radical feminist accounts because they provide an analysis of education situated within the wider structures of both patriarchal and capitalist relations. They recognise that short term strategies for change based at school or institutional level, will be largely ineffective without concomitant longer term, radical challenges to patriarchal and capitalist relations. Theories which have used the concept of hegemony to explain how gender relations are reproduced through education (eg. Arnot, 1982; Connell (et al), 1982; Deem, 1983) have been the most successful, since they are able to avoid the functionalism of some of the earlier accounts, and show how gender relations are always contested, changable and specific to different contexts.

More recently the concept of hegemonic masculinity has been used to describe dominant forms of masculinity which are reproduced within educational contexts. A central feature of 'normal' hegemonic masculinity is its close connection with physical power, heterosexual conquest and aggression. The connections between power, sexuality and social control beginning to be explored in feminist theory more generally (eg. Kelly, 1988), has highlighted an important focus for future feminist work in education (eg. Halson, 1991).

## **FEMINIST THEORIES, PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT**

The last section overviewed feminist critiques and explanations of the reproduction of gender relations within education. It focused largely on accounts which could be categorised as socialist feminist, whilst acknowledging the increasing difficulty of describing feminist work which draws on strands from a variety of different philosophical and political positions.

This section aims to overview the developing feminist work within the area of PE and sport (5). Since there is still very little feminist research in PE, it draws on the wider area of sport and where appropriate, leisure literature. It shows how the development of work within these areas has mirrored the trends in the development of feminist work more generally, and identifies the important contribution this area is beginning to make to an understanding of the relationships between male power, physicality and sexuality.

### **The marginalisation of PE in educational and feminist research**

Although the amount of feminist work focusing on sport, and more widely leisure, is increasing, PE as a specific aspect of schooling has been largely ignored, reflecting the lack of analysis of PE within sociology of education generally. Many of the detailed ethnographic studies of schools, for example, have specifically chosen to exclude PE from their analysis both reflecting and confirming PE's low status within the hierarchy of school subjects (eg. Ball, 1984).

The research which is available on PE concentrates on the measurable, the observable or the quantifiable, and takes the form of either large scale curriculum surveys (eg. ILEA, 1988; Kane, 1974; PEA, 1987) or classroom observational research, aimed at improving teacher effectiveness. This latter research has concentrated on aspects of 'successful' teaching, such as 'time on task', or teacher-pupil verbal interaction without problematizing the wider, social context in which these interactions occur (eg. Bailey, 1981; Mawyer and Brown, 1983; Spackman, 1986). It is only in the last few years that more qualitative accounts, focusing on the processes involved in teaching PE, whilst at the same time situating them within a wider, structural context, have begun to emerge (eg. Evans, 1986, 1988; Kirk and Tinning, 1990b). Despite an increasing awareness of the importance of gender issues in these kinds of analyses there have been few empirical research projects within the area of PE which have taken a feminist perspective (6). Two important exceptions are the work of Scraton (1989) and Dewar (1987) discussed later in this section.

Given the centrality of the body in feminist work, particularly within radical feminism (eg. Brownmiller, 1976; Coveney et al, 1984; Mackinnon, 1982; Rich, 1980), this is a significant absence. A variety of factors may be important to explain this. Hall suggests that

In its attempt to be recognized as a legitimate and scholarly discipline, women's studies, like the traditional disciplines, has devalued the *body* side of the mind/body dualism, and as a result, sees serious scholarship on sport as marginal... (Hall, 1990, p.239).

A great number of feminists have aimed to denounce theories of gender differentiation based on biological differences, and Scraton (1989) argues that this is one of the major reasons sport and PE, until recently, have been neglected by feminist analyses. Research which focuses on the body and physical action has been assumed 'too close to biology for comfort'. The relevance of biological differences to the development of feminist theory and practice - central in arguments about the social construction of sexuality, for example - remains an under-researched, as well as a strategically problematic area for feminism (Ramazanoglu, 1989a).

However, this lack of feminist work in PE in Britain is surprising given the fact that historically, it is a subject which has been traditionally taught in single sex groupings, and one where, very often, girls have been offered different activities from boys. However, as Leaman (1984) notes, whilst feminists have been keen to point out the consequences of differentiation in other aspects of the curriculum (eg. crafts), it has not always been clear what PE is supposed to prepare children for, and therefore, how girls may lose out by learning different physical activities from boys. Furthermore, PE teachers are not renowned for high levels of critical awareness (eg. Nettleton, 1985), nor for their commitment to equal opportunities (eg. Pratt, 1985).

#### **Feminist critiques of sport**

In contrast to PE, theoretical feminists' critiques of sport and leisure, including historical studies, are flourishing (eg. Fletcher, 1984; Hall, 1985a, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990; Hargreaves, 1985, 1987; Messner, 1988;

Messner and Sabo, 1990a; Scraton, 1988; Willis 1982). A number of overviews of this material show how this development has mirrored that of feminist theory outlined by Grosz (1987) described earlier (eg. Birrell, 1988; Dewar, 1991a; Hargreaves, 1990). These analyses have shifted from 'women and sport' debates, largely concerned with distributive questions and using sex role socialisation theory to show how girls and women are socialised away from sport, to more sophisticated 'gender and sport' debates, which place male/female power relations at the centre of the discussion.

Hall (1990) identifies three themes beginning to emerge within current work in this area; the role of sport and PE in the social reproduction of gender and gender relations; the empowering of women through the empowerment of their bodies, and the link between theory, policy and practice. As the previous section identified, a new focus within those working in the area of gender sociology is the study of men and masculinity, and this kind of work forms a fourth major trend within sport sociology. A number of (mainly male) theorists have begun to explore the relationship between sport and the reproduction of dominant forms of masculinity (eg. Connell, 1987, 1990; Day, 1988; Messner and Sabo, 1990a, Whitson, 1990). The development of feminist theory in sport, a development which Hall (1988) has called 'femininity to feminism' is explored in the next section.

## From 'femininity to feminism'

Birrell (1988) notes how,

in a relatively short period of time, feminist work ..grew from the writings of those politically conscious women, to the liberal feminist approach of adding women to established research traditions and applying the methodologies and theories designed to study and explain male behaviour, and finally to the endorsement of methods and theories developed to expand our means of conceptualising women's lives (Birrell, 1988, p.479/480).

It is only in the last few years that the analysis has progressed to seeing gender, not as a variable or as a distributive category, but as 'a set of relations created through human agency and sustained or reproduced through cultural practices including, but not limited to, sport' (Birrell, 1988, p.492).

### *Early exclusions for our 'own good'*

Whilst there were a number of what Birrell calls 'rumblings of discontent' within the 1960's, including the major contribution of the work of Metheny (1962) who, well ahead of her time, showed how ideologies of the 'female role' restricted women's development of physical skills, it was not until the 1970's that the discourse of women and sport really began to be established.

Through to the 1960's, an understanding of women's involvement in sport was largely a 'misunderstanding' based on ideologies of what was 'good' for

women, prescribed by the male medical establishment. Historical accounts are now able to show how these ideologies were largely successful in excluding women from all but a few 'appropriate', feminine, sports (eg. Atkinson, 1985; Fletcher, 1984; Hargreaves, 1985, 1987; Lenskyj, 1986, Scraton, 1989). These ideologies were very much class based. Pronouncements about the effects of 'excessive' physical sports exertion on middle class women were rarely extended to prevent the debilitation and exhaustion brought on by the domestic drudgery central to most working class women's lives (Lenskyj, 1986). The separate development of the women's PE profession did little to challenge these dominant ideologies, which was constrained by both the type of activities women were introduced to, and its underlying pedagogical philosophy (Fletcher, 1984; Kirk, 1990a; Scraton, 1989). Birrell rightly characterises women's involvement in sport up until the 1970's as a 'heritage of exclusion'.

#### *The Equal Opportunities Tradition*

Changes in women's position in society during the 1970's more generally brought an increase in their involvement with sport and physical activity, and with it, the emergence of the beginnings of a feminist analysis. This drew heavily on psychological sex role theory, and on socialisation theory, the foundations of liberal feminist theory. It was argued that the low rates of female sports participation, far from being a natural result of biological inferiority, were the results of socialisation practices carried out by the family, the media and school. This created a constant struggle for women in sport to maintain their 'femininity' (Felshin, 1974; Greendorfer, 1977; 1978). A more recent study which has its theoretical

base within this perspective is Leaman's (1984) work for the Schools Council. This study focused on the ways in which school PE contributes to sex differentiation, and how the curriculum and practices involved are often in conflict with girls' 'femininity'.

The limitations of sex role and socialisation theory identified in the first section apply equally to these attempts to understand women's position within sport and PE. However, as Hargreaves (1990) notes, this work was important for its implicit rejection of biological explanations of women's subordination in sport - and since the most consistent justification for women's exclusion has been based on women's supposed 'limiting' biological capacities - the significance of this theory cannot be underestimated. This point is taken up below.

Another important aspect of liberal feminist work has been the identification of the importance of female role models, be this in employment, educational or sporting contexts. Research has suggested that the numbers of female role models in sports administration are on the decline rather than the increase (eg. Brackenridge and White, 1985; White et al, 1989). Brackenridge and White's (1985) study of the power structures of British sport, for example, shows how women's presence in authority positions is decreasing as sports organisations become more professionalised and bureaucratised. Despite the fact that it was 'women first' (Fletcher, 1984) in the development of the PE profession in Britain, the patchy evidence available seems to point to a similar picture here too (7). Women, who were once at the forefront of the profession, are now most likely to occupy a position in charge of girls' PE, but within a department



headed overall by a man (eg. Burgess, 1988a; Cunningham, 1989; Evans and Williams, 1989).

Although the limitations of liberal feminist theory have been recognised, it is this 'equal opportunities' strand of feminism which is accepted within the government policies and legislation. Indeed, it could be argued that it is precisely because of the failure of this perspective to challenge anything much other than individuals and their attitudes that this theory has been so widely accepted! The next section discusses government legislation specifically related to sport and PE.

#### *Legislation, Policy and Equal Opportunities in PE and Sport*

The government's political 'lip-service' to gender equality in educational policy has been discussed elsewhere (eg. Arnot, 1987). Given the current educational context which seems to seek to increase rather than decrease differentiation (eg. see Flude and Hammer, 1990), it is hardly surprising to note that there has been no explicit policy statement issued by the Department of Education and Science (DES) concerning equal opportunities for girls/women. This lack of concern is similarly reflected within government's PE documentation. One of the most recent documents on PE, *Curriculum Matters 16, Physical Education from 5-16* (DES, 1989a), which includes just one sentence about gender issues, argues that there may well be a need for teaching pupils in single sex groupings for some activities. Since moves towards mixed sex teaching are still ad hoc and far from common (Scraton, 1985) this kind of statement reveals both a lack of knowledge of current practice, but more importantly, a lack of sensitivity to research

which has identified that the introduction of mixed sex PE classes may have more *negative* than positive implications for girls.

Although the debate over mixed PE classes has been varied, with many recognising that the issue is more complicated than an either/or situation, increasingly evidence suggests that many girls may well lose out, rather than gain, in a mixed PE setting (eg. Evans, 1989; Evans et al 1987; Scraton, 1985; Talbot, 1990a). As Talbot (1986) notes, the move towards opening up activities within the PE programme has often meant girls have been allowed to opt into 'boys' games, but rarely the reverse. Few boys have been involved in the aesthetic activities such as dance, prominent within the girls' PE tradition, thereby doing little to challenge the differences in status between the activities. Very often new initiatives in PE such as the introduction of the 'A' level, have avoided a consideration of such issues, rather than make them central to their work. The practical activities currently chosen for inclusion in the 'A' level in PE, for example, are gender 'neutral' ones - ones seen as suitable for both boys and girls. This means that both sexes are prevented from being assessed in other, more 'gendered' activities which might well be their strengths (see Flintoff, 1991).

Scraton's work (1985; 1989) remains unique in that it identifies the centrality of sexuality in mediating and controlling many girls' experiences in mixed PE classes. As yet there has been no analysis of the power dynamics between male PE teachers and mixed classes, or between female PE teachers and mixed classes, although there is some evidence which suggests that women teachers may be at a disadvantage particularly if they

are involved in teaching a so-called 'feminine' activity such as dance (eg. see Pollard, 1988). Similarly, gender power dynamics in teaching in ITE PE classes remains an area devoid of feminist research, but crucial to the understanding of the reproduction of gender relations within the profession.

The PE profession in England and Wales has itself been largely silent of issues of gender equality (Flintoff, 1990a). The only policy document available addressing 'equal opportunity issues' in PE is that of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA, 1984a), now disbanded (8). It is not surprising, then, to note that the moves to co-educational PE teacher training colleges came about through the imposition of European Law - the EEC Equal Treatment Directive of 1976 - rather than through the actions of the colleges themselves (Talbot, 1990b).

Both the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) and the Equal Opportunities Commission, which has the responsibility to ensure its implementation, are both largely concerned with issues of access and treatment. In terms of sport and PE, the sex discrimination legislation in Britain is complicated. Talbot (1990b) points out the inconsistencies resulting from the conceptual confusion between school PE (which is covered by the SDA as an educational provision) and sport (which is excluded under Section 44). This lack of clarity has allowed discriminatory practices against girls (such as preventing them from being able to play in some extra-curricular sports teams for example) to remain intact.

The fact that private clubs too, remain outside the remit of the SDA has meant that discrimination can continue to be openly flaunted within the organisation and running of private clubs under the Working Men's Club and Institute Union, one of biggest promoters of sporting contests in Britain (Rogers, 1988). There are, then, major limitations in the SDA legislation which affects its role in the promotion of gender equality for women. The fact that the current scope of the SDA legislation covers only activities in the 'public' or commercial sphere, means that discrimination remains rife in many areas in the 'private' sphere, including sport and leisure.

#### *Towards a feminist theory of gender relations in sport*

More sophisticated feminist theories of gender relations in sport have developed in the 1980's, drawing on the critical theories of feminism, Marxism and cultural studies. The previous section identified the way in which feminists working within education, such as Arnot (1982), have used the basis of existing phallogocentric work to develop ones which could explain the reproduction of gender as well as class relations. In the same kind of way, feminists have been keen to expose the class-reductionism of recent critical sport theory (eg. Deem, 1988; Hall, 1985a, 1987, 1990), and to use aspects of this work for the development of feminist theories (eg. Bryson, 1987, Hargreaves, 1986).

Alongside this, there has been the development of work using the concept of patriarchy, drawn from radical feminist theory, to explain the male domination of sport (eg. Birrell, 1984; Fasting and Pedesen, 1987; Theberge, 1985). This work has argued for the importance of *female* sporting

values and the redefinition and development of separate sport centred on, and for, women (eg. Birrell and Richter, 1987; Fasting and Pederson, 1987). Whilst these accounts have been invaluable for showing ways in which women feel their oppression as *women*, including the way in which sport is a major mechanism in the control of women's sexuality, they have been criticised for reinforcing a biologically reductionist explanation of gender relations. As Scraton notes,

the question arises as to whether the masculine values, behaviours and attitudes attributed to sport and much criticised by feminism are an inevitable feature of maleness. The implication of some radical feminist writing is that this is the case which leaves feminist theory back once more in the entrenched commonsense views of inherent physical and psychological sex difference. This area is difficult to negotiate. The experiences of women suggests a real need for space and separate provision in sport but there is a real necessity to avoid biological reductionism for the progression of feminist social theory which can account for the social construction of gender (Scraton, 1988, p.11/12, original emphasis).

More useful attempts to move away from such gender reductionism to develop a more *relational* theory have come from feminists who have recognised the importance of an historical framework in their conceptualisation of gender, and who have worked with, and adapted critical neo-Marxist theories of sport (eg. Bryson, 1987; Hargreaves, 1986). By taking a socialist feminist perspective, these have been able to recognise and account for the way in which gender relations are shaped by both patriarchy and capitalism, as well as how these change and adapt over time.

### *Hegemony and feminists accounts of sport*

Mirroring developments within educational theory, a number of theoretical accounts developed by male sociologists have used Gramsci's concept of hegemony to explain the contestation and struggle involved in the reproduction of class power relations in sport under capitalism (eg. Gruneau, 1983; Whitson, 1984). Some of these have also attempted to include an analysis of gender in their work (eg. Kidd, 1978; Whannel, 1983). However, as Hall (1985a) notes, most have been unable (or unwilling) to place gender relations as central to their analyses, and continue to theorise women's, as well as men's, position in sport as primarily constrained by social class. Recognising the usefulness of the concept of hegemony, a number of feminists have begun to use it to develop theories which explain the reproduction of male hegemony both through, and within, sport and leisure activities (eg. Bryson, 1987; Green, et al, 1990; Hargreaves, 1986).

As the previous section illustrated, the strength of the concept of hegemony comes from the fact that it can explain not only male domination, but most importantly, how the hegemonic process works to ensure that this is seen as *legitimate* and accepted. It recognises that hegemony is the result of constant struggle, that it is *achieved*, rather than simply given, and therefore is always open to change and transformation over time. Sport, as a cultural practice, is an ideal vehicle for the reproduction of male hegemony through the ideological presentation of 'natural', immutable, biological differences between the sexes (Willis, 1982).

One of the strengths of using hegemony as a theoretical concept is its ability to allow room for resistance and struggle - to reinstate agency into theories of gender relations. Scraton's (1987a) account of young women's resistance to the activities and teaching of PE shows how this take similar forms to those described in schools more generally (eg. Griffin, 1981; McRobbie, 1978). For example, the 'sullen, silent participant' identified by Griffin (1981), who often simply encourages less attention from the teacher in the classroom, provides far more conflict for the PE teacher, since such behaviour can affect the participation of the whole group. Similarly, the strict dress code enforced within PE, and which is seen as an important part of maintaining 'good' standards, forms a major aspect of conflict between PE teachers and their female students. Ideologies of femininity are not reproduced simplistically without resistance and negotiation in girls' PE.

Bryson's work (1987; 1990) represents an important attempt to show how hegemonic masculinity is reproduced through and within sport. She argues that this relies on two mechanisms; the exclusion of women, and the 'inferiorization' of their performances by comparison with men's. Women's performances are constantly compared unfavourably to those of men, even when they compete on their own, and it is the performance criteria seen as masculine, rather than feminine, which become most highly valued. Bryson identifies the centrality of certain sports to the maintenance of male domination. These 'flagships of hegemonic masculinity' are the team sports of cricket and the various codes of football (rugby, soccer, Australian football) which are the sports most closely tied up with the exercise of sanctioned and highly valued qualities of strength, power and

aggressiveness, and those to which a majority of people are regularly exposed (through the media etc). It is not surprising, then, to note that in the moves towards mixed sex PE lessons, it is these games which are usually kept as male-only preserves.

*Sport within the broader structures of gender oppression*

Sport and PE have to be recognised as just one site of women's oppression. An analysis of their position cannot be divorced from that of the wider social, political and economic context of their lives more generally. Men's dominant role in sport is supported 'not only by the structures and ideologies of male power within sport itself but also by patriarchal relations in the household, community and economy' (Deem, 1986a, p.78). Feminists working within the broader area of leisure studies, for example, have begun to show how concepts such as leisure as 'free time' do not always fit neatly into an analysis of women's lives. Studies such as Deem's (1986a, 1987b) and others (eg Dixey and Talbot, 1982; Green, et al, 1990), have shown how domestic and family responsibilities prevent most women from enjoying much free time at all, and how few women can make use of this to participate in sport as their leisure activity.

As Deem (1987b, p.428) notes,

For something to form part of most women's leisure it needs to be enjoyable, accessible, flexible, inexpensive and preferably capable of being done either from home or in a place and a time which fits in with women's dual roles and responsibilities, but also not incur men's individual or collective wrath, nor affect men's own leisure.



Not many sports fit this pattern, and women are therefore much more likely to play roles in sport other than the active participant - as spectators or facilitators of others' sports (Talbot, 1984). Men's control over women, both as individual women's partners, and as a group, is identified as another major element in women's restricted leisure experiences and opportunities (Deem, 1986a; Green, et al, 1990).

Feminists have successfully made links between women's experiences in sport and leisure and the experiences within other aspects of their lives. Whilst gender relations are a major factor in explaining women's experiences of sport and leisure, class and race have important impacts too. The task of successfully integrating class and race relations within theories of male domination of women in sport remains a central issue for women working within this area, as within feminist theory more generally. Feminists have been more successful at integrating class into their analysis, but efforts to incorporate race and ethnicity into the analysis are still largely absent. There are only a few accounts which explore black girls and women's experiences of sport, PE and leisure. Some accounts have showed how black girls' experiences of sport are mediated by both patriarchy, and ethnicity (eg. Carrington, Chivers and Williams, 1987; Carrington and Williams, 1988). Black feminists have argued, however, that it is insitutionalised racism, rather than black girls' own ethnicity, which needs to become much more central in these accounts (eg. Raval, 1989).

*Summary: From femininity to feminism*

The above discussion has overviewed some of the feminist work exploring the role of sport and PE in the social reproduction of gender relations. There is a dearth of feminist analyses of PE, reflecting no doubt its low status as a subject within schools. Despite the reluctance to get involved with an analysis which might be 'too close to biology for comfort', feminist critiques of sport and leisure, are now more forthcoming. The theoretical development within these fields have mirrored those within education, discussed in the previous section, and has moved from an equal opportunities perspective to one which places male/female power relations at the centre of the analysis.

The early liberal attempts were rejected for their stress on the individual woman, and on the perceived incompatibility between her 'femininity', and those of competitive sport. Similarly, there are limitations with the different strands of thought within radical feminism, whether it is a cultural feminist perspective (those who advocate the celebration and protection of the supposedly 'special' and superior values of women) or those arguing that it is patriarchy which is central to women's oppression. Arguments for separate development of sport for men and women stemming from these kinds of essentialist positions are problematic when they are based on biologist assumptions. If male domination in sport is reduced to the biological differences between men and women, it leaves little room for change.

A much more adequate theory is one which acknowledges that gender relations

are historical and therefore changeable, that they are constituted cumulatively in a system of mutually reinforcing structures, of which sport is but one. Some of the most successful theoretical attempts have used the concept of hegemony to describe how male power and privilege is maintained and reproduced through and within sporting practices, and how such relations are constantly being challenged and changed. These have been able to show how women's experiences of sport and physical activity are affected by their social class, although race and ethnicity are dimensions which have not always been adequately included in the analysis.

#### **Sport, physicality and power**

A second major theme within current feminist theory is the work which is beginning to focus on the way in which women's increasing involvement in sport and PE can have counter-hegemonic potential, and the link between sport, physicality and power (eg. Gilroy, 1989; Hall, 1989; Lenskyj, 1986; MacKinnon, 1987, Scraton, 1987b; Theberge, 1987). Can sport contribute to an empowering of women through the empowerment of their own bodies? In what ways can women's sports involvement present a challenge to hegemonic masculinity, and dominant notions of femininity? Alongside this is the work of a number of mainly male theorists who are beginning to explore the ways in which sport and PE play a vital role in the development of hegemonic masculinities and in the maintainance of male power (eg. Connell, 1990; Kidd, 1990; Messner, 1988; Messner and Sabo 1990a; Whitson, 1990).

*Women's sport involvement as a challenge to male hegemony*

Feminist accounts of sport and PE have rarely focused on the positive experiences of those women who *do* participate - even if it is participation within patriarchal constraints - participation which Wimbush and Talbot (1988) call 'relative freedom'. All too often, accounts have indentified the constraints and barriers preventing women from participating in sport, or have focused on the so called female 'diseases' of the body, such as anorexia nervosa. What is missing, Hall (1989) suggests, is an analysis of more 'positive' body practices associated with physicality in sport, exercise and dance. This omission reflects the way in which dominant discourses within the sociology of sport have constituted women as 'objects' rather than subjects (Hall, 1985b). As noted earlier, the development of feminist 'knowledge' which can provide ways of validating and acknowledging the subjective experiences of women forms the crux of the feminist debates on epistemology, methodology and research methods (eg. Harding, 1986, Stanley, 1990).

A number of accounts are now beginning to explore the positive experiences girls and women gain from involvement in physical exercise. These range from young girls' involvement in disco dancing (Griffiths, 1988), to women playing 'conventional' sports such as hockey or badminton (Talbot, 1988) or baseball (Birrell and Richter, 1987). Most accounts recognise the importance of the sense of female collectivity and collegiality these women-only experiences can offer, and several identify the potential of team games in this process (eg. Bennett, et al, 1987; Theberge, 1987).

*Providing positive physical experiences for girls and women through PE*

Since girls and young women rely heavily on their school PE for their introduction to sport and physical activity, it is crucial to understand the nature of this experience. PE *should* play an important part in the development of positive body images for girls and young women, through the acquisition of physical skills, and competencies, key objectives of most PE programmes (eg. see PEA, 1987).

However, Scraton's (1989) research reveals current practice in girls' PE rarely achieves these objectives. Instead, it encourages girls to be 'vigorous' and to develop 'good health' but within an ideology of the physical which sets limitations on female activity, physical contact, and which concentrates largely on personal appearance, all of which contributes to the maintenance of 'acceptable' heterosexuality, and a reinforcement of male/female physical power relations (Scraton, 1987b). She argues strongly for the retention of girl-centred organisation within PE, and for self defence to become an essential core activity for girls. This might be one way in which PE can make a positive contribution to the development of girls' individual physical strength, power and confidence.

'Progressive' moves to mixed sex teaching in PE should be viewed with caution given the wide range of evidence to suggest that girls are exposed to verbal and physical sexual harassment in other areas of co-educational schooling (eg. Jones, 1985; Mahony, 1985; Jones and Mahony, 1989). The 'loosely framed' PE classroom and the legitimacy of physical contact within it (eg. in supporting moves in gymnastics, in dance and in some games)

makes this even more problematic. Scraton concludes that PE needs to 'question whether, or indeed how, it contributes to [the] definition of woman-as-object' (Scraton, 1987b, p.186). The contribution of boys' PE to the development of 'desirable masculine' physicality has yet to be fully explored (9).

#### *Contestation or incorporation?*

Whilst women's increased involvement in physical activity can be seen as a positive challenge to patriarchal oppression, others have suggested it is more appropriately seen as a process of *incorporation* (eg. Hall, 1985a; Haug, 1987; Messner, 1988; Willis, 1982). The large increases in participation by women have been in *particular* kinds of physical activity, largely those activities within the 'fitness' industry, such as aerobics.

Messner (1988) suggests that sport has served as one of the primary institutional means of 'bolstering a challenged and faltering ideology of male superiority' in the twentieth century, and that the female body in sport has become a 'contested ideological terrain'. Whilst increasing female athleticism represents a genuine quest by women for equality, he argues, this has not been without contradictions and ambiguities. Women's attempts to control and define their own bodies through sport are being shaped *within* existing hegemonic definitions of femininity. Similarly, Haug (et al) (1987) notes, the development of women's gymnastics, in terms of the types of movements included in routines, the clothing and its presentation by the sports media, has resulted in an objectification and commodification of women gymnasts for the 'male gaze'. Walby (1990) has

concluded that the dominant discourse of femininity has shifted away from one which emphasised domesticity towards one which centralises heterosexual attractiveness to men.

*Sport, power and hegemonic masculinity*

The second part of this chapter highlighted the work by Connell (et al) (1982) which explored the way in which schools provide different contexts for a variety of masculinizing and feminizing practices. Connell has suggested that a major element of hegemonic masculinity revolves around physical aggression and heterosexual conquest. A number of male theorists have developed this work, and are beginning to explore the way in which sport and PE plays a vital role in the development of hegemonic masculinities and male power (eg. Connell, 1990; Kidd, 1990; Messner, 1990; Messner and Sabo 1990b; Whitson, 1990). As Whitson argues,

If ...our sense of who we are is rooted in our experience of embodiment, it is integral to the reproduction of gender relations that boys are encouraged to experience their bodies and therefore themselves, in forceful, space occupying, even dominating ways. It may be suggested that masculinizing and feminizing practices associated with the body are at the heart of the social construction of masculinity and femininity (Whitson, 1990, p.23).

Whitson argues that the development of confidence and assertiveness as ways of relating to others, become embodied through the development of strength and skill and through prevailing over opponents in competitive sporting situations. Sport (particularly the major games) has therefore become a key masculinizing practice, and an important element in the reproduction of

male/female power relations.

Feminists have long recognised the importance of male *physical* power relations, yet it is only recently that the contribution of sport and physical activity to this aspect has begun to be explored (eg. Scraton, 1987b, Bryson, 1987). Bryson (1987) argues that sports 'needs to be analysed along with rape, pornography and domestic violence as one of the means through which men monopolise physical force' (p.357). This remain a key area for future feminist research.

*Summary: Sport, physicality and power*

This section has described key work which has focused on the way in which women's involvement in sport and physical activity has counter-hegemonic potential, and the role of sport in the development of a more positive physicality for women. Sport and physical activity can offer supportive and positive experiences for women, and women-only sporting groups and teams have the potential for developing female solidarity and support networks. The development of women's physical strength and skill through sport is an important aspect of the challenge to existing gender relations. However, women's increasing involvement in physical activity may represent a shift in male hegemony, rather than a real challenge or change. The boundaries of acceptable 'femininity' may have shifted to include physically active women, but this remains firmly within the limits of what is deemed physically attractive to men. The link between sport and the reproduction of heterosexuality, along with homophobic attitudes, is an important focus of some recent work (eg. Connell, 1990; Lensky, 1987).



Similarly, the exploration of the role sport plays in the reproduction of hegemonic masculinities and of male physical power is a promising avenue for further work.

### **Theory, policy and practice**

The third area mentioned by Hall in the development of feminist theory in sport is the link between theory, policy and practice. This link has always been central to the development of feminist theory, since feminist research has never been content to simply describe women's lives but also explicitly seeks to change and improve them. In this sense, there are similarities between the aims of feminist theory and those of critical sports theory. However, despite these links, and the possibility of building more pluristic, collaborative accounts, Deem (1988) argues in agreement with Grosz (1987), that politically, there must always be room for the development of autonomous feminist theory. She notes that whereas feminists have been keen to expand and develop new theories, using insights from a variety of perspectives, the reverse has not always been the case. Feminist perspectives have largely developed alongside 'malestream' sociological theory, and there have been, and continues to be, a substantial resistance to feminist scholarship within sociology generally and within the sociology of sport (Hall, 1990).

What is important is not so much that there are different perspectives within the sociology of sport, but implications of these for political change. Hall (1988), for example, argues that there are unrecognised gender assumptions and ideologies implicit in the development of much

mainstream sports research. It is no surprise, she argues, that the majority of work within the discourse of women and sport has, until recently, had a heavy reliance on sex role theory and on femininity rather than masculinity, since this kind of theory, and the kinds of questions this supports, do little to challenge and change the pervasive nature of existing gender ideologies in society.

Questions around the production of 'new knowledge' within sociology of sport (and education) - what kinds of research gets funding, what kinds of questions are being asked, and what kinds of 'knowledge' becomes dominant - are crucially important to a feminist critique of PE and education, and to this study. The next chapter considers work which has critiqued the kinds of 'knowledge' students are introduced to in their training, and the implications of this for the reproduction of gender relations.

The fact that the relationship between theory, policy and practice is central to the development of feminist theory presents feminism with a key problem. The differences in the nature of women's lives and experiences in society has meant that the development of one feminist theory has been impossible. The result has been the development of the different perspectives within feminist theory which has reflected these differences. The current problematic for feminists is to acknowledge the differences between women, and to find ways of constructing theory which can provide clear, practical and relevant strategies to improve the lives of all women (Ramazanoglu, 1989a).

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the development of feminist theory from initial challenges to the sexism of existing theory, to the development of more autonomous feminist theory, drawing on aspects of patriarchal theory where useful. Recently, there has been a move away from attempts to develop 'macro' feminist theories, to ones which analyse the reproduction of gender relations in more specific, historical contexts. These can incorporate more easily a notion of agency, and with it, the possibilities of social change.

Socialist feminist theory, which recognises the importance of situating an analysis of education and sport/PE within the wider structures of both capitalist and patriarchal relations, provides the most adequate theoretical accounts of the reproduction of gender power relations. In both educational and sport contexts, feminists have usefully used the concept of hegemony to describe the reproduction of gender relations. These accounts have been able to avoid the functionalism of earlier, male reproduction theories, and show how gender relations are always contested, changeable and specific to different contexts. Increasingly, analysis has included the reproduction of hegemonic forms of masculinity through sport and education, and its relationship to male social control, sexuality and power. This chapter has not included a focus on teachers, or more specifically the role of ITE in the process of reproduction of gender relations, since this is the aim of the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

TEACHERS, TEACHING AND TEACHER SOCIALISATION

## **CHAPTER TWO: TEACHERS, TEACHING AND TEACHER SOCIALISATION**

### **Introduction**

The last chapter offered an overview of the development of feminist theory in education, sport and PE from the early stages of challenging sexism in existing theory, to the development of more autonomous feminist theory. It concentrated on the reproduction of gender relations through schooling but did not focus directly on teachers, their work, or on teacher socialisation. This chapter considers some of this work, although not all of the work included here is feminist, or has included a consideration of gender relations in its analysis. The fact that research is not feminist, or does not consider gender issues, does not prevent it from making other important contributions to a discussion on teachers and their work, and hence, such work is included here.

The chapter is in two sections. The first section concentrates on the research which has focused on teachers and teaching as work, and on teachers' attitudes to equal opportunities and to gender equality. The second section focuses on ITE and highlights the paucity of recent empirical research in this area. Most of this work is now dated, and is limited by the theoretical perspective it adopts, and as well as its lack of concern with the reproduction of gender relations. The small but developing area of feminist work which is beginning to examine gender relations within ITE is considered, and the ITE of PE teachers is identified as a significant gap in the research.

## **PART ONE: TEACHERS AND TEACHING**

### **Teachers' lives and careers**

In the 1980's, sociology of education research has focused on teachers, and their work and careers within teaching (eg. Ball and Goodson, 1985; Connell, 1985; Sikes, Measor and Woods, 1985). For Ozga (1988), the nature and conditions of teachers' work have been, and continue to be, radically altered by policy initiatives which have had the cumulative effect of increasing the government's control over education. Recent research has attempted to illuminate the relationship between the wider, structural constraints and the subjective, everyday experiences of individual teachers within schools, and there has been an increasing recognition of the way in which these are affected by gender, class, and race (eg. Apple, 1986; Ball, 1987; Connell, 1985; De Lyon and Widdowson Migniuolo, 1989). More recently, feminists have begun to document the particular problems and constraints faced by women teachers in their teaching careers (eg. Acker, 1989; De Lyon and Widdowson Migniuolo, 1989).

#### *A Gender Segregated Profession*

Although women now make up a larger proportion of the teaching workforce than men (women made up 61.5% of all teachers (DES, 1992a) they occupy particular positions within the profession, and tend to hold specific posts of responsibilities, rather than being represented across the full range (Grant, 1989). For example, they are more likely to be in charge of young children, fill posts within particular subjects, occupy pastoral roles in

secondary schools, and are over-represented in teaching, rather than management roles in education (eg. Acker, 1983; Grant, 1989; ILEA, 1984b, 1987). They are also over-represented in the lower salary scales of the profession (see DES, 1987; DES, 1992a; NUT, 1980).

Women's position within the profession is deteriorating, rather than improving. The most recent research carried out after the implementation of the new grading system introduced in 1987, suggests that an 'underclass' of teachers is being created; teachers who are demoralised, stuck on main professional grade with no incentive payments and with little chance of promotion, who are working harder than ever 'just to keep up'. Women teachers make up the majority of this group (Marr and Maclure, 1990). This is particularly acute in primary schools where there are few incentive allowances, and 89.7% of teachers on main professional grade are women (DES, 1992a). Latest figures from the DES show that the percentage of men who have been promoted to headship and deputy headship positions in the period from 1981-1987 is significantly higher (and particularly in primary schools) than that of women. Although women form 47% of all secondary teachers, only 18.17% of secondary head teachers are women. The picture is worse in primary schools, where men form only 20.2% of all primary teachers, and yet are 52% of primary head teachers.

Similarly, women's position in further and higher education has not improved significantly over the last decade. As Delamont (1990) notes, women's career structures in teaching were drastically curtailed by two major changes within the education system since the 1950's; the move to co-education, and the closing of single sex training colleges, or their

replacement by multi-course tertiary institutions. In 1957, for example, there were one hundred and eight, two year teacher training colleges; nineteen for men, fifteen mixed, and seventy four for women, and many of these were headed by women (Delamont, 1990). Similarly, the move to co-education in the women's and men's colleges at Oxford and Cambridge has meant women losing out in terms of tenured posts; whilst many men have gained tenured posts in the former women's colleges, hardly any women have done so in the former men's colleges (Hansard Society Commission, 1990).

In the polytechnics, women are slightly better represented (women represent 14.3% of full-time staff, compared to 13.9% in the universities, and 22.4% in other 'major institutions') but are missing from senior positions (1). In the universities, women make up only a small minority of full time teaching staff, are likely to occupy the points of the lowest lecturing scale, and are vastly over-represented in un-tenured, research posts (Acker, 1984; AUT, 1992; Hansard Society Commission, 1990; Rendel, 1984). The latest audit carried out by the Association of University Teachers (AUT) showed that women were just 3% of professors, 6% of senior lecturers, and 22% of lecturers (AUT, 1992). As well as vertical segregation (women occupying the lowest grade posts), horizontal segregation also operates. Both women students and staff are located in particular subjects areas, most notably education, social studies, health or languages.

The evidence available on teachers' career positions within PE suggests that here, too, men are likely to occupy the overall head of department position, even though the department may well still operate with a teacher in charge of women's PE, or as separate men's and women's departments (eg.



Burgess, 1988a; Cunningham, 1989; Evans and Williams, 1989; Scraton, 1985). Although there are no national figures available, there is some evidence that the move towards co-education in PE ITE has led to a trend where men are being appointed to key decision making positions, including those in former women's PE colleges, whilst the number of women staff is declining (2).

#### *Women's careers in teaching*

The concept of 'career' has been used to describe not only an individual's experiences within teaching, but also the structural features which mould and shape those experiences. As Evans and Williams (1989) note, although all teachers are affected by structural factors, not all teachers experience them in a uniform way, or possess the same degree of power or resource 'to confront, challenge or resist their individual conditions of work' (3). Teacher's career chances vary according to their position in the 'institutional grid' (Connell, 1985) which locates them in terms of factors such as age, subject they teach, or type of school in which they teach, but these patterns are affected by gender, too. Gender has only recently begun to be explored as a factor in teachers' career progressions.

Many explanations for women teachers' subordinate position within the teaching profession have relied on limiting and harmful stereotypes; they don't get promoted because they are not 'ambitious' enough; they are not as 'committed' as male teachers, or they are too 'emotional' to be able to hold down senior positions (see Acker, 1983). More recently, studies have identified how ideologies of familism operate to hinder and block the

career pathways of women teachers, or relegate them to the jobs with young children, the jobs which carry the lowest status (eg. Aspinwall and Drummond, 1989). Black women's experiences in teaching, including the stress of 'being used' as the experts on every black cultural group in society, have hardly begun to be documented (eg. Bangar and McDermott, 1989). Grant (1989) has argued that the concept of career as it is currently used is inappropriate to describe the career paths of women. Since it is women, rather than men, who are likely to take a 'career break' in order to raise their children (a factor shown to have a negative effect on career achievement), the age-related norms used in the analysis of teacher careers are clearly inappropriate for women.

The traditional role expectations and responsibilities of child care and family life have been shown to deter many women from seeking promotion - particularly if it entails a move to another school. Many women only consider career advancement after their children are settled in school (eg. Evetts, 1989). Similarly, the shortage of childcare is regularly cited by women as a major reason preventing them from pursuing a career more rigourously (eg. INTO, 1985).

Career patterns and advancement within PE are not only structured by gender but are closely associated with the 'non academic' nature of the subject (eg. Evans and Williams, 1989). As Ball (1987) has pointed out, there are very clear patterns of advantage and disadvantage in the career opportunities of teachers of different subjects, with PE featuring poorly within these. The low status of PE is reflected in the distribution of salary points within the subject, and in the position which PE teachers

achieve in the hierarchy of the school. PE teachers are far less likely to rise above the mid levels of the salary scale within their departments than other subject teachers (Ball, 1987; Evans and Williams, 1989; Hilsum and Start, 1974). PE teachers' career advancement has tended to be affected by age too (Sikes, 1988). There is still a strong feeling that PE is a subject which needs to be taught by a young teacher, and that competence as a PE teacher links closely with a teacher's personal practical performance. As they get older, PE teachers, particularly men, look to move out of their subject area either into pastoral care, or into another subject area. As Sikes (1988) notes, one of the consequences of this, put alongside the gendered pattern of advancement in teaching posts, is that PE remains controlled by relatively young men, and it is their interpretation of what constitutes an appropriate PE curriculum which prevails.

Al Khalifa (1989) suggests that it is the use of the 'male' timetable of career advancement as the yardstick in promotion, together with the move to link school leadership to stereotypically 'masculine' traits and behaviours, which is contributing to a segregation within the teaching force where men manage, and women teach. As she notes, the debate on school accountability and effectiveness of the 1970's and 1980's has led to a growth in theories of educational management using a 'technicist' model. This perspective emphasises characteristics which are commonly depicted as 'masculine' - analytical detachment, strong task direction, hard-nosedness. She suggests that it is these masculine images, overlaid and strengthened with existing prejudices about women's unsuitability for leadership positions, which serve to rationalise and perpetuate the 'exclusive male character of educational management' (p.88). For many women, the images of

management, the appreciation of the difficulties they may well encounter (not least of which may be getting men to work for them - see ILEA, 1987), together with high stress levels and long hours of work, operate to dissuade them applying for advancement.

#### *Women's experiences of teaching*

Recent studies (eg. NATFHE, 1987) have shown how women teachers' lives are routinely controlled and affected by sexual harassment, not just by male staff, but also by male pupils. The trade unions have begun to take more serious notice of sexual harassment (eg. NUT, 1986), and there are now several studies which have documented the prevalence of sexual harassment of women teachers (eg. Whitbread, 1980; NATFHE, 1987). Burgess (1989a) and Cunnison (1989) have both documented how the 'routine' jokes made by male teachers at women's expense and which are part of the daily life of schools, operate to detract from their professional image, prospects for promotion and their experiences of teaching more generally. Women teachers - and girls too, as the previous chapter outlined - rarely complain about being harassed since they realise these complaints are seldom taken seriously. Incidents are more often dismissed by senior (male) members of staff as 'only natural' behaviour. For this reason, several authors have suggested that sexual harassment is better seen as a central part of masculinity. As Benn (1985, p.34) has suggested,

The description 'sexual harassment' itself rings wrong. To me it conjures up images of 'moments', episodes of coercion, bad times..but there is something overwhelmingly ordinary, tedious and day to day about it. The point is, isn't sexual harassment really about masculinity? But shouldn't any campaign against it

contain some recognition of, and commitment to change, masculinity - rather than simply to amend 'unacceptable', 'individual' male behaviour?

As the previous chapter outlined, it is only recently that research on gender has begun to focus on exploring the ways in which schooling contributes to a reproduction of hegemonic forms of masculinity with male pupils (eg. Askew and Ross, 1988). However, very little of this research has focused on the role of male teachers within this process (Benyon, 1989; Halson, 1989; Herbert, 1989). Benyon's work (1989) is important for it is one of the few studies which has documented the routine and accepted 'violence' of male teachers, and the way in which they use violence (real or symbolic) to establish their control and authority over male pupils. Delamont (1990) has suggested that since teaching is an occupation requiring sensitivity, expressive and receptive qualities - qualities normally associated with femininity rather than masculinity - this kind of behaviour from male teachers is a reaction to the fact that the masculinity of male teachers is 'perpetually in doubt'. Certainly, there are still big gaps in our understanding of how masculinities are constructed and transmitted in schools, the role of male teachers within this process, and the effects of these on the experiences of women teachers (Metcalf and Humphries, 1985). Askew and Ross (1988), for example, have shown how women are very often at a disadvantage in a school where there is a prevailing 'macho' environment, which pressurises teachers into adopting authoritarian teaching styles.

Sexual harassment of women teachers is not limited to the actions of colleagues - sexual harassment by male pupils is common for many women

teachers too (eg. Askew and Ross, 1988; NATFHE, 1987; Walkerdine, 1987). Not surprisingly, new young members of staff, or students on teaching practice are particularly vulnerable (Menter, 1989; Whitbread, 1980). Very often, the behavioural problems women teachers face from the boys in their classrooms are directly related to issues of sexual harassment, yet they are unable to make these public for fear of being seen as an incompetent teacher. There is a common belief in male teachers' ability to 'control' groups, and much of this stems from their ability to resort to, or threaten, physical force (Benyon, 1989; Wolpe, 1988)

It is these kinds of experiences which, as yet, remain largely under-researched in higher education contexts. Some higher education institutions have strong 'masculine' cultures, and are characterised by male traditions and acts of academic 'machismo' (eg. Acker, 1984; Hansard Society, 1990; Morgan, 1981). The experiences of women lecturers within these kinds of institutions need to be understood and made visible. Ramazanoglu (1987), for example, has suggested that the way in which men control women in higher education institutions is best described as 'violence'. This ranges from verbal or vocal violence, to more extreme cases of sexual harassment. She argues that the competitive and hierarchical career structures in educational institutions themselves act as a form of violence towards women, since women who succeed within this kind of system are constructed as, and are treated by men as 'abnormal'. The result is that many potentially able women often end up deferring to men, rather than challenging them, and the division of labour seen in schools, where women teach and men manage, becomes reproduced in higher education.

Different subjects may well reflect different 'cultures'. The work exploring the cultures of different subjects at school level (eg. Goodson, 1984) has recently been extended to consider subjects at higher education level (eg. Thomas, 1990). Thomas's (1990) research aimed to consider the relationship between the 'culture' of specific subjects and the commonsense constructions of masculinity and femininity and the implications of this relationship for the reproduction of gender inequality in higher education. She compared the experiences of women and men students in two subject areas within the sciences (Physics and Physical Science) with those of the humanities (English, Communications), and concluded that higher education uses culturally available ideas about masculinity and femininity in such a way that women are marginalised, and to some extent, alienated. For the men students, studying Physics was a reaffirmation of their masculinity, whereas for the women, there was always an uneasy tension about their capabilities as physicists, based on the commonsense idea of a clash between their 'femininity' and the subject. Even when men were involved in a subject like English, in which there are likely to be many more women students than men, Thomas argues that it was the very fact of being in the minority meant the male students in her study were able to maintain their superiority - in this case, it was their non-conformism which was closely allied to masculinity.

As the previous chapter showed, there is a close connection between masculinity and sport. Despite the history of women's early involvement in PE (Fletcher, 1984), the culture of the subject in schools today is one which reinforces the 'functional, scientific and competitive discourse of

male PE' (Evans, 1990a, p.146). Although we have some data on how pupils as a group perceive their PE teacher (as elitist, competitive, more concerned to work with talented pupils rather than every child, and with the development of skill uppermost - see Nettleton, 1985), we have little information about how girls or boys, as specific groups, view their PE lessons. Similarly, to date, we know very little about the 'culture' of PE settings in higher education, how this might have changed since moving to co-education, or the experiences of women and men students within these. As the next section describes, Dewar's (1990) work is pioneering within this area, but this work has been done outside the Britain context. The different historical tradition of PE here may be an important factor in the way in which women and men students (and staff) experience PE ITE, as well as the type of institution in which the course is offered.

#### *Attitudes towards equal opportunities*

As the previous chapter described, schools contribute to the reproduction of gender inequalities, either by direct acts of discrimination, or more usually, through their more subtle 'gender regimes'. The role of teachers within this process, and the attitudes they hold towards equal opportunities, is of obvious significance since it is they who will mediate, oppose or neglect equal opportunities policies (Riddell, 1989a). Whilst some research has suggested that most teachers believe in the equality of the sexes as an abstract principle, it has also demonstrated that few teachers recognise, are aware, or accept that schools contribute to the processes by which girls are discriminated against (Kelly, 1987; Pratt, 1985; Pratt et al 1984; Riddell, 1989a). Indeed, Pratt's study



showed teachers felt that their professionalism demanded a neutral, disinterested stance towards gender discrimination.

Although there is a large degree of uniformity of attitudes held within the teaching profession generally (eg. Kelly, 1987), attitudes towards equal opportunities appear to be affected by the sex, age, and teaching subjects of individual teachers, as well as the type and location of the school in which they work (Kelly, 1987; Pratt, 1985; Riddell, 1989a). Female teachers are more likely than male teachers to support the principle of sex equality, as are younger, rather than older teachers. However, subject specialism is more significant than sex or age of teacher in determining attitudes towards equal opportunities (Pratt, 1985). Those teachers involved in the scientific or craft subjects are most likely to hold attitudes least sympathetic to the idea of equal opportunities, whereas teachers in the humanities area are likely to hold the most positive attitudes. PE as a specific subject area is only mentioned in Pratt's study; he found that PE teachers fell into the group of teachers who were least sympathetic to equal opportunities, a position which reflects findings in other research not specifically focusing on teacher attitudes (eg. Leaman, 1984; Scraton, 1989).

Many teachers blame the fact that children are already socialised into sex stereotypical attitudes and roles by the time they come to school. Since they believe schools should be 'neutral' institutions, they do not agree that part of their role might be to intervene and encourage non-stereotypical behaviour. The belief in child-centred teaching ideologies where everyone is 'treated as individuals' is strong, consequently leading

to a situation where most teachers 'do nothing' to implement anti-sexist initiatives (Acker, 1988). Since there are no negative sanctions, and innovations would entail time and effort over and above normal class time, with very few positive incentives, Acker suggests that this response is understandable. Similarly, she suggests that the conditions of work within teaching (eg. increasing work loads; classroom dynamics where control of children is paramount etc) and the type of people teachers are - generally conservative - leads to a situation where anti-sexist initiatives are more often resisted rather than welcomed (eg. Payne, et al, 1984). The few exceptions to this - teachers who are in favour of schools taking positive action to change the current situation - are most often those who have explicitly identified themselves as feminists (Riddell, 1989a), a position which many experience as isolating and alienating (Joyce, 1987).

Not surprisingly, attitudes held by students in training have been found to be similar to those of teachers in service (eg. Massey and Christensen, 1990; Skelton and Hanson, 1989). Although there is little research evidence available which considers the attitudes of lecturers teaching on ITE towards equal opportunities, it seems unlikely that these will differ significantly from those of teachers in schools. Indeed, there may be good reason to suggest that the attitudes of lecturers in higher education might be *more* conservative than those of teachers in schools, given the larger number of male lecturers, and the slower rate at which equal opportunity initiatives have been taken up by higher education institutions generally. The high level of demand for higher education places also ensures that there is little necessity for lecturing staff to seriously address equality issues (see Appendix Two).

Feminists, then, have been instrumental in highlighting the gender dynamics of teaching, both in terms of women's careers, but also in terms of women's experiences of teaching. Other work which has recognized the importance of gender has been that which has considered professionalism and the nature of teacher's work, which is discussed below.

### *Teaching as work*

The nature of professionalism has been a longstanding and central part of research on teachers and teaching. Recently, it has been argued that teaching is becoming proletarianised, although the application of this thesis to teaching is very problematic (eg. see Apple, 1986; Apple, 1988; Ozga and Lawn, 1981; Ozga and Lawn, 1988; Ozga and Westoby, 1988). Proletarianisation is defined as the process that results in the worker being deprived of the capacity to initiate and execute work; it is the removal of any element of skill from the work, which results in, amongst other things, the erosion of workplace autonomy, the decline of craft skills, and the increase of management controls (Ozga and Westoby, 1988). Ozga and Lawn (1988) have suggested that whilst there are aspects of their original work (Ozga and Lawn, 1981) which analysed teaching in this way which were, and which remain valid, more recent research on teaching has demonstrated the contradictions involved in applying the proletarianization thesis to teaching.

Whilst there is clear evidence of the ways in which teachers' work is changing (and this process would seem to have been intensified since the passing of the Educational Reform Act (ERA) (1988) and the introduction of the National Curriculum - eg. see Ball, 1990a) teaching cannot be compared straight forwardly to other types of work. Ozga and Lawn (1988) argue, for example, that the notion of skill in the teaching process is problematic. What constitutes de-skilling in work which is essentially about social relations - the teacher-pupil relationship, rather than the technical relations between assembly workers and their machines? Similarly, they argue that proletarianisation needs to be assessed in terms of its masculine construction. As the previous section has illustrated, more recent work has demonstrated the importance of gender in the analysis of the labour process of teaching, and the link between proletarianisation and feminization (Apple, 1988; Ozga and Westoby, 1988). If teachers are becoming increasingly divided into those who 'manage' and those who teach, it is likely that men would do the former, and women the latter. Ozga and Lawn (1988) argue that whilst the focus of teaching as work is useful and should remain central, future work needs to incorporate an historical dimension, and one which allows teachers to be viewed as a heterogeneous group, which are actively involved in challenging the contradictory changes occurring in their work conditions. However, as Apple (1988) concludes, an accurate understanding of the changing nature of teachers' work cannot emerge without placing it within a framework which integrates both class (including the process of proletarianisation) and gender.

## Summary

This section has described the segregated nature of the teaching profession. Although women make up a larger percentage of the teaching force than men, they are mostly employed in the lower levels of the profession, and in particular subject areas. They are less likely to be in management positions than men, and are vastly under-represented in higher education, particularly in universities. Further, their promotion chances seem to be getting worse, rather than better. A lack of understanding of the way in which their dual roles affects their teaching careers, together with almost all male promotion panels, many of whom hold stereotypical attitudes towards women's roles, contribute to a situation where women remain largely in teaching jobs on low salaries, whilst school management is dominated by men. Women's position within PE - despite its female origins - is similarly disadvantaged, and the nature of the subject in schools is now very much a male defined one.

Sexual harassment of women teachers, by both their male peers, as well as male pupils is commonplace, and serves to control their behaviour and actions within the profession. The work which is beginning to focus on masculinity and its link to the sexual harassment and social control of women is a promising line of research, and needs to be extended into higher education settings.

Research which has focused on teachers' attitudes towards equal opportunities has shown that although most teachers agree in principle with sex equality, few support the development of positive action

programmes and strategies for change. There is, as yet, little research which has assessed lecturers' attitudes towards equal opportunities issues, although some work is emerging in the area of race (eg. Siraj-Blatchford, 1991).

There is now a developing body of research which has recognised the crucial role of both class and gender in an understanding of the nature and experiences of teaching as work. The changing nature of teacher's work needs to be linked with the increasing feminization of the teaching profession. The next section of this chapter focuses specifically on ITE. How much is known about the processes involved in teacher education, and, more specifically, to what extent does an understanding of the processes of the reproduction of gender equalities, feature within these?

## **PART TWO: TEACHER SOCIALISATION**

### **Introduction**

The professional socialisation of teachers seems to be an area of research which 'has lost its way' (Atkinson and Delamont, 1985). As the previous section demonstrated, recent sociology of education work has concentrated on the experiences and nature of *servicing* teachers' work, rather than students in training, perhaps reflecting the immense upheavals within schools over the last decade. The implications of recent educational policy initiatives, which have had such far reaching effects on the work of schools, are only just beginning to be felt in higher education. Although

still in the early stages of implementation, the government's announcements of reforms to ITE will have major implications, both for students' experiences of their training, and for the nature, scope and conditions of teacher educators' work. A summary of the recent reforms to ITE is given in Chapter Four. The rest of this chapter overviews the few studies of ITE, particularly those which have focused on issues of gender within ITE.

Detailed empirical studies of the professional socialisation of teachers are scarce and most are now very dated (eg. Lacey, 1977). More recent work has been of a theoretical nature and has focused on either the nature of professional knowledge in ITE programmes (eg. Kirk, 1986; Zeichner, 1983); the demise of the educational disciplines (eg. Dearden, 1985; Wilson, 1989) or the effectiveness of teacher education programmes in producing 'reflexive' teachers (eg. Calderhead, 1989; Zeichner and Liston, 1987). It is only in the last few years that attention has been drawn to the ways in which courses address (or do not address) equal opportunity issues (eg. EOC, 1989; Leonard, 1989; Menter, 1989; Shah, 1989; Skelton and Hanson, 1989).

#### **The socialisation of teachers**

As Atkinson and Delamont (1985) note, although there was a developing field of sociological research focusing on occupational socialisation in the period from the 1950's to the late 1970's (eg. Becker, 1952; Becker, et al, 1961; Geer, 1972), very little of this concentrated on teaching. Much of this available work was limited by its methodological perspective. It adopted either a structural functionalist or an interactionalist

perspective, and in this way reproduced and mirrored many of the limitations in the work on professions more generally. For example, the structural functionalist perspective tried to identify a number of 'traits' which characterised the teaching profession; professional socialisation was then simply a matter of inculcating students into these traits (eg. Parsons, 1951). The socialisation process was presented as a smooth operation in which students and teachers held the same values and interests. These studies gave little attention to what was being reproduced, or how this took place, and accepted uncritically the notion of professionalism.

In contrast, the interactionist perspective saw the socialisation process as characterised by conflicts of interest. For example, Becker's (et al) (1961) now famous study of the culture of student life in medical school, showed how the aspects of training which students considered to be important were often quite different from those of their teachers. These studies presented a lot of detail about how students managed to 'make out', and 'survive' the demands made upon them in their training. The danger, however, with such interactionist accounts is that they tended to

overemphasize the enclosed nature of the institutions at the expense of discussing how novices become incorporated in the larger culture of the occupational groups outside the training site' (Atkinson and Delamont, 1985, p.311) (4)

Institutions were presented as internally homogeneous, with a lack of concern with the differences in perspective held by the teaching staff. These studies also illuminated little of the actual content of the training programmes themselves. Their almost exclusive concentration on aspects of



the hidden curriculum, means they fail to develop analyses of the transmission and reproduction of the occupational knowledge itself, and therefore do not address the reproduction of professional knowledge, culture and power.

#### **Current analyses of initial teacher education**

Many of the recent changes brought about by the government's increasingly centralisation of ITE (see Chapter Four) have been questioned and resisted by the profession itself (eg. Clarke, 1987; A. Hargreaves 1988; Hunter, et al, 1985). The debates centre around the relationship between 'theory' and 'practice', and the role and importance of the Professional and Educational Studies elements of courses (traditionally the area where students were introduced to the educational disciplines such as sociology, psychology etc). The most recent DFE documents (DFE, 1992a; 1992b) for example, state that this part of the course should be essentially concerned with the development of professional skills (5). The profession's response has been to argue that replacing courses in the educational disciplines with 'topic' or skill based Professional and Educational studies courses, will lead to development of teachers ill-equipped to consider the wider political and social implications of their work, and whose teaching will, as a result, simply maintain the 'status-quo' (eg. Chambers, 1981; Dearden, 1985; Hill, 1990; Miles and Furlong, 1988).

Other professionals have called specifically for the development of a 'critical enquiry' perspective within ITE, to replace the dominant 'technical', 'craft' or 'ideological' perspectives (eg. Hartnett and

Naish, 1980; Kirk, 1986; Zeichner, 1983). A critical perspective makes explicit the moral and social issues which characterise teaching, and attempts to develop students' understanding of the wider political context within which teachers operate. 'Traditional', 'craft' or 'technical' perspectives on the other hand, view the teacher as a technician and teacher education as a programme to help students acquire specific teaching skills. Little of this work seems to have influenced, or emerged from the specific context of PE ITE. The exception is a small body of work, developed outside the British context, which has critiqued the way in which ITE PE courses are dominated by scientific, technical knowledge at the expense of socio-cultural knowledge (eg. Dewar, 1990; Kirk, 1986; Ross, 1987; Tinning 1988, 1990b).

#### **Gender and initial teacher education**

Despite the increasing concern with the development of 'reflexive', critical teachers during the 1980's, most of these studies remained silent on issues of gender and race inequality. Although some feminists recognised the crucial role of teacher education in the process of breaking down gender inequalities some time ago (eg. see Deem, 1980), it is only in the last few years that a number of analyses have emerged. These have largely been theoretical accounts focusing on the way in which courses address gender and race issues (eg. EOC, 1989; Leonard, 1989; Shah, 1989; Skelton and Hanson, 1989). Although there are increasing examples of 'good practice' - courses which specifically attempt to address gender issues in a programmed and consistent fashion - the success of these is difficult to

ascertain (6). The decline in sociology particularly within the educational discipline work in ITE, has had important consequences for students' work on equality issues, since, as Coffey (1992) notes, it is a discipline 'highly suited to giving critical consideration to gender and other social divisions' (p.110). Many courses address equal opportunity issues within the Professional Studies element of the course, with little permeation of the issues through the work of subject studies, or offer 'option' courses in gender issues. Clearly, if courses addressing gender issues are only included in the Professional Studies element, the aspect of their course which students view as least significant (eg. Skelton and Hanson, 1989), or they remain optional, the potential for such work remains limited. Work on gender has also been criticised for its limited focus. Leonard (1989) for example, points out that much of the material addressing gender issues has focused on the educational experiences of pupils, with little consideration of their effects on the work experience of teachers, or lecturers, or the pedagogy of ITE (7).

Menter's work (1989) is important for its focus on investigating the gender power relations involved in the student/lecturer/teacher triad during teaching practice. He showed that the tendency of lecturers to try to avoid conflict or confrontation on teaching practice resulted in race and gender issues rarely being raised as a professional issue in the supervision of students' work in school. More significantly, he found that there was a general silence surrounding the gender power relations between the adults in the teaching practice triad. Since, as the statistics in the last section illustrated, these triads are most likely to involve women as students, and men as supervisors, either as teachers or tutors, this is

perhaps not surprising. As many feminists have noted, before schools (and colleges) can begin to address gender inequalities in education, there has to be recognition by teachers that there is a problem in the first place (Deem, 1991). There is considerable evidence to suggest that many men find identifying personally with issues of sexism more difficult than women (eg. Adams, 1985). Since teaching practice is a central element of a student teacher's training, this seems a crucial area for further research.

Other critiques have concentrated on the 'lip-service' of the government to equal opportunity issues in their educational policy material (eg. Arnot, 1987, 1989b; Carr, 1989; Miles and Middleton, 1990). For example, although the DES (1984) recognised in both its 1984 Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) criteria (circular 3/84) and the updated 1989 version that all

students should learn to guard against preconceptions based on race, gender, religion, or other attributes of pupils and understand the need to promote equal opportunities (DES, 1989b, p.10),

the approach is one of combating stereotypes, rather than recognising that there may well be other forms of direct discrimination, as well as indirect, *structural* forms of discrimination operating which need to be countered (Leonard, 1989; Menter, 1989). The fact that educational practices (including the practices of ITE lecturers) might actually reproduce gender inequalities is not recognised. The 1989 circular does recognise that teachers might need to do more than guard against making stereotypical preconceptions, and suggests that all students

need to recognise their responsibility to promote equal opportunities in their classrooms. But since this is all the twenty six page document says about equal opportunities, apart from to suggest that institutions *might* like to develop an equal opportunities policy and read the EOC (1989) report, there does not appear to have been any significant change in the government's commitment to these issues since the emergence of the first CATE guidelines. Indeed, as Hill (1990) notes, it is exactly these kinds of concerns, and broader, liberal and socialist views more generally, which the present government are seeking to eliminate, rather than develop within teacher education. Hill argues that

teachers of the future will far more be classroom operatives, trained to deliver a preordained curriculum, trained in pupil management, grading, and supervision. They will be even less concerned than they are at present with critiqueing the role of schooling in society, and less educated into critical reflectiveness about their own classroom practice (Hill, 1990, p.7).

It is not surprising, given the nature of the government's recent plans for the radical reform of ITE (see DFE, 1992a; 1992b discussed in more detail in Chapter Four), that the latest CATE guidelines (DFE, 1992c) make no mention of equal opportunities issues at all.

The current picture of work on gender issues within ITE is not promising: the EOC (1989) recently completed survey of all teacher education institutions, showed that the CATE criteria has had little impact on getting gender issues included in ITE courses. The report showed that the provision of courses on gender issues varied enormously between institutions; some had well developed equal opportunities policies,

compulsory courses on gender for all students, and staff training; others (37%) did not have the basis of an institutional equal opportunities policy. The report characterised the overall position towards the promotion of equal opportunities as one of 'benign apathy' (EOC, 1989, p.7). As Jayne's (1987) work notes, it should not be assumed that 'the case for equal opportunities has been won'. For example, the universities have only recently adopted a draft code on equal opportunities in employment (see THES 3.8.90). Although work on gender was flourishing in the 70's and 80's, including national projects such as the GIST project (Girls into Science and Technology), it is not surprising to find that in the 80's and early 90's, characterised by increased workloads for teachers at all levels, as well as lack of funding for research into gender issues, that attempts to maintain and develop such work are struggling (Benn, 1989).

#### **Gender issues and PE ITE**

PE ITE in Britain is notable for its single-sex history, a history which has had important consequences for the shape of school PE (see Fletcher, 1984; Scraton 1989). Today, all ITE institutions are co-educational (8). However, as Evans and Davies (1986, p.20) notes,

there is little doubt that an understanding of the socialisation of PE teachers both within professional training and in their departmental sub-cultural communities [has] hardly yet developed as a line of enquiry

Although there is now a developing body of research evidence which points to the ways in which girls tend to lose out in mixed sex PE classes (eg.

Evans, 1989; Evans, et al, 1987; Scraton, 1989), there has been no research which has considered the ways in which PE ITE in Britain, within a co-educational setting, might reinforce, reproduce or contest gender inequalities.

A recent collection of papers published in North America (Templin and Schempp, 1989) focusing on the socialisation of PE teachers, demonstrates how little cognizance the PE profession has taken of feminist critiques of education. Only three articles out of the sixteen included in the book, make significant reference to gender in their analyses.

Dewar's research (eg. 1987, 1990) in North American is the only empirical research on PE ITE, focussing on the way in which courses address gender issues. Concentrating on the content of ITE courses, her research reveals how it is scientific knowledge which is regarded as 'really useful' knowledge by students in training. They perceive this as being most useful in helping them achieve what they consider to be the main aim of PE teaching - increasing the skill levels of their pupils in physical activities. Students are introduced to 'gender inequality' in their course - in both the scientific and the social science parts of their course. In the scientific courses gender is presented as a 'neutral' fact about performance, whereas in the social sciences it is seen as a 'social' fact, and is linked to the social inequalities in sport and PE. However, because of the dominance of the scientific courses, students tended to give more credence and credibility to the insights from these courses, with the result that 'the links between teaching, learning and the oppression of women in sport remain invisible to many students' (Dewar, 1990, p.80).

She documents, too, in a later paper (Dewar, 1990), how both male and female students negotiate their gender identities within a subject which is male defined, and within a patriarchal society. The four groups of students identified in her study all construct their gender identity in some relation to the label 'jock'. She defines a jock as a male student with an 'enhanced heterosexual ... sexuality and athletic prowess'. Although there were a variety of masculinities and femininities, all of these are constructed within the boundaries set by 'traditional hegemonic notions of heterosexual masculinity and femininity' which is reinforced and reproduced by the teacher education programme itself.

Although it is not as large a project, Sherlock's work (1987) has similarly explored the process of negotiating a gender identity for students in PE ITE in a British context. She characterises this process as one of conflict, particularly for female students, since affiliation with sport and PE automatically sets them apart from the majority of disinterested girls they will teach in school (as Leaman's, 1984 work also shows). She is more optimistic about the way in which male PE students manage to negotiate a masculinity other than the dominant 'macho' ideal, which she argues permeates PE ITE in general, and concludes that there is more space for different kinds of masculinity within PE than there is for different kinds of femininity.

As with other studies which have focused on gender issues in ITE, both Sherlock and Dewar concentrate on the course content, or students' experiences of ITE. Neither consider the way in which this content is taught, or the experiences or attitudes of the lecturers themselves. As



Leonard (1989, p.26-28) points out,

colleges..have theories about education and are practical institutions. To understand the role of ITT, we must look not only at the theories of education which colleges teach, but also at what they practise.....the issue is not whether it is counter-productive to raise the topic of sex equity at ITT level, but what is taught and learned and how it is taught (in the sense of the broadest social relations within which learning takes place) within universities and polys [original emphasis].

Research showing the attitudes of PE teachers to be amongst the group of teachers who are least sympathetic to equal opportunities (eg. Pratt, 1985), is likely to be replicated in ITE. Certainly, there is evidence to suggest that lecturers involved in PE ITE place a very low priority (if any at all) on issues of gender equality within their courses (eg. Flintoff, 1990b) (9). This will have obvious implications for feminist women working within these kinds of settings.

Although Dewar's work reveals important insights into the ways in which PE ITE courses address gender issues, it has a number of limitations. It has not been demonstrated, for example, that courses within PE ITE in the British context, mirror those of North American courses. The very different historical traditions of British ITE in PE has had an important influence on the present provision. Also, her analysis concentrates on the theoretical aspects of the course, and does not consider the practical activity sessions which students would also be involved in. The development of PE ITE in Britain along separate, single sex lines meant not only did each tradition have its own philosophy, but also taught different

activities or different types of activity (10). It is significant to analyse which *particular* practical activities students are introduced to, the way in which these are taught, and the nature of students' experiences in these sessions, now that the courses have become co-educational. As Atkinson and Delamont (1985, p.317) note, 'curricula are highly selective impositions....and their appearance of consensus actual embodies the interests and perspectives of contesting segments'.

More importantly, there is little sense of the 'contesting segments' or the 'micro-politics' (Ball, 1987) of the institution in which her research was situated. Although Dewar (1989, p.53) recognises that 'individuals who are critical of dominant structures and practices in PE and continue in PE in order to challenge and change them' have been the 'missing link' in work focusing on the professional socialisation of PE students, these types of individuals do not appear in her analysis. There is little sense of struggle and conflict within the process of teaching and learning she describes. Whilst she rightly recognises that there is a strong 'self-recruitment' mechanism operating within PE, so that pupils who have had poor experiences of PE at school are selected out of the process, leaving a group of PE students remarkably homogeneous in character, analysis of ITE must not simply replicate the over-deterministic, social reproduction theories discussed in the earlier section. Similarly, the strategies and experiences of lecturers actively involved in challenging or resisting dominant ideologies of masculinity and femininity within PE must be made visible.

## Summary

This section has shown the paucity of recent research on ITE in general, and on PE ITE in particular, within a British context. A number of theoretical critiques of ITE in Britain have emerged in the last decade or so, attacking the government's attempts to centralise control over ITE courses and to make them more 'functional' and vocational, but these have remained silent on issues of gender. More recently, feminists have begun to challenge the government's policies for the lip-service they pay to gender issues, and have called for a much more focused and deliberate approach in the way students are introduced to these issues.

North Americans have produced a considerable amount of research, again mostly theoretical, calling for the development of 'critical pedagogy' perspective within PE ITE. Dewar's work, focusing on gender issues in an ITE course, remains the sole empirical study of its kind. PE students tend to reject socio-cultural knowledge in their courses because they perceive it to be less relevant to their teaching. They negotiate their gender identities within a framework constrained by hegemonic masculinities. Whilst Dewar's work is of major significance, the analysis of theoretical content of ITE courses on its own remains limited. *How* content is taught is as important as *what* is taught - and the content may well help to determine the pedagogy. The attitudes and practices of lecturers within ITE, as well as the ways in which students react to their courses, need to be made visible.

These first two chapters have provided a critical review of work which has

focused on the reproduction of gender relations within the contexts of education, PE and sport, including teachers' experiences of their work. The next chapter describes the methodology adopted for this research, and identifies some of the difficulties and issues raised by the adoption of a feminist perspective in the research.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

This chapter is in two parts: the first part provides a rationale for the methods used in the research, and discusses some of the methodological issues and problems which I encountered in the fieldwork, including those which arose from adopting a feminist perspective; the second part discusses the process by which I collected and recorded the data. For the sake of clarity I have written these sections as separate, although the reality was far from this. Issues arising from the methodology occurred throughout the fieldwork, and influenced the nature and extent of the data I was able to collect and record. The analysis of the data was an ongoing and developing process throughout the fieldwork and is described in Appendix One.

Debates about how sociological research should be carried out are not new, but it is only relatively recently that reflexive accounts of the processes of qualitative and ethnographic research have been made widely available to the beginner researcher (eg. Bell and Roberts, 1984; Burgess, 1984; 1985; 1989b). Although contributions have come from elsewhere too, feminism has been significant in highlighting important and crucial debates about the *social production* of research material (eg. Bowles and Duelli Klein, 1983; Cain, 1986; Harding, 1986; 1987a; Ramazanoglu, 1989a; 1989b; Smith, 1987; Stanley and Wise, 1983; Stanley, 1990), or what Morgan (1981) has called the 'sociological mode of production'. Feminists have questioned many of the methods of mainstream research and have tried to develop alternative research strategies which aim to be more appropriate for exploring the

experiences and meanings of women's lives, and for producing knowledge which is useful for them. They have wrestled with identifying what it means when research is defined as feminist, how this differs from other sociological research, and the implications for the practice of doing such research. At the same time, they have had to be concerned with *defending* and *justifying* feminist research as valid sociological work. For as Ramazanoglu (1989a) points out, since the production of feminist knowledge is openly subversive and challenges dominant versions of reality, (and therefore is often politically and personally uncomfortable to many mainstream sociologists) it is often dismissed as biased, political and unreasonable. Ramazanoglu suggests that it is therefore crucially important that 'feminist knowledge is rigorously established if it is to be convincing to those people who do not accept feminist premises' (1989a, p.51).

Reading accounts of feminist (and other, ethnographic) research prior to my fieldwork meant I was prepared for at least some of the many dilemmas and problems raised during the process. However, recognising that others had had similar problems in their research, did not necessarily help me resolve my own. This chapter justifies the choice of research methods, and considers the issues which arose during the research process.

## PART ONE: METHODS AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

### A Feminist Methodology?

The aim of the study was to investigate the ways in which teacher education institutions constructed, confirmed, or contested gender identities in PE. From the outset, I was clear that the research would be feminist research, although this statement raises more questions than perhaps it answers. As Chapter One showed, it is better to think in terms of *feminisms* rather than feminism, as this better describes the diversity and range of feminist explanations of women's oppression. This diversity of thought has, in turn, generated a similarly diverse set of ideas about research methodology and the most appropriate ways of producing feminist knowledge. Despite these differences however, it is generally uncontentional to suggest that two features are intrinsic to any feminist research: a recognition of women's inferior position in society, and a commitment to the production of research knowledge which has a long term aim of improving that position. Feminist research is fundamentally linked to feminist politics and its primary aim is to create change and improvement in women's lives. This research started from these premises.

In the same way as it is difficult to describe a feminist theory, so it is futile to try and identify an 'ideal type' of feminist research. As Ramazanoglu (1989b, p.432) notes,

Feminist sociologists largely agree on criticisms of the sexism of social science. They also share criticisms of the scientific validation of much sociological knowledge. The differences between them



emerge, however, in methodological innovation, in attempts to provide improved knowledge of social life. While feminists agree that women are very generally oppressed, subordinated or otherwise rendered socially unequal to men, they are still debating how knowledge of such oppression, subordination or inequality can be produced or made convincing.

It is more appropriate to view feminist research, not so much as a specific type of research employing a specific methodology, but rather as research which is underpinned by certain principles (Cook and Fonow, 1986; Deem, 1986b; Mias, 1984; Smart, 1984). A key assumption, as suggested above, is that feminist research is characterised by its commitment to action; that the analysis is aimed at changing and improving women's lives.

A second, more contentious assumption of feminist research is that it seeks to minimise or eliminate the power relationships between the researcher and the researched (Davis, 1985; Oakley, 1981) and takes the view that useful feminist research would be impossible if an 'objective', distanced stance was adopted by the researcher (Westcott, 1979). Feminists argues that a real understanding of women's lives and their experiences is impossible if such an 'objective' stance is maintained, and that we need to recognise instead, that all research is political and value laden. Rather than abdicating the responsibility for the ethical and political concerns of the research 'subjects' by writing the 'self' out of research reports - thereby creating the illusion of 'objectivity' - the researcher must be prepared to situate herself *reflexively* in the research account, providing an analysis of the social relations underpinning the research process (Harding, 1987b; Stanley and Wise, 1983).

However, this position assumes a power differential in favour of the researcher, and that both the researcher and the researched hold the same, or similar, values. Attempting to minimise power relationships and developing a sharing and open relationship may be possible with some feminist research - where women are researching women with similar backgrounds such as Finch's (1984) work on clergymen's wives - but becomes much more problematic when the research focuses on men, or powerful women, or when the interviewee is known to hold sexist views. Feminists such as Smart (1984) or Scott (1984) who have researched men, have suggested that the idea of the researcher's 'inevitable' power position over the object of the research was reversed in their work, and that their problem was the considerable control the men had over the whole research process. Others have suggested that this assumption ignores the power differentials between women (McRobbie, 1982; Ramazanoglu, 1989a). Although some feminists would want to argue that as women, their relationships with the objects of their study are not exploitative, it would seem that this viewpoint ignores very real differences between sociological researchers and everyday women. Women may be very different in terms of their age, their class, their race, or their culture, all of which may be far more significant than the notion of their 'shared femininity' (McRobbie, 1982). As Ramazanoglu points out,

it does seem impossible to escape objectification entirely. Since, by and large, people do not choose to be investigated, they are logically the objects of research by the feminist for purposes defined by the feminist (Ramazanoglu, 1989a, p.55 .

My position in this research was very similar to that of Smart's, who has suggested that while feminism necessarily influenced the direction of her research and structured the questions it asked, it could not enter into the

practice of the research except in a peripheral way. As she suggests, whilst it is generally recognised that the researcher has an obligation to the reader to reflect on her position in the production of the research, this has very different consequences from the suggestion that feminist researchers should make themselves open or vulnerable to the subjects of the research.

As with Smart's study of the legal system, a large percentage of my research involved spending time with men, in this case male lecturers. For a large part of the time in interviewing these staff about equal opportunities, I too, found myself in the frustrating position of having to 'hide' my true values and feelings. At the same time, I was involved in confirming the typical male/female verbal exchange where women facilitate male speech (Spender, 1980). However, I experienced similar frustrations in my interviews with most of the women lecturers too, since few showed a commitment to, or an understanding of feminism either.

Consciousness raising has been suggested as an important part of including women as subjects in a feminist research process (eg. Cook and Fonow, 1986) and yet this can prove problematic in practice. In Acker's (et al) (1983) research on housewives and mothers, for example, the issue of whether or not to confront groups and individuals with interpretations of their lives which were radically different to their own was a major ethical question. The researchers found that they could only do this with some women - those who shared the same world views.

For me, working with many of the women in the research was similarly problematic, and it was only towards the end of the fieldwork, and only with some staff and students, that I felt able to share some of my feminist values and beliefs without the risk of jeopardizing the research. I was able to do this towards the end of the fieldwork because by then I felt that some of the women had begun to see me in a less threatening way. I tried throughout to be supportive and understanding of their work experiences, particularly when they talked about concerns which clearly reflected gender power relations. One woman, for example, shared with me that she was having awful trouble with a particular group of male students in her gymnastics class and I was able to share with her similar experiences of my own.

Like Scraton (see Scraton and Flintoff, 1992) I chose not to intervene and suggest alternatives when I observed sexist comments or practices, unless this was in a very general way and I could make comments which would not make individual members of staff feel threatened. For example, when I was observing a PGCE meeting where the permeation of equal opportunity issues in the course was under discussion (see Chapter Five), I felt able to make some general statements which were useful to that particular context. No doubt the fact that I felt more confident as I got to know staff during the fieldwork also contributed to my increased willingness to be more open about my feminism too. There was also a sense in which I felt that I needed to be relatively open, because in the relatively small world of ITE PE, I knew I was likely to interact with these people in the near future, and I considered it unethical to present a view of myself which was totally false. Like Greed (1990), I felt that I could not indulge in what she has

called the 'hit and run mentality' of some research, since I knew I was likely to continue to live and work amongst these people after the research had ended. Nevertheless, finding some kind of 'balance' was extremely difficult, and I tended to vary this between individuals depending on the context, and our relationship.

### **Researching professional socialisation and institutional life**

As Chapter One suggested, despite an increasing amount of sociological research on education and schooling which has adopted a feminist perspective, our knowledge of PE has been largely restricted to a few quantitative, survey analyses of curriculum content (eg. Underwood, 1983). As a result, we know very little about the *processes* of teaching and learning in PE. Similarly, Chapter Two described the scarcity of research into teacher education, most of which is now very dated (eg. Lacey, 1977). The few studies which were carried out in the 1950's and 1960's (eg. Becker, 1952) have been criticised for their tendency to view teacher education as unproblematic, regardless of the methodological perspective adopted (Atkinson and Delamont, 1985). Atkinson and Delamont (1985) argue that studies from both a structural functionalist perspective as well as an interactionist perspective, fail to adequately theorise the problematic nature of teacher education as a process, and have left the 'reproduction of professional knowledge, culture and power largely untouched' (Atkinson and Delamont, 1985, p.314). The form and content of educational practice are both crucial in the educational process, and as Evans and Davies note,

we now need research which is sensitive not only to patterned activities of classroom life, but also to the intentions, interpretations and actions of teachers and

pupils and to features of the social and organisational contexts in which they are located (Evans and Davies, 1986, p.30) (original emphasis).

This research aims to overcome the weaknesses of these earlier studies by providing an analysis which combines insights from a structural analysis of teacher education, with those gained from an ethnographic study of the 'daily life' of institutions. Ethnography as a method of social research aims to produce an indepth study of one or a small number of cases, with the researcher often spending lengthy periods of time 'in the field'. Ethnographic studies are therefore indepth, detailed accounts, but their findings are not necessarily generalizable. Ethnographic studies often adopt a wide initial focus rather than testing narrowly focused hypotheses, and it is during the process of data collection and analysis that the focus of the study is narrowed down. Data collection usually involves a range of techniques, particularly those which enables the actors' meanings and interpretations of situations to be understood (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Hammersley, 1989).

In adopting a feminist perspective, the research also attempts to overcome some of the feminist criticisms which have been levelled at some male-stream research (1). It places gender at the centre of the analysis, and I have attempted to situate my position as the researcher reflexively in the research account. I have also attempted to identify how gender power relations affected the process of the research, including the kinds of data I was able to gather.

Atkinson and Delamont criticise the earlier work on professional socialisation for the homogenous characterization of institutions, and for over-emphasising their 'closed' nature (eg. Becker, et al, 1961; Lacey, 1977). This viewpoint ignores the professional segmentation within institutions, the diverse experiences and values which staff and students bring to their positions, and gives little notion of the agency of individual actors. We need research which explores and is sensitive to 'the complexities of [actors] ideological positions and the diversity of their practices' (Smart, 1984, p.151). As Smart goes on to stress, it is these differences which allow for the possibility of change. For feminists it is crucial that these are identified since they give space for feminist struggles. Clearly, not all lecturers and students hold the same attitudes and beliefs about gender issues, and many strive hard to challenge gender power relations in their work. It was felt important that the research methods used here were sufficiently sensitive to appreciate both the wider structural and ideological constraints on lecturers' and students' practice, and the ways in which individuals, or small groups, were working for change. The next section discusses the methods used in the study.

#### **Research methods**

The commitment towards a feminist perspective in research does not assume a concomitant commitment to a specific data collection technique. Although there have been relatively few feminists who have openly argued for the use of quantitative techniques (see eg. Jayarante, 1983) most would suggest that there is nothing sexist about particular research methods themselves (Harding, 1987b; Stanley and Wise, 1983). However, as Evans and Davies,

(1986, p.30) suggest, teaching is 'a complex, intentional and interpersonal activity, strongly influenced by the social, cultural and organisational contexts in which it takes place'. For this reason, I chose to conduct an ethnographic study using observation and semi-structured interviewing as the main data gathering techniques.

My knowledge of the largely quantitative, survey-type study of gender issues in teacher education carried out by the EOC (1989) only reinforced my commitment to ethnographic methods. This study provides useful (if depressing) national information about the existence of institutional equal opportunities policies, and specific courses on gender within teacher education degrees. However, it could not capture the many ways in which an institution's organisational structures, or an individual's everyday teaching serve to reinforce, or challenge gender ideologies. From my reading of feminist theory, and accounts of research in schools it was clear that an analysis of the reproduction of gender power relations within an institutional context must include observation of *social practice*.

There are also questions which can be raised about the reliability of the data gathered within the EOC study. As the report itself acknowledges, the survey found institutions 'where pockets of exceptionally good work were not known about by those who claimed to represent the institution' (p.8). (Presumably this information was gathered through the follow-up visits which were made to a sample of institutions, although this is not made clear in the report). It is not unreasonable to suggest that this may have been the case in some of the other institutions not visited. Whether or not they provide reliable information about the nature and extent of the



inclusion of gender issues in the courses is therefore questionable. Similarly, the opposite scenario is raised within the report - that of an institution with very good policies 'on paper', but with very little evidence of how these are translated into practice. A good 'paper exercise' in equal opportunities is not a guarantee that this is put into practice.

The major part of this research was based on extended period of observation in two case study institutions, together with semi-structured interviews with key decision makers in these institutions, and document analysis (2). In this sense I endeavoured to triangulate the data collection through using different methods. Like Deem and Brehony (1992), I was interested in checking the perceptions and behaviours of individual actors in different contexts, rather than simply comparing the perceptions of one actor against others within the same context. For example, for some of the key decision making staff, I was able to compare data gathered from interviews, from observation of their teaching, and from observation of their behaviour in meetings and informal discussions with staff and students. I was also particularly interested in observing how students reacted in different physical activity sessions, and their responses to different staff (see Chapters Six and Seven).

To try and provide a wider base of information, the second part of the research involved semi-structured interviews with key decision makers in several other institutions involved in PE ITE work. However, as discussed below, these were less successful than anticipated, and the data they generated, somewhat limited.

## Case study observation

### *Selection of case study institutions and gaining access*

The selection of the case study institutions was governed by a number of factors. Given the separate historical development of women's and men's PE, it was felt the case study institutions should reflect this difference. Consequently, the institution I have called Brickhill had had a female history, and the other, which I have called Heydonfield, a male history.

The type of institution was also thought to be significant to the research. Universities, polytechnics and colleges of higher education each have a very different ethos, and different traditions within the English higher education system, and these differences may be an important influencing factor in the development of the type and nature of PE ITE courses. For these kinds of reasons, the institutions chosen were of different types; Heydonfield is a university, and Brickhill, an institute of higher education (3). Both institutions were involved in the initial education of large numbers of intending secondary school PE teachers, running both Post Graduate Certificate of Education courses (PGCE), as well as four year, undergraduate courses in PE. Both offered courses in primary teacher education and the PE departments contributed to the compulsory PE element within these. Brickhill also ran a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Sports Studies.

Although these criteria were important in the final selection, another major issue in the selection of institutions was the reaction of staff to

me and the research. It was important that the staff were responsive and generally supportive of the research if observation and data collection was to proceed smoothly. For these reasons, the early part of gaining access included visiting the institutions, not just relying on a written response to my initial letter. Six institutions were approached by letter, with a follow-up visit made to five out of the six. (One institution did not reply to the letter). My experiences on the one day visits varied considerably. The staff in four of the institutions welcomed me and seemed supportive of the project, but in one they made it clear that they were uneasy about the possible involvement of their department. The immediate concern of this institution was one of confidentiality. The head of PE suggested that my research may lead to future developments in course design in the department being 'leaked'! Alternatively, this negative reaction could have been a reflection of his concern about what the research would reveal about the department's equal opportunities practice. I was just a little suspicious that this might have been at least part of the real reason for his hesitancy, when one of the course leaders suggested strongly that the department *'didn't have a problem with equal opportunities - we've got joint changing rooms!'*.

The one day visits were a crucial part of gaining access, but the ethics of this process, including the difficulties of 'informed consent' were immediately raised. Like others who have researched gender issues within educational institutions (eg. Riddell, 1989b), I needed to explain the purpose of my research in a meaningful and open way, but at the same time, in a way which would not jeopardize my chances of having the proposal accepted. I was very aware of accounts by other feminist researchers, such

as C. Griffin (1985), who felt she was immediately labelled as feminist, and as a result, viewed as 'biased' as soon as it was discovered that the research would be focusing mainly on girls.

Consequently, I decided to present my research in terms of how institutions introduced students to issues of equal opportunities generally, and only stressed the precise focus of gender when necessary. By framing the research in terms of how the *courses* addressed issues, I felt this would be less controversial and threatening to individuals. Other aspects to do with gaining access are discussed below.

As well as the important task of gauging the likely response to my research, the one day visits were used to collect general factual information, such as the nature of the courses running in the department, the numbers of students and staff, and a brief history of the institution. They were also important to meet course leaders and heads of departments, the key decision makers in the institutions. This meant that in the early days of the fieldwork, I had at least two members of staff who I knew by face, and who knew about the research. It also meant that when it came to the second part of the research, interviewing staff from the other institutions, again I had made initial contact, and had gathered basic information prior to conducting the interviews.

*Timing of the observation.*

The fieldwork was carried out over a period of one academic year with the major block of observation in each institution lasting for a term - the

autumn term at Brickhill, and the spring term at Heydonfield. Prior to this, several 'pilot' observation days were used to learn the lay-out of the department, the operational procedures of the timetable, and to meet staff. The time of the year can have a great influence on the kinds of data available for collection in educational settings (Ball, 1981). Traditionally the summer term is the shortest of the three in higher education, and is largely concerned with revision, end-of-year examinations, external examiner visits and so on. Whilst it could be argued that these events would provide important data in themselves, it was decided that access to staff and students, and the regular day-to-day teaching would be more easily available in the first two terms. I also felt that my role as a researcher would be more easily accommodated by staff and students in these two terms too. For these reasons, the summer term was not used for observation, but left free for checking of data, and for interviewing staff in other institutions which formed the second part of the research.

Most of the observation was of formal lectures and seminars, but I also spent some time observing the extra-curricular activities of student life, such as the socialising in the bar, the evening training sessions of the students' sports clubs and Wednesday afternoon matches. I observed interview days for prospective students, staff meetings for course planning and management, and went with staff on teaching practice visits into school on a few occasions. I was also included in some of the informal gatherings, such as a member of staff's leaving party, which was arranged during the fieldwork at Brickhill.

My gender no doubt played an important part in helping me gain access to some informal groupings and settings, but also prevented me from seeing others. For example, one significant event which I was unable to observe was the 'initiation event' at Brickhill for new first year males entering the institution.

### *'Sampling'*

Ball (1984) notes the difficulty he had in 'sampling' a complex institution like a school, and of trying to get a 'representative' view of the work within the school. He describes how he ended up seeing much more of the 'academic' teaching in his research school, and little of the 'non-academic' or extra-curricular activities, and concludes that his account 'as a result, is profoundly distorted' (p.77). Inevitably, all ethnographies give a partial view. As Woods (1986) notes, the nature of ethnography suggests that whilst it is necessary to aim for intentional, systematic and theoretically guided sampling, in practice this can rarely be achieved. What is important is that the account reflects these biases, and that it is not presented as being fully representative.

Before the fieldwork began, I had made rough plans about what kinds of sessions I felt it would be important to observe, and in the earlier stages of the fieldwork, I attempted to see as many classes as possible in a day, across all areas of the course. It was soon clear that I would have to quite drastically modify my original intentions, not least because the schedule of observing all day was exhausting. As a result, I observed more PE Studies sessions - both theoretical and practical - than Professional

Studies, since I felt that the specific subject was central to the research. I decided early in the fieldwork that, because of pressures of time, I could not observe much of the Second Subject work. Although I felt that it was an important part of the work, I saw little of the way in which students were supported by staff whilst on teaching practice. This was partly because of time, but also partly because I didn't want to contribute to the pressures experienced by students on their teaching practice. I would have found it very difficult to ask students prior to a visit to school whether they minded me being there, and to turn up with their tutor unannounced would have been unacceptable. At the same time, I was aware of Menter's (1989) work on the operation of gender power relations within the teaching practice triad (student, lecturer and teacher) and recognise that this is a key omission in my research. It is a crucial area for further research, particularly since ITE courses are to become more school-based (see Chapter Four), and since other research shows that this is the part of the course which students view as the most relevant (Denscombe, 1982). These observations make the raising of gender issues within this context crucial, especially as current practice falls down heavily in this respect (eg. EOC, 1989).

I also considered the structure of the degrees as a key factor in planning my observation schedule. The first few days at each institution was spent making detailed timetable analyses, covering each student cohorts' yearly programme. This was essential for me to understand the nature of the course, and the student experience, but also to help me systematically plan the observation. The undergraduate course at Brickhill was divided clearly into two parts (part one covered years one and two; part two, years

three and four - see Chapter Five), so I felt that it was important that I viewed students in each of these. I also felt that it was important to observe older, more established students, as well as the newer recruits. Similarly, at Heydonfield, I tried to observe both 'younger' and 'older' student groups. Teaching practice had to be taken into consideration too. I had to make sure I knew which groups were out of the institution during the observation term, and when this was to occur, and plan the observation around this. For example, the fact that I knew the PGCE students at Heydonfield would be out on teaching practice throughout the term of my observation, meant that I tried to counter this by observing a lot of the PGCE sessions at Brickhill. In these senses the sampling of classes was inevitably partial and limited.

Finally, and importantly, I tried to make the observation as *meaningful* as possible. By this, I mean that I tried to develop some kind of continuity with the groups I observed, so that I began to get to know some particular groups of students (and they me). The fact that I became a familiar figure in some groups' sessions may have helped to reduce the effect I had on their behaviour (although I always felt that I had some effect on the group regardless of how well staff and students knew and accepted me, see below). At Brickhill, such planning was essential because of the nature of the timetable which was in short 'blocks' of activities, rather than courses taught throughout the term. The large cohort numbers on the undergraduate course at Brickhill also meant that there were five teaching groups in the compulsory part one of the course (first and second years). If I had not planned the observation, I could have ended up observing a different group of students on each day for the entire fieldwork!



Consequently, I chose one particular first year teaching group to observe over the term. I was not able to follow a particular group around in the same way for groups in part two of the degree (years three and four), because of students' very individualised timetables (see Chapter Five). At Brickhill, I also decided that it might be beneficial to observe the first full week for incoming students, since the induction phase is often where students are introduced to the rules and norms of an institution (eg. Benyon, 1989). I observed the full induction week of both the PGCE and a first year undergraduate group, which gave me a good preparation for the rest of the observation. At Heydonfield, the timing of the fieldwork made the observation of induction week impossible. There were also a number of other factors to be considered in the planning of the observation here, which made the fieldwork a somewhat different process to that at Brickhill (see Chapter Seven).

Another factor in the observation schedule was the importance of viewing a range of practical activities and to see a variety of staff on more than one occasion. The timing of the observation was particularly important in relation to the games programmes which was organised on a seasonal basis (see Chapter Five). This meant that I was unable to observe any practical tennis sessions, for example, which were timetabled in the summer term. 'Theoretical sampling' was also used (Glaser and Straus, 1967) to explore lines of theoretical investigation; for example at one stage in the fieldwork, I concentrated on observing male PE staff over a period of time to check to see whether the 'sexualising' I observed from some male staff was representative of others - see Chapters Six and Seven). Inevitably then, given this large range of criteria, the sampling could not be said to

be 'representative' of the whole life and teaching of the institution. Often I found that my plans for the day were changed by some incident - for example, sometimes staff would meet me in the morning and encourage me to see particular sessions, carrying out a kind of sampling for me. Very occasionally, a member of staff asked me not to watch their sessions which I respected. On other occasions, a chance meeting with a member of staff I had not talked to, meant I chose to continue with a conversation over coffee, rather than sticking to my planned schedule. Despite this, I managed to observe over two hundred hours of formal teaching (and of course, many more hours of the informal life of the institutions). Although not intentionally, I observed more formal sessions at Brickhill than at Heydonfield. The discussion at the beginning of Chapter Seven describes why this was the case.

#### **My role as non-participant observer**

The role of the researcher in ethnographic studies can vary from a pure observational one to that of a participant observer where the researcher participates in the social setting she is observing. The reflexive accounts of ethnographic work in the literature rarely adequately capture the problems and dilemmas likely to be faced by the researcher in her attempts to carry out 'naturalistic' research. Regardless of the role chosen, the researcher will undoubtedly have an effect on the social situation being observed. Her observations can only be partial and the accounts will be influenced by her own values. Feminists have been keen to make explicit their rejection of attempts to achieve 'objectivity' in social research. As Du Bois suggests,

the values and epistemology of the researcher inform each phase of the process, and contrary to general ideas of strict scientific neutrality, the process of science-making involves in fact interpretation, theory making and thus values, in each of its phases (Du Bois, 1983, p.107/8).

I had envisaged that I would take the role of non-participant observer in the research, and that I would not be actively involved in either the teaching, or, in the learning experiences as a student. I chose not to take the role of participant observer for a variety of reasons. Woods (1986, p.36/7) indentifies some important reasons why a researcher might choose not to participate. It takes up valuable time; the requirements of the role have to be met at prescribed times and on the prescribed terms, and it increases the possibility of role conflict. All were influential in me choosing not to participate, but particularly the issue of role conflict. I wanted the fieldwork to be sufficiently flexible to allow me to learn about both staff's and students' views of institutional life, and so for this reason, felt it was better to observe rather than participate.

I felt that had I been involved in teaching the students, the kinds of rapport I could establish with them, and the kinds of data which would have become available to me, would have been restricted. I wanted them to talk freely about their experiences of the course, the institution and the staff, and therefore it was important for me to establish my independence from the authority structures of the institution. I also felt that it was crucial that I did not reveal too many of my feminist values (at least initially, see discussion above). This would have inevitably happened had I agreed to teach the gender module and talk about my research, as

requested by one lecturer at Brickhill in the second week of the fieldwork.

In terms of participation in practical sessions, I also imagined that I might have had real physical difficulties fulfilling the role of student in this context. At that time I was thirty two and the weekly timetable of a PE student, once so inviting, now appeared quite daunting! On the one occasion towards the end of the fieldwork, when I was persuaded by the PGCE group to join in a basketball session 'to make up the numbers', I observed little but my immediate opponent who was both faster and more able at the game. However, in some senses, the students were at least able to see that I had some skill in the game, and this helped in establishing me as an 'acceptable' and 'competent' member of the PE culture. Adelman (1985) suggests that establishing credibility in this kind of way is important for the researcher in ethnographic work.

Taking the role of an observer was a difficult and largely impossible task. For example, there were often times when as a lecturer familiar with the material being taught, I found it very difficult not to get involved in discussions, or help students with their work. I found that as the fieldwork progressed, it became more difficult to avoid sharing my ideas and thoughts with staff and students. There were a few welcome occasions where I was able to work with people in ways which I could call feminist practice, and these were immensely rewarding after long periods of exhausting, and sometimes alienating observation.

*Gaining access with different groups and individuals.*

'Access' to an ethnographic research setting is much more than getting the initial permission and acceptance of the official 'gate-keeper', in this case, the head of department (Beynon, 1983; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Woods, 1986). It is far better perceived as an on-going process which is never completed and needs continual attention. Throughout the fieldwork, 'gaining access' to the many different groups and social situations I wanted to observe was a major task and created lots of problems.

Factors such as the importance of the researcher's appearance and dress, and being 'placed' by the respondents, have been identified as important aspects in gaining access to research settings. I found that these were important in this research too. Finch (1984), for example, has noted how as soon as the women she was interviewing found out that she too was a clergyman's wife, she was far more readily accepted. She describes how the quality of information she was able to gather improved significantly, once she had been accepted 'as one of them'. Beynon (1983) found that teachers were much more accepting of him when they found out that he too, was a teacher. For these kinds of reasons, my initial letter to institutions included brief details of my educational career, specifically noting my last six years work in PE ITE. There was no doubt that this helped in the gaining of access to the research settings. It meant, for example, that I was able to talk about current issues in teacher education, and share common concerns with staff on my initial one day visits, factors which I am sure helped my access into the institutions.

My experience in ITE helped too in the early days of the observation, where I was quickly able to make sense of the research settings in terms of course structures, timetabling and other general institutional procedures. I did find this much harder at Heydonfield however, because, as a university, the work fell outside the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAAs) jurisdiction with which I was familiar. I was surprised, for example, to learn that how easy it was to introduce a new module or course in the undergraduate degree within the university, and that there was no centralised documentation for the content of courses. Hammersley (1981) does suggest that there is also a danger of *over-familiarity* with the research setting, so that observations cease to be 'anthropologically strange'. I was very conscious of this throughout the observational period, particular at times when I was finding the observation tedious or tiring.

The fact that I was a lecturer in higher education may also have hindered, rather than helped, me. Gaining rapport with the staff in the case study institutions may have been easier if I was completely strange to the situation. It was inevitable that staff would view my research as at least partially a critique of their work. This contributed to the sometimes difficult task of establishing rapport with staff, although I suspect that given the nature of teaching, this would have been the case whatever my background.

*Developing rapport with staff.*

My presence in classes always affected staff in some way, however hard I tried to be inconspicuous. At the beginning of the field work when the situation lent itself, I made notes in a small notebook. I did not think that this would be noticed since in most sessions, for at least some of the time, students were involved in writing activities too. However, I soon abandoned notetaking in this way when I realised that staff were very much aware of me taking notes. On one occasion, for example, when I thought that my scribbles were going unnoticed - I was sitting at the edge of the gym whilst the students were actively involved in practical work - the member of staff came over and said '*I would love to know what you are writing about!*'. After this, I made a conscious effort to make detailed notes as soon as possible after each period of observation in an attempt to be as unobtrusive as possible in teaching sessions.

Some staff appeared to be less affected by my presence and continued with their teaching without making any reference to me at all. Others made frequent reference to me, particularly in the early stages of the fieldwork. Comments such as '*I don't know what you think Anne?*' or '*I'm sure Anne would do this differently*' suggest that some staff were very much aware of, and somewhat uneasy about my presence in their classes. These kinds of comments came mainly from the older female staff at Brickhill who were mainly involved in practical work, and who were not involved in research. Oakley (1981) and Ramazanoglu (1989a) have noted the difficulties of establishing rapport with women when it is clear that you

are very different from them. Whilst the fact that we were all involved in teacher education in PE, and therefore shared many of the same day-to-day occupational concerns and problems, meant that we had much in common, in at least two other, very real, ways I was seen as quite different from them. Firstly, I had taken unpaid leave of absence to conduct the research, making a big financial commitment to the project - a fact which surprised a lot of the staff. Secondly, I was interested in equal opportunity issues, a commitment and interest which few of them shared. Establishing rapport with these women was far more difficult than suggested in the feminist research texts which had implied that our 'shared femininity' would be enough. I found that this was a far easier task with the few women who had a commitment to feminism, or were actively involved in research themselves.

I tried hard to put staff at ease about my observation, stressing that I was particularly interested in the ways in which the students were responding to the material presented, and the interactions between them. For example, I tried wherever possible before a class, to check with the member of staff concerned that it was acceptable for me to watch the session. In this way I tried to give staff some control over which sessions I could observe. This option was taken up by a few of the women staff, but not by any of the men. On one such occasion a woman at Brickhill asked me not to come and watch her theory session, saying that she always got very nervous with her theory sessions, as she saw herself as only '*a practical person*'.

I tried to talk to the member of staff after the session too, feeling it was important that they had the opportunity to talk to me about the class.



Most chatted about how the work in that specific class fitted in with the overall course, or how they would go on to develop the ideas in the next session. I found that on many occasions staff were keen to share their problems and concerns with me, particularly the women. This was true of only two of the men, both of whom were relatively new members of staff with little experience of teaching in higher education.

I had to work hard to avoid over-rapport with some members of staff, and not to be seen spending too much time with one particular individual or group. I found that I was far more comfortable generally with the women staff, and as a result tended to spend more of the informal time with them, rather than the men. I developed good friendships with several of the women, and they invited me to their homes for meals on several occasions. As with other ethnographies (eg. Ball, 1981; Whyte, 1955) I found I acquired 'key informants' in each institution who were invaluable in helping with the research. Both these individuals were women, although they did not see themselves as feminists. I was continually aware of the effect of being seen spending a lot of time with these women, and had to make big efforts to sit with other staff members at coffee breaks, or at lunch for example.

#### *Dress.*

The importance of the correct dress in PE culture has been documented elsewhere (eg. Scraton, 1989). She notes the strict rules which most PE teachers adopt in schools, and the analogy they draw between neat and tidy kit, and good 'standards' in PE teaching. Dress was seen as important at

both Brickhill and Heydonfield, and was significant for me in gaining access to different groups in the research. I found that the different research roles I adopted necessitated a particular dress, and this sometimes posed problems for me when moving from one research setting to another. For example, a day's programme might involve me in observation of a practical soccer session on the fields in the rain, a course planning meeting in the staffroom, and a session in the swimming pool.

As most of the staff in both institutions dressed formally, and were easily distinguishable from the students who wore PE kit, or casual jeans and sweaters, this presented some problems for me, particular as my role allowed me to move freely between student areas (such as the student union) and staff-only areas (such as the staffroom). Most staff changed out of their tracksuit after teaching a practical session, particularly at Heydonfield, and only attended meetings or had lunch in their tracksuit if they were teaching a practical session immediately afterwards, or they were short of time.

A large percentage of the observation focused on student lectures or seminars, and for these sessions I wore a rather conservative tracksuit. This was appropriate for the physical environment of the gym or playing field, and it also allowed me to 'blend' in with the student body in an attempt to be as unobtrusive as possible. But for other sessions where I was working mainly with staff, I changed into 'formal' dress. There were several times when the appropriateness of dress was crucially important, and twice when this was explicitly pointed out to me. For example, I was invited by the undergraduate course leader at Brickhill to observe a

Professional Teacher Education Steering Committee meeting. After telling me the time and place of the meeting, she glanced pointedly down at my tracksuit bottoms, and agreed with my hasty interjection that perhaps I *'might change into something a little more suitable'*. On another occasion at Heydonfield, I was observing an indoor athletics session wearing my tracksuit, and the male lecturer leading the class commented to me afterwards that *'at least you bothered to get changed, not like our previous visitor who turned up late, in tatty jeans and outside shoes!'*. Similarly, I was very conscious of the dress I chose to wear for the initial day visits, and the subsequent visits to interview staff around the country. I deliberately chose to wear rather conservative dress, and more often skirts rather than trousers.

*Getting accepted by student groups.*

Whenever possible, I negotiated with staff to introduce myself to student groups, and this was always as a post graduate research student rather than as a lecturer from Leeds Polytechnic. It was significant that there were only two members of staff who were sensitive enough to this issue, and who specifically asked me how I would like to be introduced to the students. These were the two women I got to know very well, and began to regard as my key informants. On two occasions I failed to ask specifically whether I could introduce myself to the group, and on each occasion, the way in which the staff member did this had a significant effect on how students subsequently related to me.

A female member of staff at Brickhill introduced me to her group of second year students as a research student interested in equal opportunity issues. The response was an immediate low boozing from a group of men seated at the back of the lecture theatre. On another occasion, at Heydonfield, I was introduced by a male member of staff as a 'PE lecturer from Carnegie'. On both these occasions, I suspect that the groups were much more cautious in their interactions with me than they might have been had I had the chance to introduce myself.

Although in these early introductions I felt it was important to be established as a researcher rather than lecturer, there were many occasions later in the fieldwork when it was impossible to avoid disclosing my position as a PE lecturer. As I got to know students they soon began to ask more questions about my research, and whether I was a PE teacher. In these one-to-one situations it was easier to judge whether or not to leave the answer vague, or to specifically reveal my involvement in teacher education. As the fieldwork developed and I got to know some of the students quite well, I decided that the latter course of action was often more appropriate and honest. I did find however, that this openness very often resulted in further complications for me, as the students would then invariably ask me to comment on what I thought of their course, and how it compared with the courses at Leeds! Most were sufficiently mature enough to realise that my position as a guest in the department prevented me from being able to share much information. Nevertheless, these kinds of interactions presented me with real ethical problems to which I struggled to find a solution (some of these are discussed in more detail below).

My attempts to be seen as separate from the staff seemed to work, particular with the older students who were much quicker to accept me, perhaps appreciating the research role I was adopting. With the PGCE's at Brickhill, I quickly became accepted as an 'honorary' student. As discussed earlier, I decided that the first week is a crucial part of a PE student's course, since it is here that the institution lays down the official expectations of the students, and its rules. For this reason, I shadowed the PGCE students throughout their induction week, and although I did not participate directly in the practical activities, I did take part in informal group discussions, the welcome wine and cheese party, and other events of the week, such as a trip into school. After spending the whole week with this group I had built up a considerable rapport with them, illustrated by a remark made by one of the women students at the end of the week, that 'yes, Anne is one of us'. In this way, as other educational ethnographers have done (see, Lacey, 1976; Woods, 1979) I manufactured a special role for myself within the institution. To the students I became a kind of informal counsellor, sympathizing with them when they had had a rough time, giving bits of practical advice such as ideas for lessons they were planning or giving them lifts in my car to the sports fields. To the staff, I became the emergency helper. Towards the end of each of the periods of fieldwork I agreed to help out with interviewing prospective new students, and supervising a few students on their teaching experience.

#### *Ethical issues.*

This special role was not without its difficulties and there were times when being able to move between the two quite separate groups raised

ethical issues. On one occasion, through chatting with a group of PGCE students over coffee, I found out that they were planning to play a practical joke in their next Professional Studies lecture. They found this session *'so slow and boring'* - mainly because of the mannerisms of the particular lecturer rather than the content of the sessions - that they planned to play a game to liven up the next session. They suggested that the member of staff was so *'unaware that he won't notice anything anyway'* and that I should join them *'for a good laugh'*. The game was called *'killer wink'* and involved students in winking across the table at each other; the layout of the room, in a *'L'* shape, facilitated this kind of non-verbal interaction. It was ironic that the group planned this game after a session which had focused on the importance of non-verbal interaction for teaching! I had to make a point of deliberately avoiding this session. The students were keen to tell me the full account the following day, and were surprised by my absence.

There were other occasions when staff were keen to know how students had reacted to sessions, or to a piece of work which had been set, and I found I became good at giving rather vague answers, or dodging the issue. I have already mentioned the difficulty I had in several situations where I had to listen to sexist remarks or comments in conversation with staff without being able to challenge these, or give an alternative viewpoint. This became much more of a problem for me when I observed sexist or racist material being taught to students in their course. Again, in most situations I felt unable to do anything about this, and this impotence only reinforced the feelings of loneliness and alienation I often experienced in the fieldwork. On one occasion, I had the opportunity to intervene and

challenge a racist comment and didn't, and I still remember this incident clearly. I had been talking to a group of students on a fairly formal basis about what facets made a good PE teacher, and the question of racism arose. The white students in the group dominated the conversation and were adamant that racism *'was not a problem in sport since they're [blacks] naturally good at it - except swimming of course'*. Before I was able to decide whether to intervene or not, the moment had passed and the sentence forgotten but I remember clearly the look from the black student in the group. It indicated clearly her lack of confidence in me researching equal opportunity issues. As a white feminist, aware of the criticisms of feminist research which has ignored the oppression of black women, this was a particularly difficult moment in the research.

#### *Issues of sexuality in research.*

Feminists have argued that the researcher must make open the processes involved in data collection as a crucial part of the research itself. One of the issues which is rarely addressed however, is the issue of sexuality. There are now many more reflexive accounts of the process of ethnographic work, but few have directly addressed the issue of sexuality in the power relations between men and women in the research process, although these kinds of accounts are far more common in anthropological studies (Warren, 1988).

There may be good reason why these kinds of accounts do not get included in final accounts of research. For example, Bell and Roberts (1984) note in the introduction to their book, that some work had to be deliberately

excluded to protect the position of young (and powerless) female researchers. Others have suggested that given the lack of credibility often attributed to women's research, it is not surprising that most women choose to deliberately conceal such fieldwork problems (Warren, 1988). I have already recounted some of the feelings of frustration I experienced whilst having to play the 'shrinking violet' and listen and acquiesce in sexist conversations and discussions. There were other situations in the fieldwork where I had to deal carefully with unwanted advances from male staff. On some occasions it was a 'relatively harmless' comment or 'only a joke', or touch on the knee. For example, one male member of staff, despite not knowing me very well, felt able to make a comment about my bra size. Another asked me whether I would like a 'dirty weekend' away with him, waiting until he saw my embarrassment before adding that he meant a weekend with staff and students on an outdoor education venture. On other occasions, the advances became more intrusive and more difficult to handle. I found it both personally and politically distasteful to have to stop a male lecturer from ringing me at home by tactfully suggesting that I was 'otherwise engaged'.

Scott (1984) has recounted some of the hazards of doing fieldwork as a woman, such as travelling across the city late at night to carry out interviews with lone men in study bedrooms. This was a problem for me too, especially since there were occasions when I stayed late to use the library facilities of the departments. Two incidents in particular led me to consider carefully whether I should continue this late night studying. Walking to the station from Heydonfield one night, I was struck on the cheek by a piece of chalk thrown from a van full of men who jeered and



clapped as the missile successfully reached its target. Later that week, a woman was physically assaulted not far from Heydonfield. Both incidents served to remind me of my vulnerability as a woman travelling alone at night. The following weekend, I decided to bring my car back to the fieldwork site.

### Interviews

The research included semi-structured interviews with the key decision makers in Brickhill and Heydonfield, and with senior PE lecturers in other institutions. These were formal interviews where the conversation was taped, and the question areas pre-planned (4). I deliberately left these until the latter half of the fieldwork period so that I could get a 'feel' for the institution, and so that staff got used to me being around. It also meant that (apart from the Head of Departments who I saw rarely) I had had a chance to have informal conversations and discussions with these people.

It was important to find out how senior staff viewed equal opportunity issues since it is these staff who can play a major part in establishing these issues as central to the work of the department. For example, they could have an important role in establishing equal opportunity policies, staff training or curriculum working groups. It is also these staff who very often have the responsibility for presenting and defending the 'official line' of the department to individuals external to the institution, such as Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) or validation committees.

I have no doubt that the information gathered in the interviews was, to some extent, the 'official line'. Nevertheless this kind of information was illuminating, particularly when placed alongside information gained from the observation. The importance of triangulation of methods in qualitative work in an attempt to ensure validity has been discussed at length elsewhere (Hammersley, 1984; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). I was surprised to find that the interviews with the heads of department were the most open. They both seemed completely oblivious and unconcerned (unaware?) about making openly racist and sexist remarks on tape. Their openness was perhaps a reflection of the status and power differentials which existed between us. Scott (1984) found a similar situation in her interviews with senior academics.

In contrast to the interviews in the case study institutions, those I carried out in the second phase of the research were particularly disappointing. I felt that in the short time I had available (I had asked for an hour of their time, but usually the interview lasted an hour and a half) I was unable to establish much rapport, and got very little detailed sense of the departments' ideas about equal opportunities. Few of the staff I interviewed could talk in any detail about the ways in which equal opportunity issues were addressed in the courses. Most considered that gender had little effect in the everyday PE classroom, and that it was 'not really an issue'. These comments suggest that the scenarios of the case study institutions were not dissimilar to those in other institutions.

Scheduling the interviews at Brickhill and Heydonfield late in the

fieldwork also helped me to structure the kinds of questions I needed to ask, since it allowed me to gather information which I could then 'use' as a way in to questions. For example, I was able to approach the issue of sexual harassment with one member of staff at Brickhill far more easily as a result of observing a teaching practice meeting held previously in which the issue had been discussed.

Drawing on my reading of feminist research methodology, I attempted to make the interview as informal as possible by memorizing the kinds of areas I wanted to discuss so I would not have to take a schedule in with me, and by carefully introducing the tape-recorder. Despite this, I have no doubt that the tape affected the responses in each interview, with most of the staff being very aware that they were being recorded, especially in the early stages of the interview. However, as each interview lasted between an hour and two hours, I found that some of the staff visibly relaxed as time went on, and some seemed to forget the tape was on.

The interviews were arranged around the staff's own work schedules, and took place in their personal tutor rooms. This had the advantage of being a setting where they would feel relaxed, but it meant that there were frequent interruptions from the telephone, or knocks on the door. In all of the interviews apart from two, I felt that the control was very much with the interviewee. With some, it took me a long time just to summon up the courage to ask for an interview at all! In two cases, staff made excuses and seemed to avoid me so that I did not manage to obtain an interview with them. I felt it was significant that both of these were sociologists. The

two interviews in which I felt most at ease were those where I felt I was able to be more open and sharing. Both interviewees were women, one was my key-informant at Brickhill, and the other had shared her feminist views early in the interview.

I was soon made aware of the advantages of having a semi-structured schedule of questions rather than adopting a more open-ended approach, but even with this, I often found it very difficult at times to stop interviewees avoiding the question, or talking 'around' it. Some of the transcripts show how little opportunity I had to intervene and alter the direction of the interview. This was particularly the case with the two heads of department.

#### **Document analysis**

There were very clear differences between the way my research role was accommodated at the two institutions. I found that the staff at Brickhill were far more responsive and helpful to my needs. I was given a tutorial room with telephone, as well as a pigeon hole for mail, and generally included in most aspects of the department's work. Copies of course booklets, course outlines, and agendas for meeting were made readily available, all of which helped me to quickly make sense of the department's work. In contrast, I found getting access to written material at Heydonfield much more difficult, and had to ask for copies of course outlines. Without the strait-jacket of CNAAs regulations, the courses at Heydonfield consisted of discrete units, rather than sections of work planned within the context of a coherent and rational course. This made

the research task far more difficult since there was no common and easily available documentation. Despite these difficulties, I did manage to examine a whole range of documentary evidence, including notes for students on notice boards, external examiners reports, HMI reports, course booklets and reports for validation committees, as well as course material produced specifically for students in both institutions.

**Summary: part one**

This part has described the techniques for data collection, and has attempted to show something of the nature of the process of the research itself. It has made explicit some of the issues which confronted me as a feminist working in a research setting where there was little opportunity to demonstrate feminist values or practice, and which undoubtedly influenced the data collection process.

The selection of the case study institutions depended on a number of factors, not least of which was its particular history and nature. Brickhill had been a former women's PE college, and is now an institute of higher education. Heydonfield had been a former men's PE college, and is now a university (see Appendix two). Initial one day visits to a number of institutions were used to ascertain whether staff would be amenable to my research since it was felt important to have their cooperation for the study to be successful. The initial presentation of the focus of the research was considered carefully in order to gain access. The extent to which I was able to be more open about this changed as the fieldwork progressed, and varied between individual staff and students, and

particular contexts.

The sampling of sessions was carried out in as systematic a way as possible, although the huge range of variables which could have been considered meant that this was inevitably partial. The time of year was particularly significant in relation to the kinds of practical PE activities which were being taught during the fieldwork. Gaining access was a continual process throughout the fieldwork, and included attention to how I was introduced to groups, the role I played during the observation, as well as more specific issues such as the kinds of dress I wore. The role I adopted raised a number of key ethical issues, particularly ones relating to staff-student interactions. There were also a number of particularly uncomfortable situations where issues of sexuality and my personal safety were central.

All of these methodological issues and concerns affected both the quality and the kinds of data I was able to collect and hence analyse in the research. The second part of this chapter describes the process of data recording and addresses some issues of validity.

## **PART TWO**

### **Recording the data**

Throughout the fieldwork I kept comprehensive fieldnotes. As described above, after a member of staff specifically commented on what I thought had

been unobtrusive note-taking, I decided not to make any notes whilst observing lectures. I had already decided that note-taking in some environments would have been very difficult for me anyway - for example, many of the outdoor sessions were often wet, cold and windy, and these tested my commitment and staying power anyway, without me having to make notes too! I did consider using a small dictaphone here as an alternative, but decided against this for the same reasons as I abandoned note-taking. Instead, as soon as possible after each session, I made scribbled notes which I then wrote up in full at the end of the day. Like many other educational researchers, the day was often punctuated with trips to the toilet, or other secluded areas in the institutions, for this purpose. However, I did use the dictaphone on some of my long journeys in the car to and from the fieldwork at the beginning and end of each week. This meant that I used the time in the car productively (which I inevitably spent thinking about the research anyway), and by the time I had reached home, I had some fairly detailed reflections which I could then type up in full along with my scribbled notes made during the day.

I typed up my field notes directly onto a word processor, building up a 'hard copy' of each day in a large ring binder file, forming an ongoing 'natural history' of the fieldwork. Each entry was dated, giving details of place, time, context and including who was present, a summary of important dialogue, my own contributions and relevant events and episodes. Inevitably, however comprehensive I tried to be, these notes were always selective accounts. There were also many things that I could not observe, even if I had wanted to (for example, male-only settings such as the changing rooms, or the 'induction' evenings for new male students). I

tried to record those incidents which I judged to be relevant, surprising, or those which seemed to illustrate commonly recurring themes, as well as including too, notes about my initial interpretations of events, and how I felt at the time. Similarly, I made detailed notes about how I felt before, during and after the interviews I conducted, and made comprehensive notes about the process and context of the interview. For example, how the seating was arranged; how I felt the tape had influenced interaction, and how the interviewee had dealt with interference such as telephone calls and any other relevant information. My fieldwork file was therefore a continual and reflexive account of the research process, and of my own position within that. Appendix one provides an overview of the process by which I analysed the data.

#### **Validity issues**

During the fieldwork, I spent a lot of time either listening to, or being involved in conversations with both staff and students. The verbal information provided in the research analysis ranged from casual comments and conversations to those made in semi-structured, taped interviews. Throughout the research I have tried to make the status of verbal information clear to the reader. I only used the tape recorder for the formal interviews (and a PGCE course evaluation meeting at Brickhill which the staff and students agreed I could tape) and comments drawn from these transcripts are clearly marked in the analysis as such. Elsewhere, I have tried to indicate where a comment made to me informally during the observation was a 'one-off' comment, or representative of a number of similar comments. Wherever possible I have tried to situate these within a



detailed description of the particular context in which they were made. This is sometimes far from easy, particularly when I am not just describing but analysing the context - it assumes that my interpretation of events is 'accurate'.

The problems of producing 'accurate' accounts and analyses of situations has been debated at length by both mainstream ethnographers, and feminist researchers. Some feminists have argued for example, that feminist research should be primarily involved in giving the subjects of the research a voice, and that the researcher should not be involved in the interpretation of such events (eg. Stanley and Wise, 1983). As discussed earlier, this is a position I find largely untenable, and I would agree with Ramazanoglu (1989a, p.53) who argues that,

We cannot logically [just] be subjectivist (simply presenting everyday accounts of women's lives as women see them) because feminist politics depend upon concepts such as patriarchy and oppression which are not in most women's vocabularies.

Respondent validation, or sharing research accounts with the subjects of research, has been suggested as one way of checking the interpretation of events, and yet this has raised a number of difficult issues, both for feminists (eg. Acker, et al, 1983) and educational ethnographers (eg. Ball, 1984). My attempts to present some of my research findings to the staff at Heydonfield raised the same kinds of dismissive responses as those raised in Ball's (1984) account. Like the teachers in Ball's (1984) account, the staff at Heydonfield rejected my account of the department's practice. At one PE meeting at Heydonfield, it was agreed to set a whole day aside for a discussion of the practical assessment of the students on the undergraduate

degree. Since this was to be after the fieldwork had finished in the summer term, and as I felt that this might be an arena where I could usefully contribute and 'give back' something from the research, I suggested that I should present a short paper of my observations on this specific issue in terms of gender. After this was agreed, I spent many hours worrying about exactly what to present, and got quite distressed at the thought of talking about gender issues to a group of largely male staff, most of whom I knew by that stage to be largely unsympathetic to equal opportunity issues. I decided to keep the paper brief, and to use a quantitative analysis of the practical assessment grades by sex over the three years in which women had been admitted to the department. There were two key points to the paper. Firstly, I questioned the role of the practical assessment and its seemingly disproportionate place in the overall degree assessment (it contributed an eighth of the total marks of the final degree classification - see Chapter Five). Secondly, I was concerned to show the lack of consistency and fairness in the way in which the assessment procedures appeared to deal with sex and gender issues. The result of this was that women students averaged a practical mark which was a full degree mark lower than that of men students. Most staff did not respond directly to the information I presented, and those who did, questioned the accuracy of the data I had presented, rather than addressing the general issues I had hoped to raise. Later, the head of PE dismissed the discrepancy between the grades arguing that they were simply the result of the department failing to recruit talented women!

It has been suggested that it is useful to link issues of validity to the methods of the research (eg. Denscombe, 1983; Hopkins, Bollington and

Hewett, 1989; Rose, 1982). Rose (1982) for example, suggests that a rigorous research report should provide clear information for the reader on a number of interrelated points, including the natural history of the research; how the data was collected; how the sampling took place and how data was analysed, as well as the ways in which the data is used to illustrate concepts and theoretical ideas. Similarly, Denscombe (1983) suggests that ethnographic researchers can help the validity of their accounts by using a triangulation of methods; spending a significant amount of time in the field to enable checking of accounts; detailing the nature of the 'sample', and by being reflexive about the process in the research write-up. I have endeavoured to undertake some, if not all of these, in working towards validity in this research process.

#### **Summary: part two**

Part two of this chapter has described the process of recording the data. This involved an ongoing, reflexive process throughout the fieldwork and involved the interaction of theoretical ideas and concepts with the collection of raw data. After abandoning note taking whilst observing because of the effects on those present, comprehensive fieldnotes were made as soon as possible after each observation period. These were written up in full at the end of each day, and included details about settings and contexts, actions and conversations, as well as my initial feelings and analytical thoughts. Appendix one provides an overview of the process of analysing the data. As well as trying to ensure validity through the choice and implementation of the specific research methods, I have also tried to ensure that the written analysis includes enough detailed

information for the reader to judge the status and worth of the data presented. I have aimed to present research which Ramazanoglu (1989a) would consider 'rigorously established' and 'convincing'.

The methods and methodological issues of data collection are not separate from the nature and quality of the research knowledge produced. In this chapter I have described some of the key issues which arose in the research process, some of which were the result of adopting a feminist perspective, but others which are characteristic of ethnographic educational research more generally. For example, the question of how to present my research topic to the staff at both Brickhill and Heydonfield was problematic. On one hand, I needed to get accepted by them and felt that this may not have been possible had I been open about its feminist underpinnings. On the other hand, a key assumption of feminist research is that it should be centrally concerned with raising the consciousness of those involved. These two did not sit happily together, and like many other situations in the fieldwork, were *resolved* rather than actually *solved*. The process of data collection and its analysis is never a straightforward one, nor is it immune from the values and position of the researcher. The production of an adequate research account involves not only the thorough and careful collection of data, a clear and systematic analysis of the data, but also an honest, reflexive account of the researcher's role within this. This chapter has described how I have tried to do this.

The next chapter provides an overview of the wider social and political context of ITE in which this particular case study research was situated.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF TEACHER EDUCATION

## **CHAPTER FOUR: THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF TEACHER EDUCATION**

### **Introduction**

This chapter describes the broader social and political context of teacher education within which this particular case study research is situated. Given the huge changes which have taken place in teacher education over the last twenty years or so, it is important to situate any discussion of specific ITE courses in PE within their wider social, economic and political context. The massive changes imposed on schools and schooling as a result of the implications of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) are having significant implications for the work of ITE institutions, not least of which is the necessity to introduce students to the frameworks and requirements of the National Curriculum (1). The ERA itself contained few specific sections relating to higher education (see Williams, 1990), but in the last year or so, teacher education has become the latest focus of the government's attack on 'quality' and 'standards' in education. This chapter describes the key features of these recent changes in ITE, and traces the implications of these for this research.

### **From rationalisation to accountability**

The main characteristics of the history of teacher education during the last two decades have been strong criticism of the system for failing to produce the sort of teachers and teaching which the critics have thought were needed; various reforms and changes - both institutional and curricular - designed to meet these criticisms; and an acute need in the earlier years to drastically reduce the numbers of teachers entering employment (Gosden, 1990, p.73).

The 1970's was a period of severe rationalisation in teacher education. Rapidly changing demographic trends meant that the numbers of teachers being produced needed to be drastically reduced, with the inevitable consequences on the numbers of institutions involved in ITE. The resulting rationalisation saw a reduction from some twenty seven universities and one hundred and eighty public sector institutions (including polytechnics, voluntary body colleges, and other LEA funded institutions) involved in ITE in the early 1970's, to twenty nine and fifty three respectively, by the early 1980's (DES, 1983a). Many of the smaller colleges either merged with other tertiary institutions to form colleges of higher education, or with polytechnics and universities, or were simply closed down. For PE, this meant a discontinuation of the isolated PE courses where students trained in their own, specialist institutions. The merger of former PE colleges with other institutions in order to survive means that most specialist PE students are now trained alongside students from other disciplines (2).

As well as the huge reduction in the numbers of students in training in the 1970's, there was also a rationalisation of types of ITE courses available. The old Certificate courses were abandoned, leaving two major routes into teaching; three or four year undergraduate courses leading to a teaching qualification in which higher education and teacher training were concurrent (the BEd), and the one year Postgraduate courses (the PGCE). The intention was to make teaching an all-graduate profession, and as a result, courses in the educational 'disciplines' (Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy, etc) were included to help make the new BEd 'degree-worthy' (although these have now virtually disappeared under the CATE criteria, see below). The three year BEd was soon discontinued, so that the four year

BEd (or BA(Ed)) and the PGCE remained the main routes into teaching until the introduction of the shortened B.Ed for some shortage subjects, and the Licensed and Articled Teacher routes, in 1989.

Whilst the vast majority of secondary teachers continue to be trained through the PGCE route, there was seen to be a need to maintain the BEd route for subjects such as PE, in which there were limited opportunities for gaining an undergraduate degree in a related subject. The latest SCOPE figures (1990) suggests that more secondary PE teachers continue to be trained through the BEd route, although this balance appears to be slowly shifting towards the PGCE.

But as well as structural changes brought about by demographic changes, a shift in the accreditation procedures towards more central control can also be recognised during the last two decades. After the Second World War, university education departments, through the work of the designated Area Training Organisations (ATO's), had had responsibility for supervising the content of teacher education courses, and the awarding of qualified teacher status (QTS). Their influence began to falter (and they were soon to be disbanded in 1975), Gilroy (1992) suggests, with the publication of the James Report in 1972, which signalled a renewal of the government's interest in teacher education. This report was followed soon after by the publication of a DES survey carried out in 1981, (DES, 1982) *The New Teacher in School*, which, whilst presenting a generally satisfactory account of the way in which a teacher's initial training prepared them for the job, also identified areas where key weaknesses remained.



The resulting White Paper (DES, 1983a) *Teaching Quality*, laid down specific criteria for ITE courses to demonstrate, and paved the way for the formation of the CATE committee - the Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education - in 1984, to enforce their subsequent criteria for all ITE courses and take over the former ATO role. With the formation of CATE came the separation of the academic accreditation of courses (either through the CNAAB or through the universities themselves) from the assessment of the suitability of courses to award graduates QTS. The 1984 CATE criteria (DES, 1984) were superseded in 1989 by more detailed and specific criteria in circular 24/89 (DES, 1989b). These have now been replaced by the 1992 CATE criteria (DFE, 1992c), which have accompanied the government's most recent pronouncements on ITE (these are discussed below). As Gilroy (1992) notes, despite the many welcome changes brought about as a result of CATE, it is clear that the introduction and development of this system of formal, external inspection of courses has resulted in a teacher education system subject to increasingly tighter, centralised control.

#### **The CATE criteria and their impact on ITE**

The relationship between theory and practice is the central underpinning of the CATE criteria (Furlong, 1992). Essentially, the criteria switch the emphasis of ITE courses away from the acquisition of a liberal education for personal development, towards a more narrow vocational training with more emphasis placed on subject study (Leonard, 1989). Reid (1986) has characterised teacher education as a 'series of swings, hoops and roundabouts'. He suggests that whilst teacher education courses in the 1960's were moving towards a concept of the teacher as 'an educated

professional', the 'swing' has now returned to where teacher education has to be seen as directly relevant to the classroom. Hence, he argues, HMI, CATE and government documents now all talk of teacher *training*, rather than teacher education, a term, he suggests, which is more characteristic of the new initiatives which attempt to make teacher training 'more relevant' to the job of teaching.

The 1989 criteria (circular 24/89) both extend, and make more explicit, those of the 1984 circular (Taylor, 1990). (The 1992 CATE criteria are discussed below). Besides moving towards a stress on outputs, or student competences - on what 'students should be able to show they know, understand and can do by the end of their training' - they have two central thrusts. Firstly, they stress the importance, and detail the phasing of practical teaching in school for students as well as lecturers, and secondly, they increase the importance of subject study by stipulating the amount of time which should be given to this aspect of the course. By default, this reduces the amount of time available for disciplinary input in Professional Studies.

In relation to practice, the 1989 criteria not only spell out the phasing and extent of students' time in schools, but also stipulate that practising teachers should have a major involvement in the courses. For example, they suggest that teachers should be involved in the selection process of incoming students; in the supervision of students on school practice; in the teaching of courses, and in the writing of new ones. This requirement has important implications for PE ITE specifically. Chapter Two noted the research evidence which suggests that male PE teachers are amongst those

teachers who are least sympathetic towards equal opportunities (Pratt, 1985; Pratt, et al, 1984). They are, however, more likely than females to reach the position of head of department, and hence be involved in the training of new recruits.

As well as stressing the importance of practising teachers being involved in the students' training, some practical teaching in schools is a requirement for lecturers involved in the Professional Studies elements of the courses. As important role models for students, it is stressed that lecturers should have 'recent experience of teaching in schools', thereby it is suggested, reducing the risk that 'tutors will lose confidence in their own classroom skills' (DES, 1989b, p.14).

In strengthening the criteria relating to specific subject study for undergraduates, CATE has also laid down the minimum amounts of time to be spent studying it which should be at a 'level appropriate to higher education' (a minimum of two years). For PGCE students, their degree subject must be 'appropriate' to the school curriculum, or their intending teaching subject. Whilst the content of subject study is not subject to scrutiny, this is not the case for the content of Professional and Educational Studies elements (3).

The role of the educational disciplines has been one of the most deeply contested areas of ITE policy. The relevance of educational theory to the practice of teaching - once seen as an important part of the liberal education of students, as well as playing a part in the creation of a critically educated teaching force - is now questioned. However, it is

only recently, Furlong (1992) suggests, that the government has included *specific* statements in their documentation to encourage this decline. For example, by 1989, the CATE criteria stated specifically that the role of Professional and Educational studies was to develop students' key professional skills, and work in this area of the course must 'be clearly linked to the students' school experience' (Annex B, para, 6.1). As Furlong (1992, p.173) notes, whilst,

...on the surface it might seem that much of the disciplinary agenda remains - multicultural education, equal opportunities, learning difficulties, personal and social education...the inclusion of other topics under the heading of Educational and Professional Studies suggests that the agenda for this aspect of training is *politically*, rather than educationally derived (original emphasis).

The profession's response to the 'demise of the disciplines' has been one of resistance, and accommodation, rather than whole scale transformation (see Dearden, 1985; Hill, 1990; Miles and Furlong, 1988). However, it is clear that the role of the educational disciplines, particularly on the PGCE courses, and outside of the university sector, has declined significantly over the last decade. This seems only likely to increase, given the increasing amounts of time which have to be spent in school, and on subject study.

The effects of these changes for raising issues of gender specifically are not straightforward. As Chapter Two noted, gender has not been high on the agenda in teacher educators' concerns anyway. Directives to make Professional Studies more 'practice orientated' may have detrimental effects on existing efforts to raise issues of gender with students in

terms of the time and space to do so. Alternatively, teacher educators may be able to capitalise on making such work more accessible to students by making more direct links between educational theory and their concerns about practice.

As Barton (et al) (1992) conclude, the work of CATE has had significant material and ideological effects on the work of ITE institutions. However, as they and others (eg. Furlong, 1992) point out, it is important to recognise that the effect of CATE has not been a blanket one, and there has been considerable scope and space for institutions to resist and challenge the changes. Whitty (1991, p.2/3) argues that,

Institutions [have] displayed differential wills and capacities to resist. Some institutions had basically done CATE's bidding regardless of their own beliefs, others had found ways of preserving most of their existing practices albeit sometimes under new labels, while a few had taken the CATE exercise as an opportunity to re-think their work in a positive manner. The policy-in-use thus looked rather different and far less monolithic in its effects than any analysis of official texts might have suggested.

Barton (et al) (1992) suggest that the fact that CATE rely on documentary evidence as a main medium for accrediting institutions allows them to present a particular 'front' and so pass the inspection:

Institutions were each, to a greater or lesser extent, presenting a front, managing the impression they gave and creatively attempting to retain aspects of practice in which they believed (Barton, et al, 1992, p.55).

To what extent this will be possible in relation to the reforms announced most recently, described below, remains to be seen.

## **The new reforms for ITE**

Although changes have been made to teacher education over a number of years, it has only been in the last year that the scale of the government's impending reforms have been revealed. As Gilroy (1992) notes, from 1988, right wing 'think tanks', such as the Centre for Policy Studies and the Hillgate Group, have aimed to question the whole structure and existence of ITE. Numerous publications have emerged (eg. Cox, 1989; Hillgate Group, 1990; Lawlor, 1990; O'Hear, 1989; O'Keefe, 1989) which argue that ITE courses are irrelevant, unnecessary and even harmful. Teacher educators are criticised for their alleged ideological bias, and their commitment to equal opportunities (eg. O'Keefe, 1990), and it is argued that trainee teachers would be better trained by working directly in schools.

Some of the radical changes suggested have come from those working within ITE itself, the most notable of these from David Hargreaves (1990), who argues for the establishment of teaching schools which could draw on expertise from higher education institutions (HEIs) if they so wished, and for QTS to be awarded as soon as competence has been demonstrated, rather than after the completion of a course over a specific period of time. Overall, professionals within ITE who have had little input into the reforms, have questioned both their necessity, and their feasibility (see Gilroy, 1992). The discussion below explores the key aspects of these two concerns.

*Evidence of the need for change?*

The reforms have been announced despite there being little evidence to suggest that they are required and that ITE courses are actually failing. Upto date information about the state of ITE has been recently provided by the government's own documents, for example, in the Senior Chief Inspector's (SCI) report - *Standards in Education, 1978-88* (DES, 1989c) - as well as the more recent 1990 report (DES, 1990), and in the survey of beginning teachers - *The New Teacher in School, 1987*, (HMI, 1988) - which updated the findings of the earlier 1981 survey. Whilst these reports presented a far from perfect scenario, the overall picture was one of positive development and change.

The SCI report (DES, 1989c) reported that there had been evidence of several changes for the better in ITE courses. These included an improved balance between theory and practice; a higher proportion of staff with recent and relevant experience of schools; better links between institutional and school-based work; more effective partnerships between institutions and schools; improved intellectual rigour in courses; a clear subject/curriculum match, and evidence that ITT students respond 'confidently and enthusiastically to demands made of them'. The most recent SCI report suggested that,

In general the quality of ITT courses inspected were good...The general picture is encouraging. Institutions continue to respond constructively to the Secretary of State's criteria for further education, and the work of CATE. In particular, institutions are improving staff development, most importantly, by including opportunities for lecturers to work in schools (DES, 1990, p.17)

Edwards (1990) suggests that it is not surprising, therefore, that professionals involved in ITE have been taken aback by recent proposals to improve teacher education by *reducing* the input and influence of higher education institutions and enabling schools to 'have a leading responsibility' in the training of future teachers (DFE, 1992a). As Edwards notes,

there is understandable professional scepticism about crisis measures to change entry or training requirements when training has not been demonstrated to be an impediment, and real problems are rooted in pay, conditions of service, conditions of work, and status - indeed when retention is becoming even more difficult than recruitment and both reflect the increasing uncompetitiveness of teaching in the graduate employment market (Edwards, 1990, p.183).

#### *The scope of the new reforms*

The nature and extent of the reforms outlined by Kenneth Clarke, the then Secretary of State for Education, in his speech to the Annual North of England Education Conference on the 4th January 1992, (Clarke, 1992), which were subsequently developed into a *Consultation* document issued on January 28th (DFE, 1992a), were far reaching - particularly for the PGCE - and raised crucial issues of implementation. However, since then, changes have been made to the proposals, specifically in relation to the amount of school-based work on the PGCE, with a reduction from the original 80% to 66%. This seems to have been accepted by the profession and schools as both more realistic and manageable.



Despite this, there are still lots of contradictions and unknowns about how the forms will be implemented in practice. The 'partnership' between schools and HEIs, suggested in the original consultation document remains, although it is now suggested that 'the balance of responsibilities [within this partnership] will vary':

Schools will have a leading responsibility for training students to teach their specialist subjects, to assess pupils and to manage classes, and for supervising students and assessing their competence in these subjects. HEIs will be responsible for accreditation, awarding qualifications to successful students and arranging student placements in more than one school (DFE, 1992b, p.4).

It remains to be seen how schools and HEIs negotiate such partnerships, particularly since funding for schools has now to be involved (even though at present, this is still under the control of the HEIs).

Similarly, the selection of schools - at least using the criteria suggested by Clarke - also remains problematic. Clarke's criteria would rule out many of the schools used currently in training, such as those in the inner cities, which many would argue provide students with valuable and indeed, essential, experience. The fact that some institutions struggle to find enough schools for teaching practice regardless, without *selecting* them, seems to put in immediate jeopardy Clarke's ideas of using only the 'most appropriate' schools for training. Also, if schools rather than individual departments are to be selected, there is a danger that schools which score well on Clarke's 'academic' criteria (exam results etc), may place a very low priority on PE, and provide a far from adequate experience for PE students.

Alternatively, the fact that schools will need to enter into a formal contract with HEIs, and be far more accountable for the experiences they offer students, could be very beneficial, both for the quality of the training, and for teachers' own ongoing professional development. As Swannick (1990) notes, in the 1989 CATE criteria, it was *assumed* that school experience was bound to be effective, even without designated resources, a declared structure or a set of criteria by which it could be evaluated. The new arrangements may lead to much more open and full discussion about the nature of the training experience, and the roles and responsibilities of both school and HEI within this.

In terms of work on gender, closer links with schools and more school-based work may allow for the development of support networks between feminists working within school, and the few in HEIs. Unfortunately, the marginalisation of the LEA's, particularly those with strong equal opportunities policies and specific advisor posts, together with the changing emphasis of the inservice education of teachers (INSET) away from the longer, personal development and critical studies, towards short, often school-based and 'vocationally relevant' courses, seems to suggest that support for such work is likely to diminish (4).

The trend towards a more skills-based training stressed initially in the 1989 CATE criteria continues in the 9/92 circular, and in the 1992 CATE document which supports this. There is an overwhelming emphasis on students being able to demonstrate clear definable skills and competencies. These revolve heavily around students' knowledge of the

subject and subject application, classroom management and the assessment and recording of pupils' learning.

In contrast, it is suggested that initial training will only need to give the 'necessary foundation' for students to develop an understanding of other aspects of professional development, such as 'the school as an institution and its place within the community' (DFE, 1992c, para 2.6.3) (my emphasis). This, and other aspects, are listed as 'further professional development', the final section within the competences expected of new qualified teachers. The implication is that these are of second order importance and need not unduly concern the beginner teacher. As Whitty (1991) notes, a competence-based approach may be useful, but only if it firmly recognises the importance of knowledge and understanding and generic professional competencies as well as specific classroom skills. He concludes,

The notion that critical reflection has to wait until one has been socialised into existing work practices is both intellectually unconvincing and belied by the best practice within ITT at the present time.....beginning teachers are likely to continue to develop such skills only if they are actively encouraged to interrogate practice with theory (and vice versa) and if they have on-going support to do so (Whitty, 1991, p. 10/11).

The silences in the 9/92 circular are as illuminating as the actual content. In contrast to earlier documents, Educational and Professional Studies disappears altogether and in its place is a detailed breakdown of the competencies students should gain from subject study and school based work. There is now no formal obligation for ITE courses to make sure that

students are aware of how issues of race, gender or class affect the learning and teaching process.

### **Summary**

This chapter has provided a sketch of the recent history of teacher education, and an overview of the social, economic and political context of teacher education in the late 1980's/early 1990's, during which the research was carried out. It has traced the increasing centralised control over teacher education since the demise of the ATO's in the 1970's, and the growing influence of CATE during the 1980's.

The drastic reduction in the numbers of teachers required in the 1970's brought about huge rationalisation exercises within teacher education, with the result that many of the smaller institutions were either closed, or had to merge with others to survive. Course rationalisation was also implemented, with the aim of making an all-graduate profession, and the old Certificate course was phased out. The four year undergraduate courses and the PGCE remain the major routes into teaching, although the Licensed and Articled Teacher Schemes, and shortened BEd for specific shortage subjects, has recently widened the entry routes into the profession again.

CATE has had a major influence on the content and structure of courses, with a key thrust to make training more relevant to practice - although as Barton's (et al) (1992) research shows, its effects have been far from monolithic in implementation. At least some teacher educators have been willing and able to manipulate the 'front' they present to CATE in order to

retain those aspects of the courses which they most value. However, the most recently announced reforms (DFE, 1992a, 1992b, 1992c) present a further swing towards a practice-based training, and have severe implications for the work of those HEIs involved in ITE in the future. It is too early to predict the exact effects of these major reforms of teacher education, but it seems likely that indepth, critical and theoretically informed reflective work will continue to be squeezed, and with this, attention to gender issues.

The next chapter focuses on the curriculum content of the ITE courses at Brickhill and Heydonfield, and considers the selection, organisation and presentation of curriculum knowledge, together with an analysis of how and what aspects of the courses were assessed.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

### Introduction

This chapter focuses on the selection, organisation and presentation of knowledge in the PE ITE courses at Brickhill and Heydonfield. It also considers the nature and focus of the assessment of students on these courses. As Chapter Two noted, our knowledge of the professional socialisation of teachers is limited because of the lack of upto date studies but also, from a feminist perspective, because of their failure to make problematic the relations between the social construction of professional knowledge and the social reproduction of gender relations. It is these relations which form the central focus of this chapter.

Teacher education courses cannot be viewed as ends in themselves, but as processes which play a crucial role in the reproduction of gender relations. Seeing the ITE curriculum simply as 'subject content' or knowledge to be transmitted is problematic, since this view ignores its historical construction and the social and political context of teacher education and schooling more generally. However, the alternative, seeing the curriculum solely in terms of the product of individuals' interactions and practice, also provides an inadequate account and *over-emphasises* the autonomy of the individual actor (Kirk, 1988a). A critical theory of the curriculum is necessary, which Kirk (1988a) suggests, conceives of the curriculum as 'embodying the broader characteristics of subject matter, pedagogical interactions of teachers and learners, and the sociocultural milieu in which these interactions take place' (Kirk, 1988a, p.9). These

three characteristics of knowledge, interaction and context must be seen as dialectically related. It is this wider conception of the 'functional' or operational curriculum - the dynamic display available to learners - which provides a clearer picture of the ways in which ITE in PE may contribute to, or challenge gender ideologies. It was for these kinds of reasons that this research adopted a range of data gathering techniques, including observation, interviewing and document analysis, making it possible to explore not only the formal content of the curriculum, but also how this was taught and received. Whilst this focuses on the formal, explicit curriculum and the rationales presented by staff to support this, the following two chapters explore the interactions between staff and students within formal sessions.

The discussion in this chapter explores three specific aspects of the curriculum, theoretical PE Studies, practical PE Studies and 'equal opportunities' work, together with a consideration of the way in which the ITE courses were assessed. For ease these are discussed separately, although it is recognised that this may well contribute to an artificial view of the courses as blocks of 'knowledge' existing independently of one another (1).

#### **Problems of knowledge in teacher education**

There have been a number of attempts to outline and describe typologies of different perspectives which underpin teacher education (eg. Harnett and Naish, 1980; Kirk, 1986; Smyth, 1989; Tinning, 1990b; Zeichner, 1983). However, like any model, these accounts are often easier to comprehend at a



theoretical level than in actual practice. As Zeichner (1983) argues, whilst a particular programme may seem to convey particular priorities and therefore seem to fall into a specific perspective, in practice it may reflect a combination of perspectives as a result of the diverse approaches held by specific individuals working within the programme. These typologies have also not been sufficiently sensitive to the variations which may occur within programmes as a result of the particular subject involved or the purpose of the training. For example, PE ITE has been historically separate from other subject areas and the particular status and position of the subject might have important influences on the nature of today's ITE courses.

Despite the obvious difficulties of attributing a perspective to ITE, Harnett and Naish (1980) suggest that different perspectives are useful in that they help to distinguish between different beliefs about the nature of education, about what is educationally valuable, and about what skills and kinds of knowledge teachers require. Whilst other authors have produced modified versions of these perspectives, Gore (1990) has suggested that the two dominant intellectual approaches within teacher education fall into what can be called the 'behaviouristic' perspective and its oppositional 'reading', the 'enquiry-orientated' perspective. Whilst this attempt may have produced a necessarily simplistic opposition, it is worth expanding on the main premises of these two perspectives since elements of these, particularly the former, can be found in current ITE documentation (the government's own circulars, as well as ITE institutions' syllabi). For example, the previous chapter described the latest DFE guidelines on ITE (DFE, 1992a; DFE, 1992b) which are couched in language more fitting to

a behaviouristic perspective on teaching, rather than a critical-enquiry one.

From a behaviouristic perspective, educational questions revolve around questions of efficiency and utility. Teaching becomes the best way to achieve what are essentially non-contested and non-problematic ends. The role of teacher education is to prepare students for schools as they are (or are believed to be). Conceived this way, 'by the application of reductionist logic, teaching could be distilled into a discrete set of skills which could be isolated, practiced and applied in a systemic manner' (Tinning, 1990b, p.7). There is a strong emphasis within these kinds of teacher education programmes on management and classroom control skills, since this is thought to be most beneficial for students' current needs and 'where they are' during training. As Beyer (1987) notes, 'within this perspective, techniques of teaching often become ends in themselves rather than a means towards some articulated, reasoned educational purpose' (Beyer, 1987, p.21). The conceptions of knowledge and pedagogy associated with this perspective are closely linked with this focus on the techniques of teaching (Beyer, 1987). Professional knowledge is deemed to be a predefined set of 'worthwhile' activities to be mastered without question or criticism, and which are divorced from the social and political context in which they are situated. Knowledge is seen from an objective, positivistic stance, and as Beyer comments, 'prospective teachers come to believe that [it] is something that is detached from the human interactions through which it is constituted and by which it is maintained' (Beyer, 1987, p.22). Students become passive recipients of knowledge through a pedagogical relationship based mainly on a process of 'transmission'. As

Bartholomew (1976) notes, this is the only possible conception of pedagogy that can exist within such a conception of knowledge.

There is now a developing critique of this perspective which calls instead for teacher education programmes to adopt a critical-enquiry perspective (Hartnett and Naish, 1980; Zeichner, 1983). This perspective makes explicit the complex moral, social and political issues involved in education and teaching. Knowledge from this perspective is seen as uncertain rather than given. It is seen as socially constructed, and therefore closely linked to questions of power, vested interests, struggle and contestation (Tinning, 1990b). A central focus of this perspective would be to make problematic the creation, dissemination and legitimation of knowledge through schools and teacher education programmes. Whilst the development of teaching techniques would not be ignored within this perspective, they would be seen as means to an end, rather than ends in themselves - an important, but necessarily limited part of a student teacher's education. Knowledge would be deemed useful to the degree to which it works towards personal and social realities which are empowering - that works towards breaking down inequalities (Beyer, 1987). This conception of knowledge would have to entail different pedagogical relationships from the hierarchical and divisive ones which characterise the behaviourist perspective.

One of the limitations of this work is that much of it has remained at a theoretical level, leaving the issues and problems involved in the implementation of a critical pedagogy largely unaddressed (2). As Ellsworth (1989) argues,

There has been no sustained research attempts to explore whether or how the practices a critical perspective prescribe actually alter specific power relations outside or inside schools (Ellsworth, 1989, p.301).

These accounts have also not considered whether ITE, given the relative powerless position of students and the evidence available which suggests many aim simply to 'survive', is the best place for issues of inequality to be raised. Menter's work (1989), for example, shows clearly how issues of power, including gender power, may be an integral part of the teaching practice triad *itself* (student, lecturer, school tutor) and which may operate to prevent the development of teaching which has an emancipatory aim.

A second limitation of this work is that despite a concern with the structures of knowledge and power, these critiques, in the main, have ignored or omitted the insights provided by feminist theory and have developed largely *alongside* feminist ones. The relationship between positivist knowledge and patriarchal power relations has been, and continues to be, a major focus within the development of feminist theory (eg. Harding, 1987a; Harding, 1987b; Pateman and Gross, 1986; Smith, 1987; Stanley and Wise, 1983; Stanley, 1990). By failing to recognise or utilise these insights, the patriarchal nature of academic theorising - including the critiques of perspectives within teacher education - is maintained and reproduced.

## **Perspectives within Physical Education ITE**

Gore (1990) suggests that support for a critical perspective is still in its infancy within PE ITE. However, a major dimension of work which has been produced, outlined in Chapter Two, has been the critique of the bias towards scientific, technical knowledge at the expense of the marginalisation of socio-cultural knowledge within PE ITE programmes, and the implications of this for the production of critical, reflexive teachers (eg. Dewar, 1987, 1990; Kirk, 1986; McKay, et al, 1990; Ross, 1987).

Historical accounts of the development of scientific, theoretical PE courses have suggested that these arose as much out of struggles for legitimacy and status as a degree subject, as with the pursuit of improving the knowledge base about teaching and learning in PE (Dewar, 1990; Fletcher, 1984; Gore, 1990; Whitson and Macintosh, 1990). The result has been the development of what McKay (et al) (1990) have called 'technocratic' PE teachers, teachers who are

unable to step outside of concerns with purely technical issues; to see how they are influenced by political, economic, and bureaucratic forces; and to face up to the fact that, like it nor not, they contribute to both the reproduction and transformation of structures of domination in the education system (McKay, et al, 1990, p.65).

## **Feminism, knowledge and ITE PE**

The link between positivistic knowledge in PE ITE and the reproduction of patriarchal social relations is only just beginning to be recognised (eg.

Dewar, 1987, 1990; Gore, 1990). Dewar's (1987) research specifically focused on the way in which knowledge about gender was introduced to students in the theoretical knowledge component of their professional training. This was done in four ways; as a variable in performance, as an issue of sex difference, as an issue of inequality, and as a socially constructed set of power relations. She explored not only the way in which the programme marginalised knowledge which presented gender as a socially constructed set of power relations, but also the way in which students reacted to this knowledge. Potentially emancipatory, critical knowledge about the social relations of power and privilege was rejected as 'peripheral' by students who had difficulty seeing its relevance or applicability to PE or sport, or their own experiences within these (Dewar, 1990). This contrasted with the material on 'objective' sex differences presented within the dominant scientific courses, which they more readily accepted. This research is important for drawing attention to the implications of ITE courses dominated by theoretical, scientific courses for an analysis of gender issues. However, as Whitson and Macintosh (1990) note, the privileging of discourses of 'science and management' within PE courses also has repercussions for the nature of physical activities included in the courses. It leads, they suggest, to what Boileu (1982) (cited in Whitson and Macintosh, 1990) has called 'sportism' - the preoccupation with sport, and specifically high level sport, at the expense of other forms of physical activity such as dance or outdoor pursuits which were historically an important part of PE. As Kirk and Tinning (1990a) note,

the forms of human movement that make up physical education programmes exist because they are important

to the interests of some groups of people...They exist in school programmes because in some way or another, they service the interests of some people at the expense of others (Kirk and Tinning, 1990a, p.7).

Clearly the same is true of activities which students are introduced to within their professional programmes. This is particularly pertinent within British PE ITE, given the 'separate and different' development of the professions (Fletcher, 1984). As Scraton's (1989) work on girls' PE demonstrates, the teaching of PE contributes to, and reinforces, male-female power relations through the perpetuation of ideologies of physicality. Commonsense assumptions and stereotyping concerning girls' 'natural' differences and capacities are reflected and confirmed in the type of activities girls are offered in their school PE. A study of the relationship between gender and PE ITE must include an analysis of the selection and presentation of the practical PE content as well as the theoretical course components.

One of the major obstacles to the successful implementation of anti-sexist work in schools has been the attitudes of teachers themselves, many of whom either do not see gender inequality as an issue, or alternatively, do not view it as one that they can, or should, change (eg. Whyte, et al, 1985). Little is known about the attitudes and values which teacher educators hold, but personal beliefs and values will influence what is seen as a priority in ITE, and will affect not only the content of programmes but also its presentation. To what extent does the curriculum of the courses at Brickhill and Heydonfield reflect the behaviourist, technocratic approach to education described above? To what extent do the courses

mirror the findings of Dewar and others, and to what extent is anti-sexist work promoted by the members of staff in their teaching? The next section focuses specifically on the theoretical PE Studies element of the undergraduate curricula.

### **Course structures, knowledge and gender**

#### *PE Studies at Brickhill - an 'areas of experience' rationale*

The PE Studies in Brickhill's undergraduate degree had been written within an 'areas of experience in PE' approach, based on recent HMI and DES publications which have classified the traditional PE activities according to their 'main aim' (DES, 1989a; HMI, 1979) (3). The course provided students with a curriculum model which emphasised the importance of a balanced, but broad range of educational experiences. It also aimed to make explicit and close links between the PE 'theory' and the practical activities - at least in part one of the degree (years one and two). For each of the five areas of experience, Health and Well Being, Interaction, Artistic and Aesthetic, Body Management, and Adventure and Challenge, appropriate theory was selected from that knowledge viewed as 'internal to each activity', and which could provide a 'further understanding of the area' (CNAAC Course syllabus, 1986, p.156). Diagram 1, on page 168 shows which 'theory' had been selected to link to each area of experience within part one of the degree (4). Most of the socio-cultural knowledge was not included in this framework. Although there was a very small input (five, one hour sessions) of Sociology within the Health and Well Being area of experience, most of the socio-historical knowledge input came in



# Diagram 1

## Theoretical Inputs and Practical Activities included in each Area of Experience in Part One of the Undergraduate degree at Brickhill.

AREA OF EXPERIENCE	Body Management	Artistic & Aesthetic	Interaction	Adventure & Challenge	Health & Wellbeing
YEAR ONE	Gym Swimming Athletics	Contemporary Dance	Principles of Games Rugby Hockey	Field Course Water Safety	Body Conditioning Yoga Jogging Circuits Stress Management Fitness
	Biomechanics Psychology		Biomechanics Psychology Social		Sociology Physiology

NATURE & CULTURAL CONTEXT OF PE

AREA OF EXPERIENCE	Body Management	Artistic & Aesthetic	Interaction	Adventure & Challenge	Health & Wellbeing
YEAR TWO	NONE	Dance as Art Rhythmical Gymnastics	Basketball Hockey Soccer	Urban Adventure	Aerobics Swimming
		Aesthetic and Artistic		Physiology Psychology Social Psychology	

NATURE & CULTURAL CONTEXT OF PE

the 'Nature and Cultural Context in PE' course, which ran alongside these five areas of experience in part one of the degree (see diagram 1). The positioning of this course *outside* the areas of experience framework, reflected the fact that staff felt that this kind of knowledge, although important, could not be 'applied' to the practical activities in the same way as other theory, such as Biomechanics or Physiology, might.

Whilst innovative in its aim, this organisation of PE studies reinforces the hierarchy of knowledge identified by Dewar (1987), where 'scientific' knowledge is seen as 'useful and relevant', and directly applicable to an understanding of practical PE activities, and where sociocultural knowledge is seen as marginal and irrelevant. The 'applied' nature of the bio-behavioural scientific courses with the practical activities meant that students could only perceive these activities in a particular way; that is, in terms of physical activities in which individuals could become more or less skilled. But as Kirk (1990b, p.11) notes, 'a great deal of other kinds of knowledge about human movement ....is not accessible through scientific methods'.

A key example of the way in which socio-cultural knowledge was not used directly to help an understanding of practical PE could be seen within the Health and Wellbeing area of experience. On one hand, the inclusion of the Health and Wellbeing area of experience, where students were introduced to activities such as jogging and yoga, could be seen as a direct challenge to the traditional games-orientated PE curriculum (see diagram one). However, despite being innovative in its aim, the knowledge base underpinning this area of experience did little to help students begin to challenge

individualistic, voluntarist conceptions of health, wellbeing and the body (eg. Colquhoun, 1990; Kirk and Colquhoun, 1989; Tinning 1990a). Like the other areas of experience, the theoretical component of the Health and Wellbeing area drew predominantly on physiological and psychologically-based knowledge. Health within this discourse is defined in an individualistic fashion, where health related exercise becomes a means of physical or psychological 'repair' (Evans, 1990b). There was little recognition of the way in which wider social, environmental and economic factors also might play a part in determining an individuals' fitness or health. This kind of course perpetuates an uncritical belief that PE contributes to better health. The equation, exercise = fitness = health is accepted uncritically, reproducing an ideology of healthism (Kirk and Colquhoun, 1989; Tinning, 1990a).

A comment made by a male lecturer at the completion of his practical jogging session with a group of first year students demonstrates the pervasiveness of this perspective. Watching the last three women students to arrive back from their three mile jog, he suggested loudly within their earshot that *'some of these women, really, they are appallingly unfit for PE students'*. One of the women complained to me later that the session had been a *'complete waste of time'*. Instead of a jog, she explained that it had been *'more like a competitive run where all the men finished first...I thought jogging was supposed to be something you did at your own pace!'*. The potential of the session for challenging dominant conceptions of performance-based, competitive PE, disappeared as the presentation of this new activity remained firmly embedded within an ideology of healthism and competition.

The course grouped practical PE activities into different areas of experience on the basis of the physical type of experience gained from the activity. For example, gymnastics and swimming were included under Body Management, since the principle aim of these activities was considered to be the manipulation and control of the body albeit in different environments. Curriculum planning, using this areas of experience approach, would then ensure that children were introduced to different types of physical activity. However, this approach ignores the wider cultural and historical contexts in which the activities are embedded, and which may directly influence the ways in which individuals and groups experience the activities. For example, whilst it could be argued that rugby or netball could equally be chosen as exemplar physical activities within the Interaction area of experience, simply concentrating on the major physical aim of the activity cannot help student teachers appreciate the ways in which these particular games are tied up with strong gender ideologies. The lack of a social context in discussions about a balanced curriculum fails to help students become aware of the role of PE in the reproduction of gender relations.

The Nature and Cultural Context in PE course which was timetabled throughout the year did balance the amount of scientific input included in the areas of experience in part one of the degree. However, despite the significant amounts of time allocated to it, and its conception by staff as the 'lynch-pin' in the overall course rationale, the course was viewed by students as difficult to understand. As Dewar (1987) found in her research, many students at Brickhill could not see its relevance to learning to teach. This was clearly illustrated in the way in which third

and fourth year students had opted for their discipline-based studies in the second part of the degree (see diagram 2 on page 173 for the structure of this part of the degree). The Cultural Studies option had not been able to be timetabled that year because of insufficient interest. This course specifically addressed gender (and race) issues, including an analysis of ideologies of femininity and masculinity and their implications for the teaching of PE.

Compared to other courses (eg. at Heydonfield, see below) the structure of the PE Studies at Brickhill, in theory at least, seemed to present a challenge to the tradition of a 'technocratic', scientific PE ITE identified in the literature. It included a significant amount of socio-cultural material, particularly in the 'core' course of part one, and the study of the behavioural sciences was not compulsory after the second year. This structure allowed for the presentation of knowledge which would enable students to go beyond seeing gender as simply a variable like age or height which might affect performance, towards a recognition of it as a socially and historically constructed set of power relations. However, in practice, students at Brickhill rejected the socio-cultural knowledge in favour of behaviourist, scientific knowledge which was, for them, more relevant to their view of PE teaching.

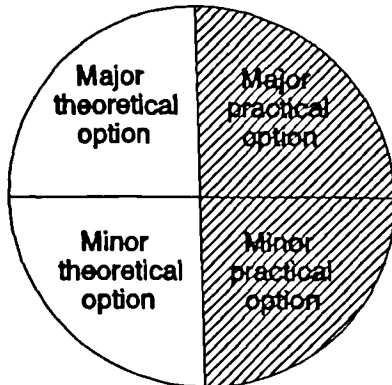
#### *PE Studies at Heydonfield*

The structure and content of Heydonfield's undergraduate PE Studies course was very different from that at Brickhill. There was no attempt here to link the theoretical PE Studies with the practical work, and apart from a

## Diagram 2

### The Structure of PE Studies in Part 2 of the Undergraduate degree at Brickhill (Years 3 and 4)

#### YEAR THREE



1. Major options continued into Year 4.  
Minor options studied for Year 3 only.

#### 2. THEORETICAL OPTIONS

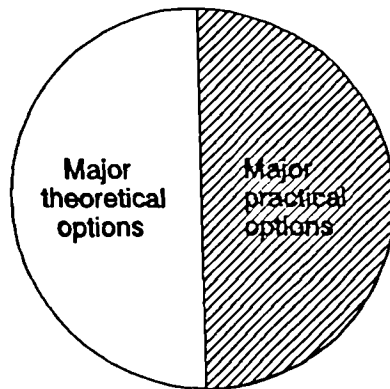
##### MAJOR

Biomechanics  
Physiology  
Psychology  
Cultural Studies  
Aesthetics / History

##### MINOR

Youth Culture  
Children in Sport  
Philosophy  
Motor Development  
and Impairment  
Science for PE /  
Dance

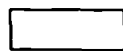
#### YEAR FOUR



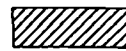
#### 3. PRACTICAL OPTIONS

Outdoor Education  
Games  
Dance  
Gymnastics  
Swimming  
Athletics

Pie diagrams show breakdown of total amount of time allocated to PE Studies in each year.



THEORY



PRACTICAL

short, seven hour course on the 'Foundations of PE' in year one, which considered the historical development of PE, together with a sixteen hour sociology course, there was no other compulsory socio-cultural material included in the course at all (see diagrams 3 and 4 on pages 175/176). Although students could opt for a module in Sociology in part two of the course (years three and four), they would have had little preparation for this work and the option groups were usually small. Part two of the degree was dominated by compulsory modules in Exercise Physiology, Psychology and First Aid, together with a 'Curriculum Issues' course (see diagram four on page 176). The model of PE presented to the students in this course was very much a science-based, performance model. In comparison to the rather complicated yearly timetable of students at Brickhill, Heydonfield's PE timetable was much more straightforward (see diagram 8 and 9, Appendix 3).

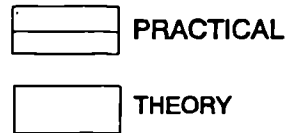
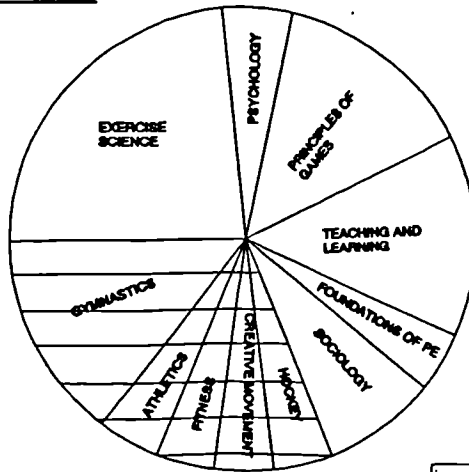
The 'academic autonomy' of the university meant that the course planning here was very different from that at Brickhill, where courses were certified through the time consuming and rigorous CNAAC validation process. Taken together, the two courses provide an excellent illustration of the overall lack of a coherent national system of teacher education in Britain (Whitty, et al, 1987). There was no overall written rationale for the course, and staff in each of the three elements, PE Studies, Professional Studies and Second Subject Studies worked largely independently from each other, with little or no idea of the content or presentation of one another's modules. As Steve, the head of PE, explained, decisions about the content and structure of the PE Subject Studies

*[are] made partly through negotiation...I mean..I think that the course is developing.....but decisions are*

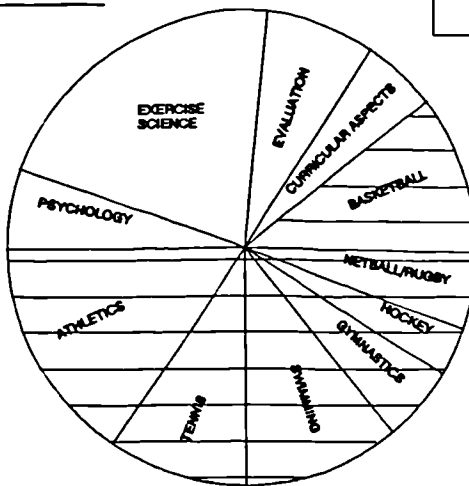
Diagram 3

The Structure of PE Studies in Part 1 of the Undergraduate degree at Heydonfield (Years 1 and 2)

YEAR 1



YEAR 2



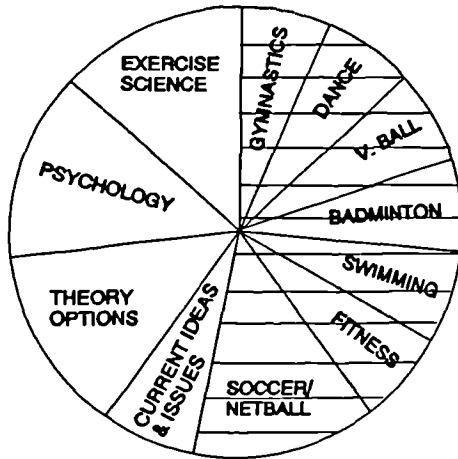
Pie diagrams show breakdown of total amount of time allocated to PE Studies in each year



Diagram 4

The Structure of PE Studies in Part 2 of the Undergraduate degree at Heydonfield (Years 3 and 4)

YEAR 3

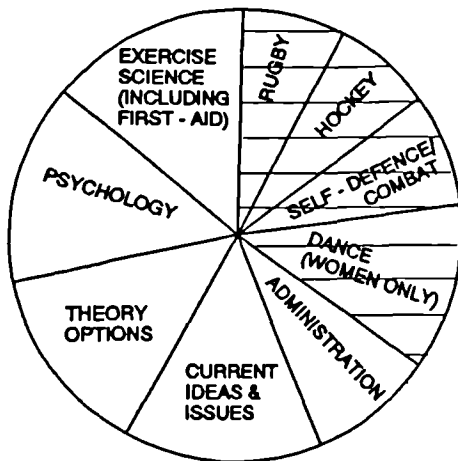


THEORY OPTIONS

PHYSIOLOGY  
PSYCHOLOGY  
SOCIOLOGY



YEAR 4



Theory options continue from Year 3 list.

Pie diagrams show breakdown of total amount of time allocated to PE Studies in each year.

*made slowly..it is a slow process because they are supposed to be made by consensus but I suppose there are certain ...certain power groups in the [PE] subject group. For example, David and I got together and decided that we wanted the health and exercise course and we were determined to get it, and so we brought that in.. [Steve, head of PE, taped interview].*

The structure and content of the PE Studies elements of both Heydonfield and Brickhill have to be seen in relation to their historical contexts, and the present political and educational climate of schooling and higher education, but also the power and influence of individual members of staff. Heydonfield's scientific PE curriculum reflected its history as a former men's PE college, and this was reinforced by its merger with the university. From its outset 'men's' PE adopted the perspective and discourse of scientific measurement, and it was this perspective which became dominant in the university PE departments of post-war Britain, all of which were (and still are) headed by men (see Kirk, 1990a). Campbell (1990) has suggested that the increasing pressures on universities to be 'accountable' in terms of research output has meant a shift towards justifying their subject more on the basis of high status (scientific) knowledge and less on aspects related to the school curriculum or recreational work. The former head of PE at Heydonfield suggested that this was a key reason why the course had changed from a BEd to a BA (Ed), so they could further the 'academic' research base of the department.

The above section has described the structure and content of the PE Studies of both undergraduate courses. Despite very real differences in the structure and presentation of theoretical PE Studies, there were important

similarities in the way in which socio-cultural knowledge remained marginalised knowledge. At Brickhill, despite attempts to produce an innovative curriculum, using an areas of experience approach, socio-cultural knowledge had been marginalised through its location in the separate Nature and Cultural Context course. By writing the degree in this way, staff themselves were admitting that socio-cultural knowledge was less applicable than other types of PE knowledge to an understanding of the practical activities. By allowing students to opt out of socio-cultural work in part two of the degree (years three and four), where the assessment of students' work contributed towards their overall degree result, it could be argued that staff at Brickhill did not see this work as an essential part of the course.

At Heydonfield, in contrast, a strongly differentiated curriculum prevailed, where PE knowledge was divided into distinct, separate units. Socio-cultural knowledge formed a very small part of the course, compared to the compulsory modules in Exercise Physiology, Exercise Science and Psychology, and in part two of the degree, like at Brickhill, the social sciences were optional. If it is through the social sciences that social and political issues within PE are addressed - including issues of gender equality - Heydonfield's curriculum model did not augur well for the development of 'critical', reflexive teachers.

*PE Studies in the PGCE at Brickhill (5).*

A second major route into PE ITE in Britain is through a one year PGCE course, which follows a three year, undergraduate degree in a relevant

degree, such as Sports Studies, Human Movement Studies, or Sports Science. The content of these first degrees has obvious implications for the definition of PE which students bring to their PGCE training. Evidence suggests that a scientific framework is the dominant perspective within these courses too (eg. Kirk, 1990b). If students are not introduced to socio-cultural work in their undergraduate degree, it is not surprising that such knowledge is scarce in their short, one year PGCE course. Without the luxury of the time available on the four year undergraduate degree, there is even more pressure on staff working on a PGCE course - including that from the students themselves (see below) - to include material which is directly concerned with the practical issues of teaching, rather than wider ethical, social and moral concerns.

Similarly, the practical activity content of these courses will also have important consequences for the preparation of PE teachers. PGCE courses, which are concerned with pedagogy, are designed to build upon the subject knowledge gained in the first degree. If students have not studied, for example, dance at undergraduate level, it is unlikely that attempts to address the pedagogical aspects of such activities in a one year PGCE course will be successful. As discussed in more detail below, the practical activity content of Brickhill's PGCE course was influenced by the content of students' undergraduate degree programmes. The growing trend to train PE teachers through the PGCE route is therefore highly significant for the future development of the subject.

The next section of this chapter considers the way in which the undergraduate courses selected and timetabled the practical PE activities,

since these are an important aspect of ITE 'knowledge' where gender ideologies might be challenged or reproduced.

### **Practical PE studies**

There is little contemporary material available which documents the actual content of the PE curriculum either at school or ITE level and how this might differ between boys and girls. The fact that this information is not available, and is not recognised as important or significant data, reflects the continuing existence and acceptance of two PE 'sub-cultures', and perhaps the low status of PE in school curricula. Gender differentiation in the PE curriculum is accepted by PE teachers, and regarded as insignificant by the teaching profession as a whole (Leaman, 1984). The rationale behind moves to introduce mixed sex teaching varies between individual schools, with only some of these being genuine attempts to try to bring about equality of opportunity; others adopt this as a pragmatic solution to a reduction in staffing or timetabling problems (eg. Evans, et al, 1987). Very often, as Chapter One noted, moves to introduce 'equal opportunities' through mixed-sex PE classes in school, have meant the participation of girls in activities traditionally seen as 'male' (such as soccer, or cricket), but rarely the other way round, to include a redressing of the balance of activities offered to boys (Talbot, 1986).

Like all school subjects, PE should be seen more as shifting amalgamations of sub-groups and traditions rather than monolithic entities, with groups within the subject influencing and changing the subject boundaries (Goodson, 1985). Different sub-groups will be influential at different

times in history. As studies have shown (eg. Fletcher, 1984; Kirk, 1990a), struggles over competing definitions of what counts as 'subject knowledge' have been central to the development of institutionalised PE, both at school and ITE level. As Evans (et al) (1987) note,

the professional socialisation of PE teachers in Britain (which until recently has often meant initiation into different activities in different institutions for men and women) may well have engendered a unifying commitment to the promotion and teaching of PE as a subject. It may also however, have served to promote the development within the subject of two quite separate sub-cultures, of male and female teachers each with quite different conceptions of what and how to teach (Evans, et al, 1987, p.61).

Although there is now a developing body of research exploring the limits and possibilities of change and innovation in PE (eg. Evans and Clarke, 1988; George and Kirk, 1988; Sparkes, 1986; 1988), few studies have considered the implications of the introduction of co-educational PE for the definition of the subject.

Since co-educational ITE in PE in Britain has been a relatively recent innovation, an important element of this research was to consider the range and type of activities included in the Practical PE Studies element of the courses, and the rationales presented for this. The definition of the subject and the kinds of knowledge students are introduced to in their training will be reflected both in the shape and direction of their future teaching, and the kinds of educational experiences they are able to offer children. As Evans (1990a) has recently pointed out, it will also have implications for their own work as teachers (including those teaching within ITE) as well as their position and influence within the profession

more broadly. The move to co-educational PE at ITE level has provided an opportunity for the profession to break down existing conceptions of 'boys' PE' and 'girls' PE' and to create a new PE capable of contesting the gender ideologies which underpinned the curriculum of the former single sex PE colleges. The reality at Brickhill and Heydonfield, however, was far different, and is discussed below.

#### *Co-education - a new start?*

As the previous section described, curriculum planning at Brickhill was very different from that at Heydonfield. The rational curriculum planning at Brickhill contrasted with that at Heydonfield, where Steve, the Head of PE, admitted that there was no overall rationale for the activities they included in the PE programme. They largely *'reflected staff expertise'*, and if anyone wanted to add another activity *'it was up to them to put forward a good case and argue for it'*.

The balance and range of practical PE activities included in the undergraduate courses reflected the gendered history of both institutions. Women's PE has traditionally been based on a much broader curriculum and has included dance and gymnastics as well as games. Men's PE has centred largely on the teaching of games (Fletcher, 1984). Similarly, the *form* of the activities taught corresponded closely to the institutions' historical roots. The different forms of gymnastics - educational and Olympic gymnastics - which formed the basis of what Fletcher (1984) has called the *'movement/anti-movement'* war within the PE profession of the 1960's - was

still in evidence at the two institutions. At Brickhill, the gymnastics was educational, based on the Laban-inspired 'movement' principles dominant in women's PE during the 1960's. Rhythmical gymnastics was also included as an element within the Aesthetic and Artistic area of experience. In contrast, the gymnastics at Heydonfield was heavily skills based, reflecting the Olympic gymnastics which characterised the male PE tradition (Kirk, 1990a). A first year 'foundation skills course', was followed by modules in Olympic and acrobatic gymnastics in second and third years of the course. This format was not necessarily accepted by all of the staff involved in teaching these courses however. Gill, one of the women staff, for example, considered the year one skills course '*still back in the dark ages!*'.

The enforced move to co-educational classes had created little change to the curricula of either institution. In both cases the move had actually been resisted. As one member of staff admitted at Heydonfield, '*we would never have changed if it hadn't been forced on us by law*' (6). The strength of the different philosophies and traditions within PE, and the general reluctance of both institutions to review their courses, other than to 'tag on' 'appropriate' activities in their moves towards co-education, is reflected in the following comments by senior members of staff:

*oh yes, I couldn't believe some of the ...I mean I remember someone saying once at a meeting that we would have to change our syllabus and do topics like menstruation, you know, and I said well, you can grit your teeth and do that can't you?...it was a very male orientated course, and I think that some of those things are still there, but at that time, it was ludicrous - the women's stuff was just grafted on - all the traditional things were done and then it was*



*something like, oh god, I suppose we ought to do something about netball didn't we? [Taped Interview, Russell, male head of department at Heydonfield].*

As well as content differences, there was also a recognition that women's PE may well have had a different philosophy, as the comments below suggest;

*well, the girls came in so there were minor changes made, in other words there was twenty hours of creative movement tagged onto the course! [laugh]....but with Richard [the previous head of PE] I think they tried to change the approach more than anything to provide..you know, what they perceived..what they thought the girls would want ...err, but the overriding philosophy ...at that time, was any girls that want to do dance are advised not to come here, you know, that is not what we were offering - at that particular time, we were offering a very games orientated course, and Richard's attitude was that if they didn't want to come, they don't come - it was a simple as that! [Steve, male head of PE, Heydonfield, taped interview]*

*well, apart from putting in the men's games....we have always, we have always right from the word go, they have come into the gym and dance and everything. There has never been a separate practical course except for the football and the rugby - not the cricket because we always used to teach cricket anyway...I think that we have more expected the men to learn to be comfortable with our ...ideals than we have changed for the men [Angela, female head of PE, Brickhill, taped interview].*

There was little indication to suggest that staff had considered the move towards co-education as anything other than an inconvenience and an imposition. They were prepared to make minor changes to the programme, by 'adding on' 'men's' or 'women's' activities, but with as little disruption to the courses as possible.

### *Gender differentiation in practical activities*

Although most activities were taught in mixed groups, male and female students were timetabled separately for some of the major games, specifically those which related to a social construction of 'appropriate' masculinity and femininity. For example, rugby remained a male-only activity, and netball a female-only activity. At Heydonfield the women studied lacrosse, whilst the men studied soccer, whereas other games which have been traditionally viewed as 'male' or 'female', such as cricket and hockey, were taught mixed. At Brickhill, it had been decided that year to have single sex groups, for both men and women, for hockey and soccer. This decision seemed to have been less about beginning to address gender differentiation in activities, but more about satisfying the demands of incoming students. As one member of staff suggested, 'well, the men are playing much more hockey now, what with the Olympics and so on, and the girls have done soccer too and they are asking for sessions'. At both institutions, male and female students studied dance, although as discussed below, it had been decided that male students in their final year at Heydonfield could 'opt out' of this activity if they wished. However, as Scraton (1990, p.25) notes,

whilst it is important to identify gender differentiation in contemporary practice, it is vital also to consider the ideological construction and reinforcement of gender through the teaching of physical education [and] it is in the often extensive definitions and justifications of 'good practice' given by teachers of physical education that assumptions concerning the ideologies of [gender] can be found.

### *Preparation for teaching practice*

The interviews with course leaders revealed that a major rationale for introducing men and women to different PE activities was the preparation for their teaching practice in schools, as the following comments illustrate:

*it is a bit difficult with individual subjects like PE when there are still separate girls' and boys' activities going on. It is a bit difficult to prescribe...I mean there is no argument in science because you would never have girls' and boys' science, or separate girls' or boys' maths, but er...because PE is still taught separately...you know...it has to be recognised that in many instances in schools ...er ...there are going to be certain practical professional differences however uncomfortable that might be....[Russell, head of department, Heydonfield, taped interview]*

*the women do not need rugby and the men don't need netball..they are never going to teach it on teaching practice ....[female lecturer, Brickhill]*

As others such as Menter (1989) have noted, efforts by ITE institutions to be innovative and forward thinking are often thwarted by students' experiences on teaching practice, with many schools offering an experience which impedes, rather than helps, the development of critical, reflexive practitioners. Certainly both institutions had felt it necessary to add to the activities they offered in their courses so that students could be adequately prepared for their teaching practice. However, these ideas about being 'adequately prepared' seemed to be based more on assumptions about what kinds of activities students would be involved in teaching, rather than on any detailed research evidence gathered from the schools - assumptions themselves, underpinned by gender ideologies.

Whilst both institutions felt (rightly) that it was important to adequately prepare students for their teaching practice, this rationale glosses over the question of why particular activities become the province of one sex, or the implications of this differentiation for the reproduction of gender ideologies. Further questioning revealed more deep-seated rationales tied closely to these ideologies.

#### *Women and contact sports*

It was suggested that men and women students needed to be separated if the activity included physical contact, as the following comments made by staff illustrate:

*it depends on the activity...the swimming, the athletics, the gymnastics, it wouldn't cross my mind to separate them..the only thing where I have reservations about teaching mixed groups was if it was going to be a contact sport...[Steve, head of PE, Heydonfield, taped interview]*

*its [single sex sessions] for the contact sports - you know, the athletics and the hockey and so on are mixed [Paul, male lecturer, Heydonfield]*

*obviously the women couldn't do rugby because of the injury factor [Helen, female tutor, Heydonfield]*

Scraton (1987; 1990) has identified how girls' PE contributes to an ideology of the physical which constructs young women as physically subordinate to men, and is closely tied to the development of female heterosexuality. Physical contact in PE for girls is considered inappropriate for reasons of safety, in terms of the potential damage girls

could do to themselves, but also because:

any demonstration of power and assertion between women is not acceptable in relation to the social construction of female sexuality. Desirable female sexuality is a passive, responsible, heterosexuality, and the engagement of girls or women in contact sports immediately raises doubts about the status of their sexuality (Scraton, 1990, p. 28).

Games such as netball, where movement is restricted, and contact eliminated through the 'three-feet' rule, and hockey, which puts a stick between the players and the ball, were adopted by women's PE as most suitable for their assumed physical capabilities (Fletcher, 1984). Although there has been little research on boys' PE, Scraton suggests that it is likely that it contributes to the reproduction of an ideology of the physical which underpins a culture of masculinity and which emphasises strength, toughness, competitiveness and physical domination. It was these kind of ideas which underpinned Steve's, the head of PE, decision to abandon initial attempts at mixed sex major games classes at Heydonfield. The arrival of what he called a small 'token group' of women on the course did not, at first, bring about sex segregated classes. However, in practice, mixed football had presented him with a number of problems. The main one was the wide range of abilities in the group since many of the women had had little or no previous experience of the game:

*The boys got very frustrated. Now that might have been my poor teaching or what-have-you, but they came, and we had school-boy international players in there, and now, whatever you say, they want to actually perform at the end of the day, you know, at some kind of level...[Steve, head of PE, Heydonfield, taped interview, original emphasis].*

He also felt that the men's physical 'abilities' in the game - hard, competitive, and physical play - had to be artificially controlled in the presence of women:

*I always finish off with a game and I wouldn't have the girls playing with the boys on the grounds that I thought that..... some of these lads are nutcases you know... and they would think nothing about thinking it would be a good idea to crunch some girl, and I mean from self preservation, I don't think so much of the girl, if a girl finished up in hospital with a broken leg, I mean I would say that would be liability on my behalf.. I couldn't trust our boys, especially if one of the girls by chance or whatever, took a ball off 'em, that they wouldn't just crunch them as they would do if it was a boy...so I used to finish off, after doing this great thing together with the girls playing four aside, and the boys playing the full game, you know.. [Steve, head of PE, Heydonfield, taped interview]*

There are a lot of issues raised here, including important questions about the nature and aims of the practical work in PE ITE and how well students are prepared to teach mixed ability groups, as well as questions about the role of competitive sports in the reproduction of ideologies of masculinity. There is no doubt that co-educational grouping in PE does raise serious, major issues about physicality, and sexuality, which need to be addressed by teachers and lecturers. Here, there was no questioning of the fact that 'crunching' anyone, men or women, might not be a desirable aspect of any practical PE session. This mirrors Scraton's findings, who found that women PE teachers did not question the belief that violent contact sport might be unsuitable for anyone, but rather saw 'contact' as unsuitable only for girls (Scraton, 1990). As long as it was other men that were involved in the violent play, it was considered acceptable. Connell (1990) argues that physical aggression and contact between men is

considered not only acceptable, but also desirable. Whitson (1990) notes for example, that the games which are considered 'real' male sports, are those which enable physical aggression between men, rather than simply the development and display of skill or strength.

For this lecturer, having to 'protect' the women all the time, led him to abandon these mixed sessions. He solved this problem initially by timetabling the men and women separately for soccer, so he could, as he suggested 'give the boys the best, and the girls the best'. However, pressures on timetabling meant a reversal back to a gender segregated curriculum, with the women students being taught lacrosse, the men soccer. Seeing the difference in ability allowed this tutor to present a 'logical' case for the return to single sex teaching, not on the basis of gender, but to the more 'reasonable' pedagogical reference point, the students' apparent physical abilities and skills. In doing so, he confirms his own (and the students) ideological and stereotypical assumptions about men and women, and reproduces the entrenched notions of 'men's PE' and 'women's PE'. By retaining soccer and rugby as male-only activities, Heydonfield ensured the involvement of male students in what Kessler (et al) (1987) has called 'masculinizing practices', practices through which the reproduction of hegemonic masculinities, are maintained.

At Brickhill that year, similar dilemmas to those faced by Steve, had resulted in single sex groups for hockey and soccer being established - largely because of 'the contact problem', but also because it was thought that the men ought to have the chance to learn to play hockey.

### *Aesthetic activities and masculinity*

The 'appropriateness' of aesthetic activities for male students was a third major area of concern for tutors at both Brickhill and Heydonfield. At Heydonfield, the staff had agreed that the fourth year course could become optional for men in response to complaints from male students. As one male student told me, they had complained because 'the men had had to do twenty hours of creative movement when they had not had a course on squash!'. At Brickhill, there was similar concern over the appropriateness of dance for the men students. As the Head of PE, Angela commented,

*although there is a strong dance ethos here, and the men know when they..they do a bit of dance when they come for interview and they know they have to do some....some of them are actually very good at it, not all of them obviously, but.....its just sort of ...the social stigma attached to dance...they struggle to understand it, they struggle to teach it and then they don't have to teach it (Angela, Head of PE, Brickhill, taped interview)*

Similarly, she had doubts about the place of rhythmical gymnastics for the male students;

*we were worried..about the men doing rhythmical gymnastics..they are not too keen on rhythmical gymnastics, well its not appropriate for them, and so we are trying to get some element of the martial arts in there for them..[taped interview]*

Observation of dance and rhythmical gymnastics classes at Brickhill (described in more detail in the next chapter) showed how many male students resisted these 'feminine' activities. Brittan (1989) suggests that a major element of what he calls 'masculine identity work' - the way



in which men and boys are involved in an almost continuous process of confirmation and construction of their masculinity - involves the rejection of 'feminizing practices'. The resistance of male students to dance, as well as the denial of major 'male' sports to the women, needs to be seen in this light. As Lenskyj notes,

institutional compulsory heterosexuality still serves to contain women's sporting participation; sports continue to be classified feminine or masculine depending upon their function in enhancing heterosexual attractiveness (Lenskyj, 1987, pp. 384/5).

Significantly, despite the fact that the men were a minority group at Brickhill, they were regarded as 'special' (see Appendix Two). Their views about the course were treated more favourably, and as more important than those of the women, and changes to the course were being implemented specifically to meet their 'needs'. Another example of this was the way in which the 'striking-fielding games' option in part two of the course, written to include an analysis of the games of rounders, cricket and softball, was reduced to a cricket module, largely because as one member of staff suggested, '*the men didn't want to do rounders*'. As Thomas (1990) notes, numerical strength is not equivalent to a female dominance in a particular subject area. The fact that they were men in a predominantly female setting, marked them out as special. Where the women were in the minority, they were expected to fit in and accept a male-orientated curriculum.

*Practical PE Studies in the PGCE Course at Brickhill.*

Although based in the former ITE PE institutions, PGCE courses were, from their conception, co-educational courses. The reduced amount of time on these courses, coupled with increasing economic constraints, meant that at Brickhill all the students were timetabled for the same physical activities. In the games curriculum, this entailed students being timetabled for four, one and a half hour sessions on each of the games of hockey, netball, rugby and soccer. However, there were clear messages to suggest that many of the PE staff saw this provision as inappropriate. In one netball class, when some male students were slow to pick up the footwork rule, one female tutor suggested,

*the men always find this difficult, but even the men may have to teach netball, you know if a member of staff is away and you have to cover for them*

For this lecturer at least, if men were ever to teach netball, it would be in an 'emergency' situation such as covering for staff absenteeism. Similarly, the male tutor teaching the rugby admitted that he would 'never teach rugby to a mixed group' if he was in school, 'because of the injury factor to the girls' and that he only taught rugby at Brickhill 'under sufferance because there was no one else'. As the following chapter illustrates in more detail, these classes were often rigidly segregated by sex, particularly if the sessions involved any physical contact, such as one session observed which focused on tackling.

Not surprisingly, these sessions did little to get students to address the

gendered nature of activities, or how these have been used to bolster ideologies of physicality which have defined women and girls as inferior. A typical student response to these sessions was to complain about the lack of time they had had to spend on the games they saw as most appropriate for them. (These comments were part of a course evaluation with the PGCE students at the end of their year at Brickhill, which they allowed me to tape).

*I liked doing the rugby and the football to get an idea of it, but should time be spent on this [for the women] when we have not done much on hockey and netball, and these are the games we are going to teach [female PGCE student].*

Most students felt that the course had not prepared them adequately to teach the PE activities, and there were complaints about the time which had been allocated to Professional Studies, compared to practical work. The following comments were made at the end of course evaluation meeting:

*I mean things that were based on some kind of social awareness..child abuse, special needs, ...er multi-ethnic lectures were useful, but ...it was just too much at the end of the day and we felt that it was a waste of time when we could be doing something else, especially as some of us found on teaching practice that we were lacking content....[male PGCE student].*

*we need to know about these things but it is not as vital as knowing the basics of a major team sport for a lot of people who have not got that knowledge..[male PGCE student].*

*don't forget that in a year everyone is sort of pre-engaged in trying to cram in as much PE knowledge into their heads of possible aren't they, rather than the more educational issues...that's why people did not turn up at Professional Studies because they thought it was irrelevant because it was not practices for netball...[female PGCE student].*

These comments reflect what Tinning (1988) has called the 'pedagogy of necessity' - that is, student teachers' pedagogy on school experience is based on 'cookbook' knowledge - on 'what works'. However, as Tinning points out, these perceptions do not exist in isolation, and should be seen as reflexive of the commonly accepted 'gap' between theory and practice in education, and the technical rationality that characterizes the consciousness of most teachers and teacher educators. Any attempt to introduce a different perspective within ITE needs to take cognizance of this.

The trend towards the PGCE as the main route into ITE PE has important implications, not only for the amount of time students have to develop an awareness of wider educational issues, but also for the level and range of their practical abilities, and consequently, the types of activities which become defined as 'PE'. The preoccupation of undergraduate programs with sport (eg. Whitson and Macintosh, 1990), at the expense of a broader range of physical activities including dance and gymnastics, affects the kinds of activities which can be included in PGCE courses. For example, at Brickhill, staff had decided to exclude dance from the curriculum, since so few students had experienced any dance in their undergraduate courses (7).

The processes of 'curriculum development and change' identified above, brought about by the enforced move to co-education, illustrate the 'double-bind' situation for women in PE. Whilst retaining separate activities for girls and women reproduces and reinforces ideologies of femininity, it is

clear that an uncritical move towards co-educational PE may not be the answer either, since this may well entail, amongst other things, moving towards a male definition of PE.

#### **Equal opportunities, gender and the curriculum.**

This section describes the formal, explicit ways in which gender issues were addressed within the courses at Heydonfield and Brickhill, and the attitudes of staff to this work. Given the findings of the EOC's (1989) report, it was not surprising to find that there was very little formal curriculum time allocated to a consideration of 'equal opportunity' issues in any of the case study institutions' courses. However, three out of the four courses did include a specific section of work, or core unit, where gender issues were addressed. The PGCE course at Brickhill did not include any such work. Staff suggested instead, that this course relied on the 'permeation' of gender issues throughout the course (although, as the discussion below suggests, whether this occurred was doubtful).

The use of the concept 'equal opportunity' here is not unproblematic. As Chapter One noted, it has been a central concept in liberal feminist critiques of education - critiques which have centred largely around issues of access, and changing stereotypical attitudes. A major limitation of this 'equal opportunities' perspective is its focus on individuals and access rather than on the redistribution of power relations, together with its general lack of concern with class and race (eg. Arnot, 1982). Despite these limitations, this approach represents the discourse of 'equal opportunities' which remains the most accepted by educationalists.

Certainly, as Acker (1987) notes, it is the language which has been used by central government, and within what she calls 'prudent efforts to introduce feminist perspectives into the teacher training curriculum' (Acker, 1987, p.423). It could be that it is precisely because this kind of approach does little to challenge the real effects of gender power that it has been accepted by educational authorities.

*'Core' courses on equal opportunities within Professional Studies*

The undergraduate courses introduced students to 'equal opportunity' issues in short, compulsory modules, situated within the second year Professional Studies element. The PGCE course at Heydonfield included two lectures within the Professional Studies element of the course; one on gender stereotyping, and another called 'Fair opportunities for all' which made reference to girls' education (alongside issues of class and race).

Both members of staff in charge of the undergraduate modules expressed some doubts about their role in running these courses. At Brickhill, where gender issues were addressed alongside race and special needs issues in a twelve hour, 'Curriculum Access' course, the tutor admitted she was having problems getting someone 'knowledgable enough' to lead it, since the person who had taught it the previous year was too heavily timetabled elsewhere. At this point, she asked me whether I would be interested in teaching the module!

The tutor responsible for the six hour course at Heydonfield explained that this had been included for the first time that academic year, 'largely

in response to CATE', and that he had been given the responsibility of running the module chiefly because of his interest and expertise in multicultural education. Although he felt that it was an 'impossible' task to consider race, gender and special needs issues within this time allocation, he suggested that there was scope for students to develop their understanding and expertise further should they wish, in the Multicultural Education and Sociology of Education option courses available in the third and fourth years of Professional Studies. He added that he thought 'it would be a bit tedious for students if these issues were 'pushed down their throats' by making such courses compulsory'. By making the third and fourth year work on equality issues 'optional' in this way, they effectively become just another educational issue which students might like to get involved with - a moral or voluntary involvement, rather than an integral part of their professional responsibility.

The fact that neither member of staff responsible for these short modules showed a particular sensitivity or commitment to gender equality suggests it would be highly unlikely that the work would be successful in raising students' awareness of gender issues. The location of the modules within the Professional Studies element of the courses - an area of work which students view as least relevant (eg. Denscombe, 1982) - together with their 'one-off' nature, and their early placement within the course, are also factors likely to contribute to their overall ineffectiveness (Jones and Street-Porter, 1989; Shah, 1989). As Jones and Street-Porter (1989) have concluded, short 'bolt-on' courses which deal largely with the mechanics of equal opportunities policies, or with raising 'awareness' of issues, without a theoretical basis to help students appreciate and understand the

structural frameworks of inequality, are unlikely to be effective in getting students to address the ways in which teachers and schools are part of this structure. Moreover, the focus of these courses on the educational experience of *children*, meant that there was no consideration of the gendered nature of the teaching profession itself. This is a significant omission given increasing amounts of evidence, summarized in Chapter Two, which shows how women are profoundly disadvantaged in terms of their career development in teaching, including PE (eg. Acker, 1989; Burgess, 1988; Cunningham, 1989; Evans and Williams, 1989).

The EOC (1989) survey noted that some institutions had taken on board gender issues as a direct result of pressure from students (although it concluded that this position was a very unsatisfactory one. It also noted that the patches of good work they did uncover, relied heavily on the commitment and energy of individual members of staff. Evidence of both these could be seen at Brickhill: there were several occasions during the observation period at Brickhill where students challenged members of staff on issues of race and gender (see Chapter Six). The fact that there was a well developed Special Educational Needs module within the degree reflected the expertise of one member of staff who had focused on this aspect in her Masters degree work. There was little evidence to suggest that the attention to gender and race issues in the course was being developed in anything like a systematic way.

Jones and Street-Porter (1989) and others (eg. Coldron and Boulton, 1988; Shah, 1989) argue that ITE course structures must include specific core courses which address issues of equality, but importantly, these must be



supported by the 'permeation' of issues through the other course elements. The process of raising gender issues through permeation is discussed in the next section.

*'Permeation' of gender issues.*

The EOC's (1989) report suggested that institutions use the 'permeation model' as a device for addressing gender issues in 'an already crowded curriculum'. It showed, for example, that permeation was cited as a far more common method of raising gender issues on PGCE courses than on undergraduate courses. However, as Shah (1989) stresses, 'permeation' seems to be accepted as a method of addressing equality issues within school or ITE curricular despite a lack of clarity about what it is or what the method entails in practice for teachers and lecturers (8). Coldron and Boulton (1990) for example, suggest that the effectiveness of permeation can be assessed in terms of how far the professional legitimacy of a concern for gender is conveyed through elements of the course. More usually, and implied in the EOC (1989) report, permeation is used in a more modest sense to describe ways in which gender issues are raised with students throughout the course, other than in the 'core' sessions specifically allocated to this task.

Adopting this definition, permeation as the sole method of addressing 'race' or gender issues in a course is unlikely to be successful. The Anti-Racist Teacher Education Network (ARTEN) (1988), for example, has suggested that whilst permeation is often cited as the method used for raising equality issues, in reality, it becomes a 'road to nowhere' - a way

of avoiding them altogether. It also demands knowledgeable and sensitive staff, without which it can become less about challenging gender ideologies and stereotypes but more about their reinforcement. There is evidence to suggest that permeation can be a valuable method of addressing equality issues, if it is part of a well structured, planned and evaluated package, and used alongside specific core modules addressing equality issues (Coldron and Boulton, 1990; Sheh, 1989; Skelton and Hanson, 1989). However, it requires knowledgeable, sensitive and committed staff, and careful planning of when and where issues will arise, rather than leaving this to chance. How did Heydonfield and Brickhill use permeation as a method of raising equality issues within other elements of the courses?

The BEd at Brickhill used permeation as a method of raising 'cross curricular issues' through the Subject Studies element of the course to reinforce the work in the Professional Studies element outlined above. The BEd CNA course document included a matrix showing where the permeation of 'cross curricular concerns', including race, gender and special needs, would occur. In terms of gender, as well as this being raised within specific courses (such as the Nature and Cultural context course, and the Cultural Studies course described earlier) the course document suggested that gender would also be raised in relation to discussions about learning and teaching strategies, including mixed PE teaching. At Heydonfield, a committee had been recently formed to address 'cross curricular issues' and was currently involved in the collection of information about whether, and where, these issues were addressed in the different Subject Studies areas. The written response from the PE staff indicated that it was only within Sociology that gender issues were specifically addressed.

However, there is a big difference between identifying where gender issues will permeate courses on paper, and how this is put into practice. As Deem has noted,

policy, as we have begun to realise, is a process, not a statement and words have to be turned into deeds and the changes monitored and evaluated. Specific tasks have to be set ...if anything concrete is to be achieved or the fine words of a document remain just that (Deem, 1991, p.11).

The next section, therefore, explores the attitudes of staff towards gender issues in an effort to assess the likelihood of effective permeation of gender issues.

*The attitudes of staff towards issues of gender equality*

The taped interviews with course leaders and heads of departments, together with observation of classes at both institutions, revealed both indifference and hostility on the part of staff towards addressing sexism within the courses. For example, the PGCE course leader, Val, suggested that gender issues were not explicitly addressed because of,

*our background..I mean we have always had more women .....in many ways we have had ..you know...to have equal opportunities for the men..we haven't been very good at that, like it was only last year that we got men's changing rooms. We have the opposite thing - in some ways we have taken it for granted because we have the women...that's why they don't have much on gender [taped interview, Val, female PGCE leader, Brickhill].*

The danger of viewing gender issues in liberal terms of access means that,

like this member of staff, where there are women involved, it is assumed that 'gender' isn't a problem. Similarly, Angela, the head of PE at Brickhill, admitted that she did not relate very easily to this material since it seemed to have had little relevance to her own teaching career;

*because of some quirk of circumstance I have got where I have without even thinking that I am a woman, do you know what I mean? Got married, had my children and got a job....whereas some people REALLY get upset about the way in which women are treated...I ...certainly working with Shirley [female sociologist] has been a real eye-opener for me because of this business of .of you know, equal opportunities and discrimination against women, I just would not have THOUGHT about it! [Angela, head of PE, Brickhill, taped interview, original emphasis].*

Angela admitted that she was doubtful whether she, or indeed the other teaching staff at Brickhill, were either 'sensitive or knowledgeable enough' to allow for effective permeation.

Steve, the head of PE at Heydonfield gave a different explanation for the lack of permeation of issues - the notion of academic autonomy:

*although we are made aware of the issues by our management team.... whether individuals put that into practice is a different thing....how far people go in addressing that [gender issues] is obviously, you know, up to them [Steve, head of PE, taped interview, my emphasis]*

'Academic autonomy' he suggested, made it difficult to 'even find out what anyone else is teaching, let alone how they do it'.

There was little or no evidence during the observation period of staff

raising gender (or race) issues in a sensitive or informed way. On the other hand, there were many more examples where stereotypical views of girls' and boys' physical abilities and behaviours in the classroom were actually reinforced rather than challenged. The following comments were typical;

*You will find that the boys will skip badly and the girls will throw badly....I might be making a sexist comment here but you will find it will be true (Female lecturer, method session, Brickhill).*

*what do the boys want to do when they start?...well yes, they want to play games...and sometimes some of the girls want to play games too, but more often the girls will do what the teacher wants them to do, but the boys will be more trouble and will need watching (Female lecturer, games session, Heydonfield).*

*In schools, girls are more likely to use creative movements whereas boys are more functional and straightforward (Male lecturer, gymnastics session, Heydonfield).*

*what about the boys, do you have the same problems there?...the boys usually organise themselves better [than girls] and get on with it (Female lecturer, games session, Brickhill).*

So although there was little evidence of gender being openly addressed and examined within the PE Studies, stereotypical assumptions such as these formed part of the hidden curriculum and would undoubtedly affect the future expectations and behaviour of the students in their teaching. However, as mentioned earlier, it is important to note that these kinds of comments were not always simply accepted by students. On several occasions, students challenged staff, although one female student admitted to me that she 'had given up because the tutor didn't take any notice' and she was aware that she was getting labelled as the 'radical' in the group by some students (9).

Whilst some staff were indifferent to permeation, others were quite openly hostile to suggestions that these issues should permeate their PE modules. In a PGCE course committee meeting at Brickhill, cross curricular issues were specifically raised as an agenda item. The course leader, Val, suggested that cross curricular issues had been identified by the external examiner as an area which staff should strengthen that year. Her report also suggested that students had complained about some staff using sexist comments. One man immediately retorted '*that assumes we know what a sexist comment is!*'. When Val went onto suggest that staff should consider how these issues could be more directly addressed in the course this year, the same lecturer went onto to complain that '*they cover race and gender issues in the Professional Studies don't they?*'. Another male lecturer grumbled that he '*wished he had known about this at the beginning of the year*' so that he '*could have done something about it*'. The report was largely dismissed by another female member of staff since '*she [the external examiner] comes from ILEA where these things are high profile*'.

The external examiners for courses have important and powerful roles in making recommendations regarding course content and assessment procedures, and as Coldron and Boulton (1988; 1990) note, can have a crucial supporting role in reinforcing the development of critical work. However, the opposite may also be true. At Heydonfield, Steve considered that equal opportunities was receiving too much attention within PE studies, and that this had been noted by the external examiners, as the comment below illustrates:

*the point had been made, both internally and externally  
that we were asking that question far too often ....*

*...every time the papers were written there was one on equal opportunities ..more than any other subject...Now Gill teaches the course (Curriculum Issues) and she obviously thinks that it is an important part of the course and obviously puts a question on it, but I mean it has been noted that too much attention has been placed on it, explicitly and it is ALWAYS examined...the external examiners are saying, another question on equal opportunities! [Steve, head of PE, Heydonfield, taped interview].*

This raises interesting crucial questions which were not able to be addressed in this research about who gets chosen as external examiners, and how this is done, as well as their expertise to act in this role.

The discussion in this section has focused on the specific ways in which the courses at Brickhill and Heydonfield attempted to raise issues of equal opportunities, specifically those of gender. Although three out of four of the courses included a specific 'core' unit on equal opportunities, this seems to have been more in response to pressure from CATE, rather than a reflection of the commitment and sensitivities of staff. These short courses, couched within a liberal equal opportunities/access discourse, situated within the Professional Studies elements of the courses, and under the direction of staff largely unsympathetic to gender issues, are likely to have done little to help students become sensitive to the way in which their pupils' educational chances and experiences, or indeed, their own educational careers, are structured by their gender, race and class. The evidence gathered from interviewing senior staff, and from the observation, shows that instead of being supported elsewhere in the courses through effective 'permeation', it is far more likely that the impact of these formal sessions would have been undermined by much more pervasive and

extensive stereotypical messages about gender reproduced in the everyday practices of the institutions. These include the way in which practical activities were timetabled, as discussed earlier, but also the ways in which gender structured the actual classroom interactions. These form the focus of the discussions in the next two chapters. The final section of this chapter describes the ways in which students were assessed in the ITE courses, since here too, gender was an influential factor.

#### **Student assessment and PE ITE**

This section analyses the way in which students on the different courses at Brickhill and Heydonfield were assessed. Diagram 5 on page 208 compares the assessment of the two undergraduate courses. This discussion focuses on two key aspects of the assessment; firstly, what kinds of knowledge or abilities were assessed, and how this was assessed, and secondly, how gender influenced the fairness of the assessment. Here the specific focus is on the assessment of practical ability within the two undergraduate courses. An analysis of curriculum content of ITE courses cannot ignore the nature and form of the assessment, since this often reflects ideas and opinions about the nature of knowledge, and what is considered to be 'essential' knowledge.

#### *Assessment in the undergraduate courses*

There were big differences in the way in which the undergraduate courses were assessed. At Heydonfield, students were assessed largely through formal, written examinations at the end of the final year of the course



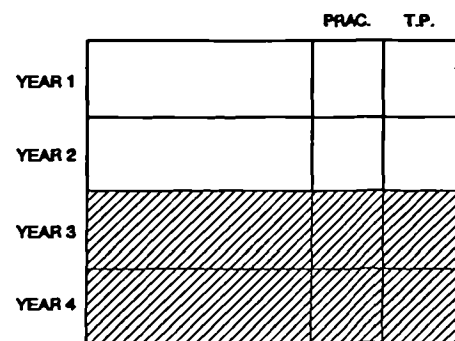
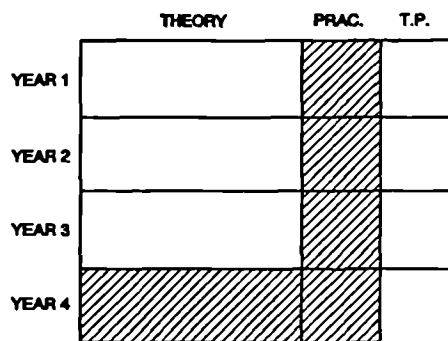
## Diagram 5

### Comparison of Assessment Patterns for the two Undergraduate Degrees at Brickhill and Heydonfield

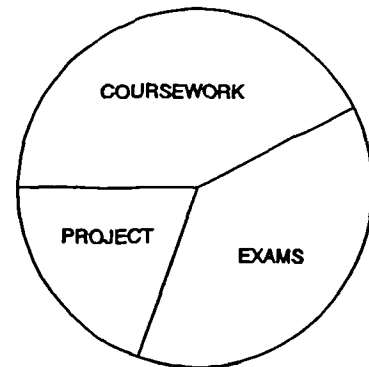
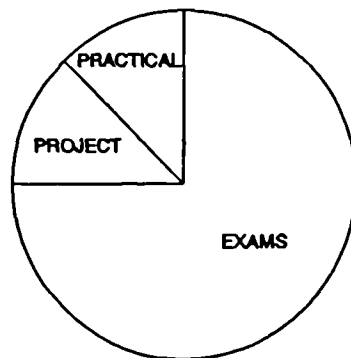
#### HEYDONFIELD BA (Ed)

#### BRICKHILL (BEd)

Diagrams show which aspects of the four year courses contributed to final degree classification



Pie diagrams show weighting of degree classification assessment elements



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Practical grades for each activity over four years contribute to an eighth of degree classification.</li> <li>2. Degree classification based heavily on final year exams, together with project and practical assessment mark. Teaching practical assessed on pass/fail basis.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Practical options in years 3 + 4 assessed through assignments and practical work.</li> <li>2. Degree classification based on coursework, exams, project and practical work over year 3 and 4. Graded teaching practice in year 3.</li> </ol> |
|---|--|

(see diagram 5 on page 208). Although students had to successfully complete examinations and tests for each of the course modules leading upto their final year, none of these marks (apart from the assessment of their practical work) fed into the final degree result. The majority of tutors included a formal examination or test at the end of each module of work, largely to 'motivate' students and, as one member of staff suggested to me, 'to get students to read'. Performance on teaching practice did not count towards the overall degree result, although students had to pass each of these. This assessment pattern contrasted with that of Brickhill's, where not only did the form of the assessment vary to include written assignments as well as examinations, but grades gained in the third year of the degree contributed to approximately a third of the overall degree result. Students' third year teaching practice was graded (fail, pass, good pass, or distinction) and only those students who were graded a good pass or above could gain a first class honours degree (10).

*Gender, assessment and practical performance.*

Students' practical performance in physical activities was considered important in both undergraduate courses. This was reflected both in the ways in which students were accepted onto the courses, and by the way in which practical grades formed part of the final degree profile. Other research suggests that students' practical performance in physical activity is valued highly by the profession more widely (see Sports Council/College of St Paul and St Mary, Cheltenham, 1989) (11).

At Heydonfield, marks gained throughout the four years on the practical

work contributed to an eighth of the final degree profile (see diagram 5 on page 208. This kind of assessment had implications for the content of the sessions, the groupings of students, and the way in which these sessions were conducted. For example, Helen, one of the tutors who taught some of the dance modules, admitted that without a formal assessment, motivating the men *'would be impossible'*. A large percentage of time allocated to practical work was taken up with the assessment. Don, the cricket lecturer for example, allocated three weeks out of a ten week course to assess students, using a written test and practical *'viva'* (see discussion below).

Gender ideologies did not only affect the timetabling of practical activities for men and women students, but also influenced the practical assessment itself. From observing aspects of the practical assessment and through talking to members of staff, it became clear that women students were much more likely to be graded lower than men students. Not surprisingly this was most acute in those activities seen as *'male'* activities.

Cricket can be used as an example to illustrate this. Don, the cricket lecturer, taught the men and women students together since he considered it a game of skill, not strength (see also Chapter Seven). As part of the paper I presented to the staff about the gender issues raised by the assessment procedures (see Chapter Three), I analysed the assessment grades of all of the practical activities, including the cricket. Over the three years women has been admitted, they had scored significantly less than the men. When questioned on this, Don admitted that the gendered nature of the

game affected the women's scores. He recognised that the women came in with less experience and knowledge of the game (a good many of them had never played before), and he even suggested that,

*even if they [the women students] practised for five years they would still get lower grades because of their lack of commitment, motivation and interest to the game*

Despite this observation he insisted that the assessment procedure was fair, since,

*it would be the same for the men in, say, gymnastics or athletics if they had not done those activities..it all balances out, and the students have to work on their weaknesses, that's all.*

The cricket module's 'practical assessment' consisted of a viva, where students had to demonstrate a series of batting or bowling skills and answer questions, together with a test paper about the game. As well as general questions about the skills or tactics of the game, the test paper included a 'general knowledge' section. Here students were asked to identify, for example, which clubs specific male cricketers had played for that season, the captains of a number of men's County sides, and the names of famous cricket grounds. The final question on the paper asked students to name the pub to which the male students' touring team had retired after playing their third match in Barbados!

The kind of knowledge assessed here clearly demonstrates how very often it is men's experiences of the world which are validated and accepted as 'really useful' knowledge. The women were 'allowed' to study cricket with the men, but there was no recognition of the way in which their

previous experiences and learned abilities might prevent them from having equal access to the course material. Not surprisingly, women students at Heydonfield were consistently given lower grades than men students on the cricket assessments, and there was a similar picture in a majority of the other practical assessments too. As Chapter Three described, the reaction of the PE staff to the paper I presented to the group which tried to raise these issues, was one of total disinterest. As Nespor (1990) notes,

the process of objectifying the assessment of students masks a situation where social inequalities are reproduced in the guise of natural and hence 'legitimate' academic inequalities and these are in turn used to buttress unequal allocations of social positions, income and power (Nespor, 1990, pp.549/550).

The fact that much time and effort was spent on giving the students an 'objective' test on their cricket, which included a theory and practical assessment, legitimised the scores, and reinforced the superior performance of male students. The content of the tests, and their failure to acknowledge gender differences in knowledge and experience of the game of cricket, was not questioned. The inclusion of practical assessment in the degree assessment was viewed positively by the majority of the students. During the observation period at Heydonfield, debates arose amongst the student body about the practical assessment. However, these were largely concerned with the inconsistent way in which staff operated the practical assessments (individual staff were free to decide how they would assess their modules) rather than to question the relevance or purpose of the assessment, or their gender bias. At one staff-student committee meeting where the issue of practical assessment was

specifically raised, only two of the women students called for 'gender-specific' gradings. The majority seemed happy to accept biological and performance-based explanations of gender inequalities in sport, and their lower grades.

Levels of practical performance were also considered important at Brickhill. Although there was a wide range of assessment procedures, students were graded on their practical work, and in part two of the degree, these marks contributed to their final degree classification. Although the course documentation had stressed earlier that, 'it will be essential for teachers to have a broad appreciation of the breadth of the subject to enable them to respond to the changing contexts in which they may work' (p.15), the structure of the second part of the degree ensured the opposite! Most students opted for practical activities in which they were already competent as they sensibly chose to continue with activities which would bring them the highest grades.

The practical assessment on the undergraduate degrees at Brickhill and Heydonfield had two major implications. Firstly, it reaffirmed the performance pedagogy which underpinned the theoretical aspects of PE described earlier. Everyone was offered the opportunity to achieve, and high levels of performance were seen as the result of 'hard work and effort'. The lower scores gained by the women students at Heydonfield (I was not able to gather the same kinds of information at Brickhill) - a result of either lack of previous experience, physiological differences or both - could then be presented as 'objective' data to verify their inferiority in performance, and more generally, their position within the

profession. Secondly, the sex stereotyped PE curriculum is continued. Given the emphasis on practical performance in the degree assessment, it was most unlikely that students would opt to study a practical activity in which they had had little experience. (This of course assumes that they were allowed to opt into all areas, which was not the case at Heydonfield).

Co-educational PE at school level has raised a number of concerns for teachers involved in the practical assessment of performance, particularly when such grades contribute to an external examination such as a GCSE or an 'A' level. I have argued elsewhere (Flintoff, 1991) that there are major inconsistencies in the way in which these examinations assess practical performance, specifically in relation to sex and gender differences. Agreeing with Evans (1989), there are often more differences *within* a group of boys or girls, than there are *between* the boys and girls. Nevertheless, there are times when the physiological differences *do* play a decisive part in performance. To ignore the implications of sex differences, as well as gender differences in the assessment of practical performance would, as Evans (1989, p.87) has noted,

result in the invidious ranking of males against females according to standards, which for physiological or anatomical reasons, many of the latter are unable to attain.

Sex differences are likely to be more influential as children get older, and have gone through puberty, and will have a significant part to play at ITE level.

Perhaps more importantly, the *actual relevance* of this practical assessment in the professional socialisation of PE teachers was rarely questioned within the case study departments. This is despite the evidence which suggests that practical demonstrations are rarely given by the PE teacher themselves, particularly as they get older (Coventry Education Authority/Sports Council, West Midlands, 1985). Ironically, a good many of the PE staff in the case study institutions were no longer 'young', and some freely admitted to me that they rarely demonstrated!.

The PGCE route into ITE in PE provides a major contradiction to the scenario presented above. The extent to which students are assessed practically, or indeed, actually participate in practical activities in their undergraduate degrees varies enormously. The existence of the PGCE course, with little or no emphasis on students' personal practical performance, may be providing the profession with a different kind of PE student from those trained through the undergraduate degree route.

The PGCE at Brickhill was assessed through a series of assignments, which varied from a traditional 'essay' format, to the production of teaching materials and schemes of work, and the successful completion of teaching practice (12). Although the students had to demonstrate a basic level of practical competence on their initial interview (this consisted of an hour session which included gymnastics, dance and games) practical performance was not formally assessed in the course.

PE has long been associated with the development of motor skills (eg. Kane, 1973; PEA, 1987) and the commonsense idea that a high level of



performance is necessary to become a good PE teacher is generally uncontested by both the men's and the women's traditions (eg. Sikes, 1988). This is reflected in the admission procedures for courses involved in training secondary age teachers. Most include a 'practical' interview, and some include a consideration of the representative level students have reached in their sport(s) as an important part of the selection criteria (Sports Council/College of St Paul and St Mary, Cheltenham, 1989). Whilst agreeing that a degree of skill in practical activities is essential, I would suggest that there is a real need for the profession to question the extent to which this currently dominates the recruitment, training and assessment of students, at the exclusion of other, perhaps more important, qualities, abilities and knowledge.

This section has described the nature of the assessment procedures for the courses at Brickhill and Heydonfield. It concentrated particularly on the place of practical assessment in the undergraduate degree, and gave illustrative examples of inconsistencies arising out of sex and gender differences. There was little evidence to suggest that staff at either Heydonfield or Brickhill had considered how the nature of the assessment might be affected by the move to co-education, or the implications of sex and gender differences for this kind of assessment.

If co-educational ITE PE is to break down gender stereotyping of activities, the structure of the undergraduate course at Brickhill militated against this. Since students opted into the activities which would be assessed as part of their final degree, it was likely that they would continue with activities which were already their strength. At

Heydonfield, a general lack of concern amongst staff towards the way in which physical activities are strongly gendered resulted in women students being unfairly assessed. The PGCE course at Brickhill presents a further anomaly, in that practical performance was not assessed at all on this course.

### Summary

This chapter has focused on the content and assessment of the courses at Brickhill and Heydonfield. The structure and content of the courses, (specifically the PE Studies which was the main focus here) reflected the institutions' historical backgrounds. At Heydonfield, the undergraduate degree placed a heavy emphasis on scientific knowledge, which was compulsory for students throughout the four year course. Socio-cultural knowledge formed an introductory module in year one, and was offered only as an option in year four. Work which specifically addressed how gender affected the learning and teaching process in PE was restricted to small inputs made by the two women lecturers. Although the structure of the degree at Brickhill represented a much more innovatory model, socio-cultural knowledge was marginalised by its position outside the areas of experience in part one of the degree, and its optional status within the second part.

Although gender may not have formed a major part of the formal curriculum within the theoretical PE Studies, it nevertheless influenced the types of practical activities included in the programme, and the way in which these were structured and offered to students. The practical programme, in

particular the major games, continued to be offered to students on a gender-stereotyped basis. The rationales presented by staff for this revealed their belief in strong gender ideologies about the nature of physical ability and performance. Efforts to raise students' awareness of the effects of gender on the learning and teaching process were small, and the position of this work within the Professional Studies element of the programmes, without the support of sensitive staff working within other areas, suggests this would have had little impact. The attitudes of staff towards gender issues revealed either apathy or hostility. This was reflected in the use of assessment procedures at both institutions which reinforced existing gender power relations.

This chapter has overviewed some key aspects of the structure, content and organisation of the formal curriculum. However, the research recognised that the way in which this curriculum was operationalised and received by students was equally important to an analysis of the gender relations in ITE. The following two chapters explore this, drawing on the observational data gathered in the two institutions. The next chapter focuses on Brickhill.

CHAPTER SIX

CLASSROOM INTERACTION, INSTITUTIONAL LIFE AND

GENDER IDENTITIES AT BRICKHILL

## CHAPTER SIX: CLASSROOM INTERACTION, INSTITUTIONAL LIFE AND GENDER IDENTITIES AT BRICKHILL

### Introduction

Although the reproduction of gender inequality through schooling as an educational issue was explicitly addressed by students in only a very small part of the curriculum, gender could be seen to structure many of the practices and interactions within the lectures themselves. As Skelton and Hanson (1989, p.111) have noted, whether or not gender is given an official 'platform' in terms of being directly addressed in ITE courses or not, 'it can nevertheless occupy a crucial position in the underlying values of the course'. It is the study of everyday practices and routines which is crucial if we are to understand the ways in which PE ITE contributes to, or contests the reproduction of gender ideologies, since it is often at the level of the 'hidden' curriculum of the classroom that these are reproduced (Bain, 1990). This chapter explores, then, the operationalisation of the curriculum at Brickhill described in the previous chapter, focusing on the dynamics of classroom interaction and institutional life more generally (1).

### A female dominated gender regime?

As a result of its history (see Appendix Two), Brickhill's PE department was controlled and run largely by women. The majority of the senior management positions within the department (head of department, teacher education course leaders) were occupied by women; there were more women

staff than men, and there was still a greater proportion of women in the undergraduate student body (although the balance was changing each year) (2). In this sense, Brickhill's PE department represented an exception to the more usual higher education department. The fact that there was still a strong female presence in the student body at Brickhill, and that this was changing only very slowly, may reflect the differential valuing of women's activities and organisations. As the previous chapter described, the undergraduate course at Brickhill placed much more emphasis on dance and other aesthetic activities such as educational or rhythmical gymnastics, than that at Heydonfield. Such 'feminine' activities were a compulsory and major part of the undergraduate course. It could be argued that by choosing to study PE at Brickhill, male students were putting their masculinity at risk, since a central feature of hegemonic masculinity is a rejection of, and distancing from, anything seen to be 'feminine' (Connell, 1987). This context made the process of negotiating a gender identity for male students problematic, and as this chapter shows, a great deal of male students' behaviour in lectures revolved around, what seemed to be for some, an almost continual process of demonstrating and affirming this masculine identity.

#### **'Masculinity' and PE at Brickhill**

Brittan (1989) has suggested that masculinity can never be accepted as a 'finished product' but that it has to be *accomplished* in a permanent process of struggle and confirmation, a process which he has called 'identity work':

although it may appear that I take my masculinity for granted, in reality I only do so because I work at it. Every social situation, therefore is an occasion for identity work. Of course, it may well be that all the 'identity work' I do will prop up the dichotomous view of gender, but this is merely another way of saying that gender is always a construction which has to be renegotiated from situation to situation (Brittan, 1989, p.36)

A great deal of male students' behaviour in PE classes at Brickhill revolved around 'doing' this 'identity work'. Askew and Ross (1988) found in their research into boys' behaviour in school that there was an almost constant 'power play' underlying the interactions between boys - an ongoing process of positioning and a continual seeking of status and prestige. This operates, they suggest, both explicitly in terms of the way in which it permeates social interaction in the classroom, but also implicitly in the ways in which boys approached different school activities. Observation of PE classes at Brickhill suggested that similar interactions were characteristic of the interactions between male students.

#### *Competition, aggression and physicality*

The usual way for many of the male students to interact in practical classes was in competition with one another, and when the context allowed it, this interaction was often physical, combative and aggressive, mirroring the kinds of behaviour found in school PE classes (eg. Griffin, 1983; 1985) or in school more generally (eg. Askew and Ross, 1988). Askew and Ross (1988) found that not only did many boys in their research bring competition into almost all of the activities they engaged in, but that it was also competition which seemed to be the primary source of their

motivation. The 'power play' between male students, or what Benyon (1989) has so aptly called 'body building', involved either attempting to out-do male peers in terms of physical performance, or 'antics' aimed at actively flouting the authority of female members of staff (3). Much of this latter demonstration of male power involved the use of the body too - either in terms of their own body language or gestures; innuendo and jokes which centred on the body, or through the explicit objectification of female staff (this is described in more detail below).

As Connell (1983) has noted, body sense is crucial to the development of male identity; learning to be a man is to learn to project a physical presence that speaks of latent power. Sport and physical activity provides an important context for men to learn not only how to use their bodies to produce such effects, but also to experience the combination of skill and force in powerful, dominating ways. It also provides a context for men to *demonstrate* and display their physicality publically, as well as to test this in relation to other men.

The social definition of men as holders of power is translated not only into mental body images and fantasies, but into muscle tensions, posture, the feel and texture of the body. This is one of the ways in which the power of men becomes 'naturalised' (Connell, 1987, p.85).

Despite this, it is important to note here that relatively few men do actually embody such characteristics, or choose to get actively involved in sport - in this sense, PE students (both male and female) are quite atypical. However, for the male students, 'jockeying for position' in terms of physical performance and acting in competitive and often



aggressive ways towards each other, characterised much of their interaction in practical sessions and served as one of the major strategies of masculine 'identity work'.

#### *Masculinity and men-only environments*

Opportunities for 'body building' and male identity work were more readily available in some practical classes than others. As the previous chapter described, rugby was the only activity which remained a men-only activity. As a major team sport centrally constructed around physical violence, Bryson (1990) has placed it alongside cricket as one of the main 'flag carriers of hegemonic masculinity' - games which are centrally involved in the process of the reproduction of male dominance. The fact that women are actively excluded from this activity together with its team nature, means that it provides not only an effective environment for 'cementing gender solidarity, but also an environment that provides for players a network of people who have great potential for reinforcing the values embedded in the enterprise' (Bryson, 1990, p.174).

The exclusion of women because of the 'physical contact element' or 'because of the injury factor' from rugby, and the timetabling of men's soccer sessions separately from the women at Brickhill (see Chapter Five) acted to reinforce and confirm the 'appropriation' of muscle, power and strength by male students. As Whitson (1990, p.24) suggests, a major element of a 'proving ground for masculinity' lies in its ability to exclude women.

This exclusion is often both in terms of the activity, but can also include the particular social spaces in which the activity is carried out. Kidd (1990) for example, has called the major sports stadium in Toronto the 'men's cultural centre', since the exclusion of women from this 'public arena' is so complete. Imray and Middleton's (1983) work has shown how men appropriate a village cricket field, a major space within the community.

At Brickhill, the weight training room was a good example of such a 'male-only', public space. It was only after going into the room on several occasions to be met by a room full of male students, that I began to ask about the useage of the room. One woman explained that women rarely used it because it was always '*full of men ..which is off-putting for the women*'. Why women students consent to such appropriation is important to note. As with other, essentially 'male-only' spaces, such as the cricket field, or the House of Commons described in Imray and Middleton's research, or men's clubs and public houses described in Rogers' (1988) and Green's (et al) (1990) research, men use a number of strategies and actions, often very subtle, to preserve these spaces as theirs, or to control the behaviour of women within them. As Green (et al) (1990, p.125) conclude,

The techniques used to sustain this control range from hostile silence and avoidance, to verbal abuse and ridicule, and are an example of a consistent set of patriarchal controls routinely used by men to control women's behaviour in [or access to] public places.

Green (et al) suggest that given the possible high costs of entering or using such spaces, most women adopt coping strategies to deal with this. A major coping strategy is avoidance. They argue that most women faced with such a situation would choose to avoid using the space, rather than

confront the patriarchal attitudes and values of its male users. In terms of the weight-training room at Brickhill, the cost to women entering and using the facility would undoubtedly be along similiar lines.

It is likely that the weight-training room and other male-only environments served as central 'spaces' for the reinforcement of hegemonic masculinity, although, as Chapter Three described, these were only accessible to me through information passed to me secondhand. Dunning (1973) has, for example, showed how the male-only rugby club culture is constructed around the mocking of women and homosexuals, both of whom are seen to be a threat to the traditional self image of what it is to be a 'man'. More recent research into male locker room interaction (eg. Curry, 1991) shows that a similar culture exists here. Being able 'to take' alcohol is an important part of male culture too (Jackson, 1990; Myers, 1982), and was a major element in the 'initiation' events organised for incoming students in their first week at Brickhill. Although I was not able to observe any of the social programme organised by the Students' Union, one first year male confided in me that he had felt very uncomfortable about the way in which the week had been dominated by drinking, and went on to ask me whether this was 'normal practice' in higher education institutions elsewhere. As the next chapter describes, the same kinds of pressures were felt by some of the first year male students at Heydonfield.

#### *Masculinity in mixed PE classes*

The previous chapter noted how on the undergraduate course, there was some differentiation between the type of games taught to the men and the women,

or alternatively, how men and women were timetabled in single sex groups for some games. However, on the PGCE, all sessions were taught in mixed sex groups. It was in observing some of these major games sessions that the effects of competitiveness and aggressive behaviour by male students were particularly noticeable.

Other research into the dynamics of mixed sex PE lessons in schools have identified games as a particular problematic activity (Evans, 1989; Scraton, 1985). The nature of all games, but particularly invasion types, presents problems for mixed ability teaching. A 'successful' game depends heavily on either a reasonable parity of ability and experience amongst group members and comparable physiques, or on the cooperation of the better players to involve the weaker ones. The nature of invasion games, where players of each team try and 'invade' their opponents' territory, means that differences in the players' abilities are less easy to 'control' for by the teacher. Evans' (1989) observations of mixed sex games lessons in schools have shown, for example, the disastrous consequences of putting a group of girls and boys together in a game of soccer when the girls have had little or no previous experience, and the majority of the boys are both bigger and stronger physically, and already have the necessary skills. In such situations it seems inevitable that the majority of the girls will lose out.

In many of the major games sessions at Brickhill the same kinds of dynamics were present. Even in games where the majority of women had had more experience compared to the men, such as netball, most of the men dominated the setting merely by their physical presence and size. One of the PGCE

soccer sessions I observed provides an excellent example. After a short warmup, the students were involved in a series of skill practices. In these tightly structured, non-competitive situations, all the students were able to get involved in the activities. The group was then divided into two, nine-a-side teams for a 'game' on the full sized pitch. After spending time making sure that the women were evenly distributed between each team (as one male student suggested, 'to make sure its fair'- implying that the team who had the most women would be at a disadvantage) the game got under way. For the women, this twenty five minute 'game' consisted of jogging up and down the pitch with the occasional touch of the ball for some of the more able players. It was dominated particularly by three male students, who spent most of the game running the ball through groups of less talented students to score as many goals as they could. The male lecturer seemed unconcerned at the fact that most of the women were far less involved than the men. The lecture finished with the students receiving photocopied handouts from a soccer manual on how to organise corner tactics with a group! There was no discussion during the lecture about, for example, issues of mixed ability or mixed sex groupings, or indeed a consideration of ANY pedagogical issue. This was true for the majority of the PGCE games sessions I observed.

It was interesting to note that most of the women students reacted to their marginalisation within the game by struggling harder to get involved in the game. They called for the ball and did their best to get into positions where they would be free to receive the ball. Only two of the women, who had had no previous experience of the game, and therefore showed little skill, effectively 'opted out' and made little effort at all. The reaction

of some of the women after the session was one of anger. As one of the more able women commented:

*the girls just stood around and got freezing - doesn't he realise that this will happen if we did this in schools!*

When I asked why she had not challenged the lecturer during the session, she suggested she had done this on a number of former occasions to no avail. Like other accounts which have described the way in which girls 'put up with' situations dominated by boys because they realise that their complaints will not be heard (eg. Mahony 1985; 1989), here too, the women have largely 'given up' trying to improve their situation.

This was a particularly depressing example of the way in which male students dominated a practical PE session. However, there were several other examples of games sessions where similar patterns occurred. As Chapter Five described, since students were only involved in limited discussions within the formal curriculum about the ways in which gender affects classroom interactions, it was not at all surprising to observe that lecturers did not intervene or challenge such interactions in their own classrooms. In fact, when I asked staff if the presence of male students made any difference to their practical sessions, most felt that the men contributed positively to groups - '*they really stretch the rest*'; '*they're more lively and competitive*'; '*they're an addition*' were typical comments.

Whilst games sessions such as the one described above provided ideal situations for the demonstration of hegemonic masculinity in terms of

physical power, competition, aggression and skill, other PE activities sessions provided a context for this too. Gymnastics classes, for example, provided male students with the opportunity to exploit the element of danger inherent in the activity and the public nature of performances in their identity work. Masculine identity work needs to be a public event, and requires a audience for its validation (Curry, 1991; Westwood, 1990).

As noted earlier, Askew and Ross's work with boys in schools found that many *introduced* competition into activities where they could, and showed a reluctance to work cooperatively with one another. Similarly, many male students constructed 'challenges' for one another within gymnastics sessions. These included climbing to the very top of the climbing rope, performing a dive forward roll over a high wooden beam with only a thin mat for cushioning at the other side, or performing a 'crucifix' on the high rings - feats which demonstrated what Messner (1990) has called the 'most extreme possibilities of the male body' (p.206). As Haug (et al) (1987) have observed, the difference between women's and men's gymnastics centres around the portrayal of strength. 'The display of strength is to male gymnastics what the concealment of strength is to its female equivalent' (p.177). Ideal images of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' have entrenched within them particular versions of physicality. The stereotype for men is one which emphasises strength, activity and a muscular physique, and it was through these kinds of situations, provided within the context of their practical gymnastics sessions, that male students were able to 'test out', demonstrate and confirm this element of their masculinity.

*Women and homosexuals as 'other'*

An alternate 'identity building' strategy to the use of direct physical contests with other men, was the use of verbal 'put downs'. One of the most common insults used to put down or trivialize other men's performances was to suggest they were performing like a 'real nancy', or like a 'girlie'. In this way, women and homosexuals were used as negative reference points in the construction of their masculinity (Stanworth, 1983). The use of the term 'girlie' by men to describe women students is described in more detail below.

It would be wrong to suggest that all the male students worked in this way during all of the practical sessions, or that some aspects of this behaviour such as the competitiveness, were not displayed by female students. Most of the students' work - both male and female - in practical sessions revolved around efforts to improve their own performance, a logical reaction given, as the previous chapter described, a part of the assessment for the course was based on their own standard of personal performance. Similarly, the structure of many of the sessions revolved around the practising and improving of physical skills.

There was, however, a definite sense in which the performances of a small group of male students in classes dominated the attention of the lecturer, and very often, that of other students. As Wood (1984) has suggested, it is often difficult to convey through writing the way in which gender power relations structure situations without reducing boys (or men in this case) to one cultural grouping, and girls (or women) to another. Like him, what



I am trying to suggest, is that there were times when a group of the men were 'dominant', and where their influence on the atmosphere and ethos of the group was great, whereas at other times the men and women students seemed to interact together much more closely.

It was in practical activities viewed as neither 'masculine' or 'feminine', such as swimming or outdoor activities, where male and female students worked best together, and there were less overt displays of 'masculinity'. The noisy environment of the swimming pool, the individual nature of the activity, and the fact that there were likely to be as many strong swimmers amongst the women as amongst the men students, meant that there were less opportunities for male students to dominate the class (4). Similarly, Humberstone (1986) suggests that outdoor activities seems to be a physical activity in which different behaviours and relations between the sexes can flourish. She argues that there are less entrenched notions of accepted behaviours and abilities for males and females within outdoor education, and that girls' and women's talents and capabilities can become more visible and *accepted* within such a context. Such observations contrasted with those collected from the observation of students' behaviour in activities such as football or dance, both stereotypical 'gendered' activities. It seemed that it was when placed in situations where their masculine identity was 'under threat' (and particularly when their sexuality was involved) that male students reacted and behaved in such identity-confirming ways. As Brittan (1989, p.40) argues,

gender identity is not something which can be discarded at will; rather it is seen as a set of reflexive strategies which are brought into play whenever gender is *put on the line* (my emphasis).

It is important to recognise the range of abilities which existed within the group of male students. As Askew and Ross (1988) note, by talking about 'boys' behaviour' or 'men's behaviour', there is a sense in which this can lead to the reinforcement of gender stereotypes through generalisations like: all the men were aggressive, competitive and disruptive, and better performers, etc. Instead, there was a wide range of abilities and behaviours amongst the men, as well as amongst the women. The variety of activities included in the programme meant that it was rare for one student to be competent in all of these contexts.

However, the fact that not all the male students could *achieve* high levels of performance did not prevent them from being absorbed in *attempting* to achieve them - at least in those activities which could be seen to be enhancing their masculinity (dance, and other 'feminine' activities were actively resisted by male students, as described below). As Connell (1987) notes, whilst dominant versions of masculinity do not necessarily represent how the majority of men really are - few men are Bothams, Bests or Beaumonts as Day (1988) puts it - since it is these which sustain male power, not surprisingly, it is these images and ideals which large numbers of men are motivated to support.

A complementary strategy to active involvement in masculinizing processes, is a distancing or devaluing of feminizing processes (Brittan, 1989). For some of the male students, this involved a rejection of behaviour which could be seen as 'feminine', such as helping or supporting one another in work situations, admitting to personal insecurities and doubts, and

resisting active involvement in 'feminine' activities such as dance, or rhythmical gymnastics.

The fact that a central feature of hegemonic masculinity is heterosexuality (at least in our culture), means that for a man to touch one another in anything other than an aggressive way, risks him being called a 'poof' or 'queer' (Askew and Ross, 1988). It was not surprising to observe that there were many examples of male students' unease in activities such as dance, or gymnastics, where students were involved in touching, lifting or supporting one another. There was a great deal of 'identity work' to be done here if male students were to 'maintain' their masculinity, and heterosexuality. One of the major ways in which male students dealt with this kind of body contact was to 'parody' homosexuality either verbally or through body language:

*'Ooh...honey..don't touch me there...'* or

*'Lovely, do that again!'*

were examples of common expressions voiced in these kinds of situations. Such overt expressions of homophobia were expressed loudly enough for most to hear, yet were left unchallenged by staff. These kinds of taunts operate to reinforce the display of appropriate 'gendered' behaviour by male and female students, but also make the position of any student whose sexual orientation is not heterosexual, virtually untenable. As Griffin and Genasi (1990) argue, most efforts at promoting gender equality within PE have ignored any reference to homophobia and its link to sexism.

Although I was able to observe only a few mixed dance sessions, there was sufficient evidence to suggest that many of the male students felt uncomfortable in these 'feminine' activities. Although dance and rhythmical gymnastics were compulsory in the undergraduate degree for men students at Brickhill, there was a lot of resistance to this, both in terms of their reactions within sessions, and more formally, through the staff-student course review mechanisms. Many of the male students went out of their way to demonstrate their lack of commitment to the activity. Laughing, 'fooling around', exaggerating their lack of skill, wandering around the room and interrupting other groups, served as signals to each other, the lecturer, and the female students, that they were not taking the activity seriously. However, unwilling behaviour was also displayed by some of the female students in dance, but perhaps for different reasons (see below).

Conversations with the dance staff confirmed that 'messaging around' was the more usual response from male students. In mixed classes, one woman lecturer admitted she wasn't able to 'get much done':

*its the men I'm afraid to say..and its the same with the staff...I am afraid that is sexist but it's true...we have to change everything, the music, the choice of material, the praise and the feedback...we have to get the men to like the dance.*

There is now a range of research evidence to show how teachers plan their lessons around boys' interests in an effort to avoid disruption (eg. Leaman, 1984). Others (eg. National Foundation for Arts Education, 1991) have painted similar scenarios in describing their attempts to introduce

boys to dance at school level. One professional female dancer in this research, for example, has described how she changed the content of her material for a mixed group, to make it more 'action or sport or games orientated'. Whilst this helped to engage the boys' interests, she felt this had been at the expense of the development of sensitivity and feeling, qualities which she would normally value and work towards in her classes.

Dance, in its widest sense including the different forms of aerobics, remains one of the most popular physical activities enjoyed by women and participation rates are increasing (Matheson, 1991; Sports Council, 1982). Some of these popular forms have been criticised for the way in which they reinforce feminine stereotypes (eg. Deem, 1986a). However, as Griffiths (1988) notes, this does not prevent them from being a positive means by which women can meet together and enjoy themselves in their own 'space'. The few women-only groups I observed at Brickhill were very different to the mixed dance classes. These sessions were characterised by concentration and hard work, and yet the atmosphere was relaxed, friendly and comfortable (5).

Sherlock (1987) has noted that the presentation of the body in some kinds of dance is more closely associated with being 'surveyed' rather than with being powerful. Whilst mixed dance sessions could be a useful vehicle for challenging gender ideologies about the appropriateness of aesthetic activities for boys for example, alternatively, they can also increase opportunities for male surveying and 'gaze' of the female body. For many of the women, there was a general unease about working in a mixed environment in some gymnastics and dance classes. This seemed to be

intensified as a result of the clothing they were required to wear.

Scraton (1989) has noted the importance of 'standards' and discipline within women's PE, and particularly how this relates to girls' and women's PE clothing and appearance. However, the traditional gymslip which was carefully constructed to conceal the body and maintain women's and girls' morality and modesty, has long since changed. The 'correct' dress for dance and gymnastics for the women at Brickhill was a leotard and tights. These were tight, figure-hugging garments, which revealed the shape and line of the body. Haug (et al) (1987) have suggested that the shift in women's clothing for gymnastics (or dance) reflects the changes in the dominant discourse of femininity, whereby modesty and motherhood have been replaced by sexual attractiveness to men:

whilst men simply wear long trousers, women's leotards curve up sharply around the hips, lengthening the appearance of the legs and emphasizing the pubic area (Haug, (et al) 1987, p.176).

Messner (1988) concludes that whilst women's involvement in physical activity may well have increased, this has been within existing hegemonic definitions of femininity - both in terms of the *particular* kinds of activities, and in terms of clothing they wear. Haug (et al) (1987) argue more strongly that the development of the clothing and of specific moves within women's gymnastics have served to constitute the gymnast as a sexual object.

Conversations with some of the second year women in the changing rooms before their gymnastics sessions revealed their unease about having to wear

leotards and tights. All wore long teeshirts over their leotards in efforts to conceal their bodies. They told me that the tutor allowed them to wear these 'until they had warmed up'. There was no evidence of any women taking these off whilst working in their classes, although I was assured that in their practical 'assessment' examination they were made to - a situation which one woman described as '*awful, really embarrassing*'.

In contrast, the students working in the women-only dance option groups, in part two of the degree, did not seem to show the same inhibitions about working in leotards, and soon discarded warmup tops where necessary. Whilst this could simply have reflected their greater ease and expertise with the activity, there was also a very different ethos and atmosphere within these groups which allowed these women to use their body shape and line freely within their dance compositions. Conversations with staff revealed that although there had been the same kit regulations for the men students at one time, they had 'refused to wear them', and so eventually had been 'allowed' to wear shorts and vest. Here again, the fact that the male students were in the minority did not prevent them from having an influence on the shape of their courses or on the institutional policies such as the clothing prescribed for practical classes.

Policies and practices within institutions are not necessarily interpreted, adhered to, or carried out in the same way by each member of staff. There is 'space' for individuals to challenge or contest these, and the kit regulations represented one such policy which was not agreed by all staff. Many did not 'enforce' the clothing regulations. One of the newer members of staff teaching dance on the undergraduate course, for example, argued

that students should wear clothes in which they felt comfortable. However, this view clashed with others in the institution who stressed the importance of keeping high 'standards' in dress. During the fieldwork, I observed a forty minute discussion on dress policy during a course committee meeting. The discussion ended with Angela, the head of PE, placing written notices on each of the students' notice boards which stated firmly that uniform was compulsory. This episode clearly demonstrates the continuing importance which was attached to dress in the teacher education work at Brickhill.

It is important to note that there were a few men who were actively involved in dance, since they illustrate how individuals can and do successfully negotiate a gender identity outside the 'accepted' image of masculinity. One of the few male students involved in the dance group at Brickhill was a black Afro-Caribbean student studying on one of the Access courses. As Chapter One suggested, if the concept of hegemonic masculinity or the 'culturally idealised form of masculine character' (Connell, 1990, p.83), is to be useful, it has to be able to encompass different forms of masculinity, to reflect the way in which masculinity differs and is cut across by both class and race. Interestingly, for this black student, whilst his position in the dance world acted as a challenge to dominant images of masculinity based around aggressive rather than artistic qualities, this was only possible because he physically exemplified 'masculinity'. The head of dance, for example, described him as '*the big muscly type, so there is no problem with him being involved in dance*'. However, hegemonic masculinities may differ between cultures - certainly



this student did not escape racial stereotyping - another member of staff described him as having 'lots of natural rhythm' (6).

*Masculinity, power, sexuality and social control*

A third strategy of masculine identity work was to use the women students as a negative reference group. Throughout the fieldwork I was struck by the way in which many of the male students exuded confidence in themselves and their own abilities, and how many of the women seemed to lack confidence, and under-estimate their abilities for what appeared to be no good reason. There was little evidence of male students reflecting critically on their individual performance or progress, whereas the women, if anything, tended to under-estimate or be over critical of their own performance. This is a tendency which appears characteristic of many girls at school level too (eg. see Stanworth, 1983). As Wood (1984) notes, the outward 'face' of masculinity is characterised by confidence, brashness, fluency and 'presence', even if the inward face may be the reverse.

In lots of very subtle ways, male students boosted their own confidence and status within the group by diminishing that of the women. One of the common methods of embarrassing a woman student, and at the same time doing a bit of 'body building' was for a man to shout out aloud in a full lecture hall that the woman sitting next to him had a question. Another strategy was to groan loudly if a woman asked a question. Derogatory comments about their performances were common: 'typical woman' or 'just like a woman' were directed to women who made mistakes.

It is important to note here that the women students involved did not always accept such put downs passively. Some protested although somewhat half-heartedly, others reacted more angrily, and some simply tried to carry on and ignore the comments. There is a real dilemma for women here, for as Mahony (1985) notes, if girls or women overtly challenge such situations, it may simply result in the efforts to disrupt being doubled. On the other hand, to stay silent and to opt out of engagement can be viewed as a measure of male control of the situation. An alternative view, she suggests, is to see staying silent as a positive, self-chosen strategy of resistance.

Despite the undermining of women, there was also evidence to suggest that the men students relied on, and used the women students for help and support in their work. For example, when students were set small group tasks which involved one person acting as the Chair and feeding back their ideas, it would invariably be a woman who would be pushed into this role. Collecting handouts or reading lists or finding out the times and locations of lectures were other examples of how women 'serviced' the men.

#### *The 'sexualizing' of classroom contexts*

As well as directly putting down women's performances within sessions, another important way in which women were controlled was through the explicit 'sexualising' of situations (7). The centrality of the body within practical PE sessions meant that there was numerous opportunities for the introduction of sexual innuendos, and for the 'sexualising' of particular contexts.

Chapter One highlighted the important role which the social construction of male heterosexuality plays within the maintenance of male power (Connell, 1987; Coveney, et al, 1984; Mahony, 1985). A central feature of this sexuality revolves around the objectification of women. Studies of boys' verbal abuse of girls have shown the centrality of this objectification in everyday exchanges within school contexts. Mahony (1985, 1989) and Wood (1984), for example, have showed how boys' talk about girls focuses on parts of their bodies, and how verbal abuse and physical forms of sexual harassment are so common that they are assumed to be simply a 'normal' part of growing up to be a man (Benn, 1985; Wood, 1984). However, as Day (1988, p.70) has noted, there is the inherent contradiction within masculine culture:

for whilst a means of cultural status is achieved through not being labelled 'effeminate' or a 'woman', an equal measure of masculine symbolism is attained through men's and boys' ability to 'score with the birds'.

Showing a disregard for women has to be balanced with the status achieved by 'getting' a woman. The 'sexualising' of situations by male students within formal classes was less derogatory than those school situations described by Mahony (1985) as 'the sharp end of sexual violence'. Nevertheless, there were remarks and gestures which served to reinforce the 'naturalness' of heterosexuality and a construction of male sexuality based on objectification and conquest.

For example, in a gym session, students were working in pairs on a stretching exercise which resulted in one of the pair's head going in between the outstretched legs of the other. One male student called out to the only mixed pair in the group,

*John, what ARE you doing? Let's have the sound effects please!*

and then proceeded to make loud sucking noises. On another occasion, when a woman had successfully completed a flik-flak, and had gone on to explain that it was important to '*thrust your hips up*' during the move, a male student immediately responded by making an exaggerated gesture with his hips, grunting and laughing towards the other male students in the group. In another session, where students were reviewing a tape recording of a gym lesson which had just been taught by one of the group, one shot showed a young girl in a short skirt performing a forward roll away from the camera. A male student asked for a '*close up on that please!*'.

In all of these situations the women were working within contexts where strong, powerful physical movements were being encouraged. However, as Scraton (1987b) has noted, it is exactly these kinds of movements which are not acceptable in relation to female sexuality. Scraton cites Young who suggests that '*to open her body in free activity and open extension and bold outward directiveness is for a woman to invite objectification*' (Young, 1980, p.154). Scraton has questioned whether mixed PE can offer girls a better experience when their sexuality is '*clearly up for grabs*' in this way. She suggests that on the contrary, it could condemn adolescent girls to an intensification of sexual abuse. The incidents described above

show how easily male students could turn common, everyday physical actions and activities within the PE sessions, into contexts for the objectification of women.

*'Only a joke' or sexual harassment?*

Halson (1991) has pointed out the difficulty of 'drawing lines' about what constitutes sexual harassment. A common definition of sexual harassment is one which centralises the way in which the actions or behaviour in question are *experienced* by women. In this sense, the same behaviour can be viewed as a 'harmless joke' or as demeaning or offensive. However, Halson argues that a more radical definition such as that used by Kelly (1988) is more appropriate:

sexual violence includes any physical, visual, verbal or sexual act that is experienced by the woman or girl, at the time or later, as a threat, invasion, assault, that has the effect of degrading her or hurting her *and/or takes away her ability to control intimate contact* (Kelly, 1988, p.41) (my emphasis).

This definition stresses the importance of women's lack of control over intimate contact. In Halson's study, she suggests that despite the fact that the girls argued that a male teacher's sexual banter was 'only a joke', this does not detract from the fact that they had little choice but to 'go along with' such behaviour. She argues that such incidents should therefore be properly described as sexual harassment. In a similar way, the women students here had no control over the way in which male students were able to discuss parts of their bodies or make inferences about their sexuality. As the discussion below describes, male lecturers were also

involved in this process.

There were more overt and offensive ways in which women students were objectified within the student culture. For example, a leaflet produced at the beginning of the academic year from the new male President of the Students' Union described one of his major aims of the year as 'to have as many of the girlies' as he could. Similarly, a notice about the first social event of the year for male students informed them that this would consist of a pub crawl, followed by a return to the disco, where there would be plenty of 'girlies available'.

The term 'girlie' was a common term used by some male students when referring to women students. The use of terms such as 'slag' or 'drag' by boys to describe and control girls' sexuality in schools has been widely explored (Griffin, 1978; Halson, 1991; Lees, 1987). Lees (1987) for example, notes how while a boy's social identity can be sustained through a wide range of activities, including sport, a girl's social identity seems to depend much more crucially on her assumed sexual activity - whether she is a 'slag' (sleeps around) or a 'drag' (a 'nice' girl who doesn't) or perhaps worse of all, a 'lezzie' (lesbian).

The term 'girlie' was used by male students to describe and control women students in similar ways. The term had two connotations. On one hand it was used to describe women who were worth 'pursuing' sexually, in contrast to those who, as one male student described to me, were the 'right dogs' (women who were seen by men as unattractive, or possibly lesbian). On the other hand it was used to describe women PE students' 'inferior' physical

abilities. Comments like, 'she won't be able to do it, she's only a girlie' were common, and as noted above, to be called a girlie was one of the key forms of abuse used by male students to one another. Women who clearly challenged patriarchal definitions of femininity, by playing the 'men's' game of soccer for example, were exempt from the category of 'girlie'. Women students were therefore caught in a double-bind. They either accepted the conventions of femininity associated with being a 'girlie', and with it a restricted and limited view of their physical abilities and the activities in which they were able to be involved, or they actively resisted such limitations by engaging in 'masculine' sports, thereby laying their sexuality (or more accurately, the male students' definition of their sexuality) open to question.

In the same way in which Lees (1987) and Halson (1991) note that girls themselves internalise and use labels such as 'slags' in talking about one another, so the women students at Brickhill used the term 'girlie'. For example, posters displayed in the Students' Union advertising a social evening would often use the label of 'girlie' to stress that it would be a women-only occasion. The label was accepted and used by the women students, thus reinforcing rather than challenging its sexist connotations. The way in which staff addressed women students also added to this. There were several occasions when I saw information on the student notice boards which referred to women students as 'girls', whereas men students were always addressed as 'men'.

### Being female within PE ITE

There is a danger that in focusing on the actions of male students and on the construction of masculinity within PE, female students and the ways in which they negotiate their own gender identities get lost. The reproduction of an 'emphasised femininity' is not without resistance or struggle. As physically talented individuals, the presence of large numbers of women students in the institution provided a major challenge to patriarchal ideas of 'passive' femininity. However, as Dewar (1990) notes, for many female students in PE, negotiating an identity with which they feel comfortable, means making sure that they are recognised as heterosexual, feminine and attractive. Many of the women students, particularly in the early years of the undergraduate degree, took great care to emphasise their femininity and heterosexuality, for example through their dress and appearance, and through their avoidance of particular 'masculine' activities. 'Feminizing' the PE 'uniform' included rolling up tracksuit bottoms to reveal very 'feminine' pastel coloured ankle socks (very much in fashion at the time of the research) together with the wearing of makeup and heavy jewellery. However, not all of the women adapted their dress in this way. Many of the older students, in classes where there were very few male students at all, did not seem to have the same kinds of concerns about their appearance. This perhaps suggests that the increased presence of male students was an important element in the some students' efforts to demonstrate and exaggerate their femininity.

There were times when some of the women were clearly uncomfortable with being 'female' in mixed settings in PE. I have noted earlier how some of



the PE contexts were sexualised by male students and staff at women's expense. The potential for this was increased in some sessions where women's bodies were most clearly on display, such as swimming or gymnastics. Informal conversations with the students confirmed that their choice of wearing long teeshirts over their swimming costumes until the last possible moment was an attempt to control the extent their bodies were 'on display'.

For the majority of women students, maintaining their heterosexual identity meant avoiding 'masculine' activities such as weight training or soccer, together with a distancing from the few women who were involved in such activities. The extra curricular involvement of most of the women was in 'acceptable' women's sports such as netball, hockey or gymnastics. The few women who did participate in 'masculine' sports (there was, for example, a small group of strong soccer players) risked their heterosexuality being questioned. To quote one woman student, although she enjoyed learning soccer in the formal curriculum sessions, she would not get involved in the women's club because these women were viewed as 'a bit suspect if you know what I mean'. As Lenskyj (1987) concludes,

institutionalized compulsory heterosexuality still serves to constrain women's sporting participation: sports continue to be classified as feminine or masculine depending upon their function in enhancing heterosexual attractiveness (Lenskyj, 1987, p. 384/5).

The fact that many of the women accepted and used the name 'girlies' themselves serves to illustrate the importance of heterosexual attractiveness in the construction of their own identities - they were

prepared to collude with the use of the label, despite its other sexist characteristics.

#### *Sexual harassment by lecturers*

The sexualising of situations described earlier was not limited to the actions of male students; many of the male lecturers also went out of their way to sexualise situations in their lectures. The fact that some of these comments were to the whole group of students, in a very public way, made them particularly embarrassing and difficult for students.

For example, in one physiology session, a male lecturer asked for a volunteer to have their heart beat monitored whilst exercising on the stationary bike. He explained that this would involve sticking two electrodes to the chest, and that for women these would be positioned just below the bottom of the bra and could be attached without having to take off their shirts. He tried to reassure them that they should not be afraid to volunteer, saying 'I did a female last week - well, perhaps I should re-phrase that', laughing. Not surprisingly all of the volunteers over the next three weeks were men, who all stripped off their shirts and cycled bare chested!

In another session, a lecturer talking about the automatic responses of the new born child stressed the importance of the sucking reflex, added, 'it may be useful later on in life too', and then laughed. When some of the students laughed with him, he replied jokingly, 'now please, don't misunderstand me!'. Later, when he was discussing the bodily changes

associated with adolescence for young males, he used an overhead diagram which showed males at different stages of development. One of the men immediately suggested loudly that the picture of the male with a small penis looked like one of the men in the group. The fact that the sexual innuendo had been introduced by the lecturer in the first place, 'sanctioned' further such comments from male students.

There were similar examples in many other sessions with a number of different male lecturers. There was only one male lecturer I observed who did not use such 'sexualising' innuendo in his lectures, and although there were several occasions when the content he presented could have had a sexual connotation, there was no reaction at all from students. It was clear that the actions of the lecturers themselves were important in setting the tone of the session, and affected the reactions and behaviours of the students.

On each of these occasions the lecturer had deliberately introduced the sexual connotation to the lecture, so legitimizing and tacitly encouraging similar responses from male students. Wolpe (1988) argues that both men and women teachers can and do use their sexuality to control their classes, and disputes the view that women teachers and students are passive victims of male sexual advances. Whilst I agree with the latter - women develop a range of strategies for coping with sexual harassment - I am more inclined to accept Holly's view of the use of sexuality by teachers:

Given the inequalities which underlie all male-female relations, this is an especially potent source of power for *male* teachers dealing with younger women and girls. ...The effect of such encounters is to reproduce the

idea of male superiority (Holly, 1989, p.5) (my emphasis).

These male lecturers used this kind of sexual 'banter' to build up rapport with male students, at the expense and embarrassment of the women. There were no situations where I observed women lecturers doing the same; rather there were many more incidents where they were the targets of such 'sexualising' themselves, and where their authority was undermined by male students or staff (see the discussion below).

Others have reported how some male teachers reinforce and perpetuate the sexual harassment of women through their own behaviour with girl pupils (Halson, 1989; Mahony, 1989). Whilst this behaviour is limited by teachers' professional code of ethics to subtle words, or gestures, these nevertheless affect how girls and young women experience their schooling to the extent that girls may choose not to take an option subject run by such a teacher (Halson, 1989). However, it is important that girls' and women's strategies for dealing with such behaviour are recognised. Girls and women do not always passively accept sexual innuendo or harassment. Both Mahony and Halson have identified the strategies which girls use to resist such sexual harassment from male teachers (however limited these might be). One of the strategies of the girls in Halson's (1991) study was to make sure that other girls knew what to expect of particular male tutors. Whilst this did not necessarily prevent them from being sexually harassed, it did at least forewarn them about the possibility. Women students at Brickhill warned me about one of the male lecturers who fitted into this category - as one told me, he is 'a good lecturer, but has suspect morals if you know

what I mean!''.

Apart from this, there was very little open evidence of women students resisting sexist comments by male staff, or complaining about their inappropriateness. Occasionally, there would be a groan or two, but mostly the response from at least some of the women would be to join in and laugh. It seemed that they had come to accept these comments as 'natural' male/female interaction, and felt it was easier to 'get on with the lecture' than to make a fuss. As Stanworth (1983) has noted in her research with A level students, whilst students' experiences of gender differentiation in the classroom are very real, they are nevertheless only partially articulated, and remain to a large extent, a largely unreflected domain. Whilst some women students were clearly embarrassed by some of the comments, there was little or no evidence to suggest that they perceived these as inappropriate instances of sexual discrimination. Holly's description of sexuality in school applies equally to higher education institutions:

The underlying sexual dynamics of life in school are highly visible yet usually shrouded in silence on the part of school authorities, which enables the expression of a certain kind of sexuality to appear as normal, everyday and unremarkable, echoing the attitudes of the rest of society. Sexual harassment and abusive language are often accepted as ordinary life in school (Holly, 1989, p.5).

It is not surprising that few girls or women complain openly about sexual harassment, given the evidence which suggests that when institutions are forced to respond to specific incidents of sexual harassment, they often

trivialize them and 'down play' them, thereby sanctioning rather than challenging the behaviour (De Lyon, 1989; Halson, 1989, 1991).

During the fieldwork at Brickhill, a specific incident led to sexual harassment being formally discussed amongst the staff. A female student had complained to her course leader that she was being sexually harassed on her teaching practice by a male teacher. The course leader brought the issue to the teaching practice meeting for guidance on how she should deal with the situation. After some discussion, which revealed that the institution did not have a specific policy to deal with such cases, it was eventually agreed that the teaching practice tutor should deal with the issue in the first instance. After the meeting, the woman who had acted as Chair was clearly annoyed that the issue had been raised in front of student representatives suggesting,

*well, she probably asked for it! ...there are some things that should come to the meeting and there are others that should be dealt with in private...did you hear Jean [one of the student representatives at the meeting] saying that she should tell him where to go?*

Arguing that such matters should be 'dealt with in private' in this way reinforces the view that sexual harassment is a private rather than public issue for women - something individual women have to 'deal with', and which is often of their own making (De Lyon, 1989). There was no acknowledgement within the meeting that women students experiencing sexual harassment could expect to have their complaints dealt with sensitively.

As Menter (1989) has argued, although students on ITE courses are asked to consider gender issues in relation to children in their training (if sometimes only in a limited way), gender power and its effects on relationships between adults is left as part of the 'hidden curriculum'. As a central part of their course and their assessment of potential as a teacher, teaching practice is one area of the course where power differentials between staff and students are particularly highlighted. However much staff attempt to build a non-threatening, collaborative relationship, the teaching practice 'triad' - student, supervising teacher and lecturer - remains unequally balanced in terms of power since both teacher and lecturer are involved in assessing the students' performance. The gender dynamics of the trio can further complicate or extend such power differentials. Tutors in Menter's study denied that gender relations might be an issue in supervising students on teaching practice, and yet the data he presents suggests the opposite. Both women students and women tutors, he suggests, are likely to be affected adversely by gender power relations, although there is little formal recognition of this.

The fact that many educational institutions have policies on general violence, but not on sexual harassment is testimony to the silence which still surrounds this issue, and the general 'non recognition' of it as a problem for women. As Connell (1989, p.300) notes,

What a school acknowledges as its activity in relation to gender and may therefore be willing to discuss under the heading of 'equal opportunities' or 'anti-discrimination is less significant than what it does not include (my emphasis).

Whilst Brickhill had a 'multi-ethnic' policy, including a clearly worked

out policy for dealing with racial harassment which was reproduced in the staff handbook, there was no such policy for sexual harassment. This was not surprising, given the general lack of recognition to gender issues within student courses described in the previous chapter.

#### *Working as a female lecturer in PE*

In contrast to the male lecturers described above, I did not observe any of the female lecturers using sexuality in this way in their teaching. Instead, there was far more evidence to suggest that male students undermined women lecturers' authority in ways similar to the 'put-downs' used with women students described earlier in this chapter. There were two types of strategy. The most common was the way in which they challenged women lecturers' classroom control, through, for example, the wearing of inappropriate dress to practical sessions, or through the questioning of the material presented. A second, less common, and often more subtle way, was through comments and gestures used as a form of sexual harassment.

An extreme example of this kind of sexual harassment occurred in an indoor athletics lesson where a young, female member of staff, relatively new to the department, was demonstrating a progression in the teaching of the fosbury flop. This involved her jumping onto a gymnastics box to show the turn of the body in the air. Before she attempted the jump she asked a male student to stand at the far side of the box to act as a support to make sure that she didn't over-rotate in the jump. As she turned her back away from the box to make a final comment to the group of students watching, the student made an obscene gesture with his hands on top of the



box. At the same time, he caught the eye of the other male students engaging them in a bout of grins and eyeball rolling. The fact that this was a very public gesture, clearly visible to all but the lecturer, made it particularly powerful in its effect. Whitbread (1980) has suggested that it is young women teachers, and students on teaching practice, who are particularly vulnerable to such sexual harassment by their male pupils and colleagues.

Other examples of male students undermining women lecturers' authority included the ways in which they attempted to embarrass them by picking up on any phrase which could have a sexual connotation. For example, an explanation of ethnography as a method of social research which was best '*learned on the job*' brought loud titters from three male students sat at the back of the room.

On another occasion, after a hard session of aerobics the previous week, the female lecturer asked the group if they had been stiff the following day. The response from one male student was to raise his eyebrows, and catch a male peer's attention before admitting that he had been very stiff '*but it hadn't been that bad*'. Having to deal with these kinds of comments, usually made very publically, is a common and wearying experience for women teachers. As a teacher in Askew and Ross's research describes,

some boys in my class are always doing things that are intended to demonstrate that I have no power over them. Often it's very subtle - maybe just the way they look at me or the tone of their voice. Of course, sometimes, it's very out-front and unbelievably rude, sexist comments, answering back or direct challenges (cited in Askew and Ross, 1988, p.58).

In a similar way, I sensed on several occasions subtle differences between the way in which a student group would respond towards a female lecturer compared to that of a male lecturer. For example, I noted how a large group of students assembling in the lecture hall would take much longer to 'settle' down and allow the lecture to begin, when the speaker was a female, compared to the time taken when it was a male. The status of the lecturers did not seem to make a difference to this behaviour; if the lecturer was a woman, it seemed to be assumed that it was acceptable to continue chatting for some time after she had announced she would like to start. Similarly, many students (mainly male) would enter a session late, and go to their seat without offering an apology. In comparison, there was almost immediate silence when a male lecturer called for attention, and the usual response of students to male members of staff was deferential and respectful, particularly to the male PE staff.

#### **Summary**

This chapter has described the nature of the classroom interactions and institutional ethos at Brickhill. Most of the chapter has concentrated on describing how male students negotiated and confirmed a masculine identity within what could be said to be a 'female-dominated gender regime', for despite male students being in the minority in terms of numbers at Brickhill, their influence on the nature and ethos of the sessions was immense. 'Doing' masculinity entailed them in working (at least in some activities such as games,) competitively with one another, either by trying to out-do one another physically, or by boosting their own identities and self esteem by putting down others. Women or homosexuals were used as

negative reference points in these verbal put downs, with sexuality a central aspect in the abuse.

In many of the mixed games sessions the play was physically dominated by a group of male students, with many of the women marginalised from the action. Maintaining a masculine identity meant not just an active involvement in masculinizing practices, but also a rejection of activities and behaviours associated with 'femininity', such as dance, or gymnastics. Observation of these practical classes showed how these sessions too, were dominated by the actions of some of the male students, but in this case it was behaviour which made it clear to others they were not interested in the activity or taking the sessions seriously.

Male students' interactions with female students were often contradictory in nature. On one hand, some of the men undermined the confidence of women by put downs and derogatory remarks; on the other, they worked hard at 'testing' out women's views of them as sexual partners, since having a relationship with a woman was also seen as an important part of their masculine status. Much of the classroom 'banter' from male students revolved around building a reputation (if not in fact) as an active heterosexual. Because many of the sessions were of a practical nature, involving students interacting physically, there were many occasions where contexts could be 'sexualised', either through innuendo or gesture. The control of women through such 'sexualisation' of classroom contexts was also used by male tutors. Whilst there was some evidence of resistance of such behaviour from women students, on most occasions, they joined in and laughing along with it.

Female students at Brickhill were in the majority. Despite this, there were clear indications that their experiences as women within PE were often contradictory. On one hand, their presence in the programme represented a challenge to ideologies of femininity which define women in passive and inactive ways. On the other, their presence remained within the confines of what was considered 'acceptable' heterosexual femininity. For most women this is meant avoiding 'masculine' activities, or women who were involved in these, and deliberately 'feminizing' their appearance. Comments from male students regularly reminded both women students and women staff that they were first and foremost women.

The move to co-education at Brickhill, as the above chapter has attempted to show, has resulted in a very different ethos to that described in the women's PE colleges by Fletcher (1984). Despite the fact that women were still very much in the majority in terms of key decision makers and the student body, the impact of male students was very significant. They dominated classroom interactions, both physically and verbally, sexualised the ethos of many of the sessions, and ensured their experiences and needs were met very often at the expense of the women students. The next chapter considers the nature of the classroom interaction and institutional ethos at Heydonfield, an institution which had had a very different history to Brickhill, and explores the similarities and differences between this and the context described above.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CLASSROOM INTERACTION, INSTITUTIONAL LIFE AND

GENDER IDENTITIES AT HEYDONFIELD

## CHAPTER SEVEN: CLASSROOM INTERACTION, INSTITUTIONAL LIFE AND GENDER IDENTITIES AT HEYDONFIELD

### Introduction

A number of factors made the fieldwork at Heydonfield very different from that at Brickhill. For a variety of reasons, I found it much more difficult to develop as close a relationship with any of the student groups and also most of the staff at Heydonfield, in contrast to the earlier fieldwork at Brickhill. The timing of the fieldwork may have been an important factor in this. At Brickhill, I started the observation at the beginning of a new academic year, and as a result, seemed readily accepted by the new groups in the institutions who were constantly seeing new faces. At Heydonfield the fieldwork began half way through the year when the newcomers were already well established. This, together with the particular ethos of the institution as a university, with its very different organisation, timetable and teaching, played a major part in making the fieldwork a very different and often difficult experience for me.

At Heydonfield there were far less opportunities to observe formal sessions than at Brickhill. I could not observe any PGCE sessions since these students were out on school practice for the full duration of the fieldwork. In addition to this, much of the timetabling of the undergraduate PE Studies work was in whole year cohorts, meaning that there were fewer sessions for me to observe in contrast to those at Brickhill. At Brickhill the incoming cohorts were larger and each year group was divided into a number of smaller teaching units. The large groups at

Heydonfield not only resulted in less sessions for me to observe, but also had implications for the nature of the classroom interaction. Most of the theory sessions took place in one of two formal, tiered lecture theatres where the usual format of the session was a presentation by the member of staff, with very little input from the students. Although I chose to sit at the back of the lecture theatre to enable me to see the whole group, the kinds of data I could collect was much more limited. Many of the subtle, non verbal gestures, or muted comments of students which I was able to note in the smaller groups at Brickhill were not so accessible to me here. As well as the timetabling differences, the ethos at Heydonfield was very different. At Brickhill, there always seemed to be plenty of activity and movement on the site - students and staff seemed to be around more, either going to a lecture or going for coffee or lunch. At Heydonfield, the atmosphere was very much more impersonal; staff came and went more frequently and were rarely around unless teaching. As a result, I found it much more difficult to engage staff in casual conversation than I did at Brickhill, and I had to make more deliberate attempts to seek them out to talk to them. These factors all played a part in the kinds of observations and perceptions I was able to gain during the fieldwork at Heydonfield.

#### **The gender regime at Heydonfield**

The research of Askew and Ross (1988) in boys' schools concluded that there is a direct relationship between a schools' organisation, policies on discipline and teaching methods, and the gender relations and behaviour observed within the institution. Boys' schools, they suggest, are usually built on values of competition, strength and power, with bullying and

'running down' others the norm in gaining status. This chapter describes the nature of the gender regime in operation at Heydonfield, where similar values and norms were evident, and were part of the everyday practices of institutional life.

The previous chapter showed how, despite being very much in the minority at Brickhill, male students dominated much of the classroom interaction and significantly affected the ethos within PE. Male students were constantly involved in 'identity work' and in the demonstration of their masculinity. Attempting to boost their own masculine status through active competition with one another, through putting one another down, or by undermining women - both staff and students - and sexualising situations at their expense were central elements in this very visible, 'up front', identity work.

In contrast, at Heydonfield, at least in the formal lecture sessions there was less evidence of male students so actively and overtly building masculine identities in the same, up-front ways. This may have been because there was less 'room' for any student to play a great part in classroom interaction as a result of the format of the sessions as described above. Alternatively, it may have been that there was less need for such overt, brash and noisy 'macho' activity, since a 'masculine' ethos was taken-for-granted, and was part of the daily life of institution. Rather than male students, it was more the case that male staff actively constructed gender difference and therefore contributed to the maintenance and reproduction of the masculine ethos.



The type of masculinity institutionalised at least in the formal culture at Heydonfield, was that which Connell (1989) has suggested characterises the 'dry sciences' in many universities - a masculinity which has rationality and responsibility, rather than aggressiveness or pride as its central themes (1). Thomas (1990) has described how culturally available ideas about masculinity and femininity are taken up and reproduced through particular subject areas within higher education. She argues that science, seen as 'objective' and 'value free' knowledge, has become closely associated with masculinity and masculine values, and is regarded as high status knowledge, compared to more 'feminine' knowledge areas, such as languages or the social sciences. The link between masculinity and science contributes, she argues, to women's marginal and often contradictory position within the subject area. The heavily scientific curriculum, described in Chapter Five, contributed therefore to Heydonfield's strong masculine ethos.

For many male PE students at Heydonfield however, there was a contradiction between the demonstration of this kind of rational, responsible masculinity, and that required of them as sportsmen and male physical educationalists in the informal culture of university life. Here the masculinity required was based more on physicality, and it was specifically anti-intellectual (2). The contradictions between these different facets of masculinity meant that there was considerable 'space' for male students to negotiate a gender identity. It is also important to recognise here that the definitions of masculinity made available and negotiated by male students would be influenced very much by social class. As noted earlier, although the research was not able to gather specific information on the

social class backgrounds of students, over a third of the first year cohort had come from independent schools, suggesting that middle class values would have had an important influence on the existing definitions of masculinities (see Appendix Two for details on student intake).

For both the women students and staff there was much less room for the construction of a gender identity. Both women staff and students were in the minority at Heydonfield, and they had the difficulty of negotiating between a gender identity, an academic identity, and a sporting identity. For many this meant the adoption of what Sheppard (1989) has called 'gender management' strategies - strategies designed to manage the presentation of their femininity and sexuality, in efforts to minimize their 'otherness'. The second half of this chapter, which explores the experiences of being female in PE at Heydonfield, concentrates particularly on the experiences of the women staff, reflecting the kinds and quality of the data I was able to gather (3).

#### **Using gender as a category for grouping students.**

The last chapter described how male students at Brickhill actively constructed their masculinity by competing with one another, putting one another or women down, or by sexualising situations at women's expense. At Heydonfield, there was less evidence of overt displays of 'masculinity' by male students, particularly in those sessions taken by male PE staff. These sessions were more usually characterised by a very formal atmosphere; students listened quietly, made notes, or worked hard on the task set, and if there were any 'asides', most of these were reactions to a comment made

by the lecturer himself rather than initiated by the students. More obvious was the way in which many of the male staff (particularly the older staff) constructed and reinforced differences between male and female students. Some of the younger male staff used jokes and asides, often at women's expense, to build rapport between themselves and the male students, mirroring the findings of Cunnison (1989).

Chapter Five described how men and women students at Heydonfield were taught separately for much of their major games curriculum. The men studied rugby and soccer, whilst the women studied netball and lacrosse. As well as these two activities, dance in year four was a single sex activity for women since the men had been 'allowed' to opt out of this course. The rationales presented by staff revealed strong ideologies of femininity and masculinity underpinning this curricular organisation. However, gender was also used as a means of organising and grouping students on a number of other, at first less obvious, occasions, each of them instigated by male members of staff. These are discussed below.

#### *Interviews with prospective students*

The first of these occasions emerged early in the fieldwork as I observed the interviewing process for prospective new candidates. Each week, approximately twenty prospective students were invited for interview for a place on the following year's course. This included a 'practical' - which involved performing a variety of physical activities, a problem solving 'assault' course, and a short teaching section where candidates had to

teach a skill to the others in the group - followed by a verbal group interview held with two of the PE staff.

On arrival candidates were divided into small groups of five or six in which they would spend the rest of the day. It was immediately noticeable that the [male] admission tutor had organised these smaller groups to be single sex. He explained that he always organised it this way (or if the numbers did not work out, he made sure that there was never a single member of one sex in a group) so that the students would 'not be embarrassed', and specifically so that the men would not be disadvantaged in the group interview. He maintained that,

*the girls do better than the fellas...they're used to talking, and if you are not careful, the men do not say much at all. You have to get them talking to one another, and then I always say at the end that if they want, they can talk to be individually, and several take up the offer..[male admissions tutor, Heydonfield, taped interview].*

This view contradicts the research on language and interaction in the secondary classroom which shows it is men and boys who are more likely to interrupt women and to talk for longer, and that there is a gendered division of labour in conversation in which women are more likely to be supportive, and collaborative (eg. French and French, 1984; Spender, 1980; 1982).

On an earlier occasion when I was asking the admission tutor about application rates generally, he had suggested that achieving a balance between men and women was difficult because of the large numbers of talented women who applied:

*we get far better women apply than the men ...but we do try to keep a balance...the European court does not allow us to do this of course [rolling his eyes], but if we don't we wouldn't have enough for some of the courses such as the rugby and the football...but we do take men who are weaker to make the numbers up ...[male admissions tutor, Heydonfield, taped interview].*

I was given the very clear impression that this tutor 'adjusted' the admissions to maintain a balance of male/female students. As he was the only person involved in reading the applications and calling students for interview as well as dealing with all the final paper work, there was considerable scope for him to do this without question (see Appendix Two).

Control over the type of students, not just in terms of gender, but also in terms of class background, age, and ethnicity, has implications for the development of the profession. The fact that HMI have recently identified that achieving 'the required balance' of male/female PE students is a major issue for the profession to address, points to the continuing existence and acceptance of conceptions of boys' and girls' PE (Talbot, personal correspondence, 1985). As Chapter Five showed, the strong beliefs about the kinds of physical activities considered appropriate for boys and girls in school, both reflect and influence the kinds of practical experiences offered to PE students during their training. This in turn ensures the continuing production of PE teachers who are confined within a narrow, sex-segregated range of physical skills, abilities and interests, and is ill-equipped to offer challenges to such limiting practice. The admissions tutor did what he could to help the recruitment of enough male students, even if this meant creating a single sex environment for their interviews.

### *Single sex psychology seminars*

The second example where single sex student groups were specifically constructed came to my attention through studying the student notice board. The year three Psychology option group had been divided up into single sex seminar groups, and moreover, they had been asked to read different articles in preparation for the seminar. At first I (naively!) wondered whether this lecturer was conducting some kind of experiment to demonstrate aspects of gender differentiation with students. His response to my questioning of this organisation was to dismiss it as something he had done 'without thinking'. However, the fact that he had had to sift through the names from a list arranged alphabetically rather than by sex, suggested that there had been some thought and effort involved in organising the groups in this way. Knowing the focus of my research, he then went onto ask me whether I thought that it was sexist to organise the groups in this way, stressing that he always took a great deal of care to ensure that material he wrote for publication was not offensive or sexist in any way. After a short discussion, he concluded that there was no good reason to organise the groups like this. A few days later, he stopped me in the corridor and half laughed, saying that he supposed that I would use the material in my research!

It is difficult to identify the real reasons behind this grouping arrangement - they could, for example, have been organised in this way as a positive action strategy to give the women students space to discuss their work away from the men, but my conversations with this particular lecturer suggested this was highly unlikely to be the case. Perhaps the most likely

suggestion is one proposed by Stanworth (1983):

male teachers tend, far more than their female colleagues, to view the sexes whom they teach in mixed classes, as relatively discrete groups. If male teachers are particularly attuned to dissimilarity between the sexes, this orientation may, in turn, be translated into actions which have the effect of further polarising girls and boys in classes which they teach (Stanworth, 1983, p. 26).

Stanworth's research (1983) concluded that gender plays a large part in the character of a teacher's involvement with their pupils. Teachers of both sexes are likely to be more concerned for, and attached to boys, rather than girls. However, male teachers specifically, she suggests, are much more likely to be concerned for boys in their classes than girls. Stanworth does not go on to try and explain these differences. Did the lecturer view this arrangement as leading to an 'easier' seminar discussion? Since I was not able to observe any of these single sex seminar groups, I am not able to give any view of how classroom interaction might have been affected by this organisation. My presence in an all male group would have no doubt altered the interaction anyway. I can only allude to possibilities suggested in other research which might have applied here.

For example, there is evidence to suggest that teachers might work differently with groups of pupils of their own sex. Benyon (1989) suggests that male teachers in all-male settings draw on violence (either symbolic or real) as a strategic resource for controlling groups, which they feel they cannot do to the same degree if the class is mixed. Whilst violence

might not be a necessary strategy to use with students, there may be shared aspects of 'masculinity' which male lecturers use to develop camaraderie with a group of male students, which they cannot use in the same way with women or a mixed group. Davison (1985), cited in Askew and Ross (1988), argues that male teachers in all boys' classrooms have access to a shared 'male culture' from which women teachers are debarred. Similarly, it could be argued that working with a women-only group also leaves a male teacher able to interact without having to 'compete' with other males - to be able to use (and abuse?) his masculinity and/or sexuality. Whatever the reality of the situation, gender was again being used by a male lecturer as the basis for group organisation, and the polarisation of the sexes was further reinforced by the choice of different seminar papers.

*Single sex basketball for the 'competitive game'*

A third example involved the organisation of students in a second year, practical basketball course, taken by Richard, the previous head of PE. The whole year cohort was taught together in the first session of the course, which involved lots of individual ball handling and shooting skills and finished with small sided games. At the end of the session, Richard outlined the arrangements for the rest of the nine week course. Giving no explanation, he told the group that as from the next session, the 'girls' (sic) would have an hour's lecture from 9-10am and the men, from 10-11am. The response from the students was a low groaning from some of the women, but loud claps and jeers from most of the men, a large group of whom went out of the class laughing.



Afterwards the conversation amongst a group of women students I joined for coffee was one of anger and disgust. As one suggested bitterly,

*that's typical! You [turning to me] must have noticed by now that he thinks women don't have a place in basketball. It's really annoying because some of us have played before, and there are a lot of uncoordinated men as well...*

She explained that it had been the same the previous year. However, other women in the group were less angry and displayed more ambivalence about the arrangements. Like the women 'non jocks' in Dewar's (1990) research, some felt that separating the women from the men was not always a bad thing, particularly, as one suggested, for those 'women who aren't so strong'. These women accepted that physical differences between men and women were sufficient to warrant separating the group in this way. There was no recognition of the differences in physique or ability which existed within the group of women or men.

Whilst there was disagreement amongst the women about the organisation, no student questioned the extent to which the practical sessions stressed their own personal performance. As Chapter Five described, whilst some women students criticised the practical assessment for not having gender-specific grading, few students questioned the role of the practical assessment itself, or that they might be involved in learning other things in their practical work other than how to play the game.

The provision of single sex groups for girls has been used as a positive strategy in some schools to provide 'space' for girls to learn in a 'safe' environment away from the influence of boys (eg. Cornbleet and Sanders,

1982). The previous chapter showed how, in many of the mixed games sessions at Brickhill, women were being marginalised and pushed to the edges of the game, echoing the research evidence which shows how girls 'lose out' in similar ways in school games sessions (eg. Evans, 1989; Scraton, 1989).

For Richard, like Steve, single sex grouping was the best way of ensuring that the women got a fair deal. He felt that by organising the groups in this way he was providing 'equal opportunities' for both the men and the women:

*it's a coaching course..they did a teaching course last year. In the competitive situation, I have the girls separate from the men...some of the girls could compete with the men, but it is generally not the case. I find that the men pick it up much quicker - don't ask me why - it works better this way.*

However, the way in which single sex groupings are organised is crucial, and as Mahony (1989) has noted, the response of girls to the implementation of single sex groupings depends heavily on how the arrangement is put to them:

*where the girls are defined in terms of needing something special in order to help them cope with or be as good as boys, they reject it (as anyone with a sense of dignity would); where the problem is defined as male behaviour, girls' response is positive (Mahony, 1989, p.181).*

In this particular situation, the presentation of the single sex grouping arrangement, together with the fact that the women got the 'early' session - the raw deal in the students' eyes - meant that it was perceived by the women as confirming their inferior ability in the game compared to that of

the men. The shared amusement at the women's response displayed between Richard and some of the male students was disturbing.

Whilst I am sure that not all of the men agreed with the decision, none ventured forward to challenge it or support the women. As Mahony (1985) notes

boys who do not display sufficient evidence of masculinity, or more rarely those who actively challenge the sexist behaviour of other boys, are prime targets for ..'bullying'. Therefore it is doubly in their interest to adopt dominant patterns of male behaviour or at least to pretend to...The point is ..that all boys benefit from the 'ethos of male' whether they want to or not (Mahony, 1985, pp.52/3).

The same process would apply to any male student who challenged the situation here.

In each of these three situations, single sex groupings were deliberately constructed by male lecturers. All three are good examples of how gender continues to be used as a basis for educational differentiation. Teachers continue to hold different attitudes and expectations about boys and girls, men and women, which result in differential treatment and opportunities. Male teachers and boys are more likely to use and construct gender categories, since as Arnot (1984) has suggested,

unlike femininity, which in a patriarchal society is ascribed, masculinity and manhood has to be achieved...[In] this context, it is hardly surprising that it is boys who are the most prone to construct and use gender categories. Not only do they have more at stake in such a system of classification (ie. male power). Also they have to try to achieve manhood through the dual process of distancing women and femininity from themselves and maintaining the

hierarchy and social superiority of masculinity by devaluing the female world (Arnot, 1984, p.47/8).

Chapter One made reference to the work of Bryson (1990) who argues that male hegemony in sport relies on two main mechanisms - the exclusion of women from 'male' sport altogether and the 'inferiorization' of their performances by comparison with men. Both these mechanisms were evident at Heydonfield, and were central in constructing women students as 'inferior'. Women were denied access (at least in the formal curriculum) to what she calls the central sports involved in the maintenance of male domination - soccer and rugby - and, in others such as basketball and cricket, treated as inferior to the men, through the use of 'compensatory' organisational strategies or through condescending and patronising comments. In contrast to the basketball course, the cricket was taught in mixed sex groupings, but as the discussion below illustrates, this did not necessarily lead to a more positive experience for women students.

#### **Mixed sex teaching or co-educational teaching? (4)**

The previous chapter described some of the ways in which the organisation and running of mixed practical sessions at Brickhill resulted in the marginalisation of many of the women students. At Heydonfield, there were examples of much more overt 'put-downs' of women students, this time by male staff, and particularly within the third year cricket sessions.

Before the first cricket session, I arrived early so that I could introduce myself to Don, the lecturer in charge, and ask whether it was possible for

me to observe. His response to me in itself was interesting. After explaining the focus of my research, he asked me whether I was a school teacher, and whether my research was for a Master's degree. He seemed surprised that my research was for a doctorate, and that I had taught in higher education for six years! His attitude visibly changed, and he immediately began to justify the arrangement of the group for the session. I decided at that point not to tell him that I was also a senior cricket coach and had played the game to county level.

He argued that since cricket was largely a game *'of skill, rather than strength'*, he saw *'no problem'* with teaching the men and women students together, although he added that *'the girls (sic) cannot throw as far or bowl as fast, of course, but that's the only difference'*. He maintained that he always got the men to help the *'girls'* so that generally the sessions worked well. Observation of a number of the sessions showed, again, how easily classroom interactions and the teachers' behaviour and comments can operate to give women strong negative messages about their participation in particular activities.

The central element of the course consisted of teaching students the techniques and individual skills of the game. The sessions took place in the sports hall, using tennis balls, although all the other cricket equipment was full sized. Although Don was not a PE lecturer, he was well known within the university as a cricket player and a coach. He was *'assisted'* by a new, younger male PE lecturer, Paul, who admitted that whilst he didn't necessarily agree with all that the course included, for the moment, he felt unable to suggest changes. Paul was *'used'* by Don to

take the warmup, and as a feeder when Don demonstrated a shot to the rest of the group. It was clear that he was far from happy with the situation, and felt awkward at being identified as the 'junior' with little to offer. This is a good example of the hierarchical power relationships which can exist between men, or between different variants of masculinities - in this case between a younger and older man (Askew and Ross, 1988; Connell, 1987). As a younger, less experienced lecturer, Paul had to 'earn' his right to take control of this group, through working as Don's apprentice. This was despite the fact that he had come straight from a senior position in school, and in my judgement, having watched him take a session in Don's absence, had much to offer.

At the beginning of one session, the students were asked to practice overarm bowling in pairs. There was a wide variety of ability in the group, but it was noticeable that it was mainly women who made up the group who were struggling with this skill. Some students stopped and helped one another, but mostly the pairs continued to work hard on their own. Two very talented men arrived late, did not apologize to Don, and then spent the next ten minutes trying to bowl at one another as fast and as viciously as they could, laughing as their ball went flying into other pairs, disrupting their work.

After a few minutes, Don stopped the group and asked one woman to demonstrate her bowling action to the rest of the group, saying '*it's OK I have asked Susan whether she minds doing this, haven't I Susan, and you don't mind do you?*'. It was soon clear that this woman had been selected because she was throwing the ball, rather than bowling it. Don then

suggested how, as a teacher, they could correct such a fault. After several further attempts, the student was still struggling to show any improvement, so stopping her, he suggested to the group that:

*the correction worked in my experience of coaching youngsters, about 60% of the time....but it may be that with Susan, she will never learn it, and that she might be useful instead as a fielder.....everyone can have a part to play in cricket. OK everyone have another go..*

I spent the next ten minutes watching angrily and waiting for someone to give this woman, and others who were also struggling, some constructive help and positive feedback.

Afterwards, as I walked back from the sportshall with a group of women, the conversation centred on how 'awful' they felt this session had been, particularly the demonstration. Even in the cricket sessions, where men and women are taught together, the women were receiving the similar messages about their abilities in relation to male students.

The final cricket session I observed served to reinforce this message even more strongly. This was to include a revision of the laws of the game, and a demonstration on how to run a net session. The first half of the lecture took place in the lecture theatre where Don spent an hour and a half going through the major laws of the game. There were no visual aids, and it was clear that for some of the students, especially some of the women, the technical information being presented meant very little. The majority of the questions were answered by men and it was very noticeable that it was only some of the women who were writing anything down. Towards the end of

the session, Don apologised for what he called the '*masculine terminology*' (for example, he had used the term batsman all the way through the session). He excused himself, saying

*but I am old and I suppose I am set in my ways and can't change, but you know that it doesn't mean that I think that [long pause] er....er.....girls can't play cricket - you know that I think that they can...*

The response from some of the women at the back of the room was to boo quietly, suggesting that he had not really convinced them of this! I wondered at this point, whether the comment had been made for my benefit.

The net demonstration took place in the sportshall, and as groups arrived they began practising with the tennis balls and bats available. Several women students chose to practice inside the 'net' which had been prepared for the session. There was a variety of abilities in this group; some of the women were obviously new to the skill of bowling and were having difficulties landing the balls on the mat; others were more competent. One woman took one of the beginners outside the net and began to help correct her bowling action. At the other side of the hall, three competent male students were trying desperately to 'bowl out' Don. After a while, he disappeared in search of a 'box' which he said he needed for the session. Eventually, he returned and the lecture began with an introduction to the safety rules of running a net. He then asked for a volunteer to be coached in the batting role, and four volunteer bowlers, stressing that '*it doesn't matter if these are boys or girls*'. (It was clear that the fact that the lecture had been delayed for a ten minutes whilst a box had been found that he had already anticipated a man may take the batting role). One of the



men who had been bowling at Don earlier stood up and offered to bat, and the four women who had been working in the net stood up and volunteered to bowl. Hesitating, Don suggested that *'we need four bowlers that can bowl straight because this is the purpose of the net and you would not do a net with beginners unless they can land the ball on the mat'*. All four immediately sat down, and Don proceeded to select one of the four, together with three other (male) students. Later, after the woman had bowled her first ball, he said to her loudly and in a patronising voice, *'By the way, Jo, well done, a good straight ball there!'*.

Chapter Five described how students were assessed in their practical studies, including this cricket module. Women students received *formal*, structured messages about their abilities within this game through the assessment marks they received - which were, on average, much lower than those of the male students. But they also received other explicit messages about their place within this activity passed on through the everyday classroom interactions between the tutor and themselves such as those described above. Although here I have described only two examples of the most overt condescending 'put downs' of women students, there were other examples.

However, it is important to note that not all male staff acted in this way. Paul, for example, admitted that he was very aware of the way in which women students could be left out, and discussed with me at length the content of the cricket course, whether a net session was appropriate anyway for this group, and what terminology he should use when teaching a mixed group of students. He used the term 'bats person' rather than batsman in

his lectures, although admitted that he felt 'awkward' doing this, and felt uneasy at times working with what he called the 'lady cricketers'.

Another, Henry, the male tutor, talked about getting cooperation between the male and female students in his lectures, and not letting the men 'dominate the space'. On one occasion I observed him directly challenging two male students for not helping with the collection of the equipment at the end of the session. This was the only example I observed during the fieldwork of staff challenging unhelpful or disruptive behaviour of male students. He felt strongly that there was not enough attention paid to how the students were being taught in the courses themselves, and that the lecturers were 'not setting them good examples in practice'. Trying to change the format of sessions away from personal performance towards considering the game more critically as an activity for children, however, was difficult, and on a number of occasions he had felt that some of the students just 'opted out' when he had tried to do this. His attempts to change the assessment for his volleyball module away from pure performance towards an understanding of the game and how to teach the game to beginners had been met with comments from some students that this kind of assessment was 'unfair' to the better players. Again, as a young man, his power and status within the department affected the extent to which he was able to challenge or change current and accepted practice.

The incidents described above have shown how single sex grouping and mixed sex grouping in PE can result in the reinforcement of negative stereotyping about women. Richard separated the women from the men so that, in his eyes, the women would have better opportunities to take part in the

competitive game. He used gender as a basis for his groups, and yet admitted that, in fact, some of the women 'would be able to play with the men'. There was no recognition of the differences in skill levels which existed within the gender groups.

Don did the opposite, and taught the men and women together, showing little sensitivity to the vast differences in experience and skill within the student group. Yet the evidence presented here also supports that of others, which argues that mixed PE classes do not automatically lead to better opportunities for girls or women (eg. Scraton, 1985; Evans, et al, 1987). The success or otherwise of mixed PE will depend on the ability of the teacher (or lecturer) to go beyond the easily implemented organisational change, towards much more fundamental changes, in terms of the nature of the curriculum, the pedagogy and the assessment (Evans, 1989).

Evans (1989) suggests that this will involve the teacher in managing not just mixed abilities, but also in implementing 'a form of personal and social education which is capable of dealing with and confronting the often negative attitudes and inhibitions which children hold towards one another' (p.85). It was clear that neither Don nor Richard had the necessary skills to demonstrate good mixed ability teaching in their own classes, or felt it sufficiently important to raise such issues with the students. Askew and Ross (1988) call for male teachers to provide alternative models of being and behaving for boys to challenge the unacceptable facets of masculine behaviour. Unfortunately here, Don and Richard were very much apart of *perpetuating* such behaviour.

### **Classroom control through shared masculinity**

In contrast to the overt, physical 'macho' displays by male students at Brickhill, 'doing' masculinity at Heydonfield seemed a less disruptive part of the 'everyday' behaviour and atmosphere of lectures. Throughout the fieldwork I observed what could only be described as a shared sense of camaraderie between many of the male staff and students. Sometimes this was made obvious through extreme examples of put downs of women students as described above, but mainly this was developed through more subtle gestures, comments and actions. In almost every session there were short episodes of interaction between lecturers and some of the male students - sometimes at the beginning of a session whilst students were arriving, sometimes within the formal context of the lecture - which served to reinforce a sense of shared masculinity, and in which sexuality was a prevalent theme. Many of the comments or gestures were very similar in content or context to those observed at Brickhill.

For example, just before showing a video of a television programme which included one of the male lecturers, Steve suggested with a laugh to a group of male students at the back of the lecture theatre that they should not be put off by the sweater that Bob was wearing. The sweater was a brightly coloured and patterned one, and the innuendo was that it was not sufficiently 'masculine' for him to wear. In another health related fitness session, where the students had been involved in a ten minute aerobics section, the lecturer suggested to the male students '*come on lads, if I can do this and not look a fool, anyone can - you don't have to wear a leotard and leg-warmers to teach aerobics!*'. Later when talking

about human potential in terms of growth and development, he suggests that for the *'ladies in the room, sorry, it's [the peak time] at thirteen so you are all past it! ..however for us men...'*. On a different occasion, another lecturer explained with a smile on his face that the teaching practice notes he was handing out had a few mistakes because he had had trouble controlling his two secretaries. Again there were sniggers and smiles from some of the male students in the group.

Each of these exchanges centred on male heterosexuality. As Jackson (1990) notes, a major part of demonstrating one's masculinity, and being accepted into the *'male club'* is an overt display of heterosexuality, and a distancing from homosexuality. Boys or men who show any sense of *'weakness'* (whether in physique, their manner, or even their dress) risk having their heterosexuality questioned. As a result, he suggests that boys and men are compelled to demonstrate behaviour which is specifically heterosexual in nature, and which revolves around an objectifying, conquest form of sexuality as a means of gaining status and acceptance from other men.

There was, however, a range of masculinities being produced within the PE at Heydonfield. Not all of the male students engaged in such banter with staff. Observation suggested there was both a place for the *'academic'* as well as the type of masculine behaviour which characterised the group of students I have called the *'lads'*. This group of students consistently fooled around in practical sessions, and often engaged with the sexual innuendos of the male staff. The *'lads'* exemplified the *'super jocks'* of Dewar's (1990) research - a minority of male PE students who she describes

as 'unashamedly masculine', who had a physically intimidating presence, and who openly bragged about their sexual exploits. The 'lads' at Heydonfield, like Dewar's super-jocks, put their sport first - their effort in practical sessions was 100%. In contrast, their body language in theory sessions often suggested that they were there under sufferance. They leaned back on their chairs, took very few notes, often sitting throughout the session with their arms folded, specifically emphasizing their lack of commitment to the session. To show an open involvement in academic work would be to risk their 'super-jock' image, particularly in areas outside the hard sciences.

Many of the comments by male lecturers described above were directed at the 'lads', and were used as strategies to help achieve a working consensus with them. For example, one lecturer suggested that he had selected his reading list carefully, so that students would have only to read one paper each week because he recognised that *'you may well have a hectic social life to fit in too'*. These comments were accompanied by grins or knowing looks, which gave the impression that these staff almost accepted an anti-intellectual stance was part of being a male 'PE student' (see also the comment from Steve, the head of PE below). However, these students would know that their position in the university relied on them passing the end of module tests and examinations, so their anti-intellectual posturing would have to be carefully balanced with enough effort and study not to jeopardize this altogether.

Whilst my gender prevented me from observing the informal culture of male-only PE environments, some comments to me made by first year male students

suggested that the 'lads' socialising outside of lectures centred heavily around group drinking and games playing. The pressure to conform was intense as one explained:

*well if you don't drink with them then you don't get into the team. I have played to a good level, and at the moment I have to play for the fourth team here ...I know that I could play higher but they force you to drink and so on, and the hockey team are mostly from public schools and are really rich, and I can't afford to spend a lot like they do...*

Another agreed that the 'ceremonies' attached to playing had put him off. In the first term he had had a 'rough time' and had been 'forced' to drink thirteen pints and had stopped playing as a result. Being able to 'hold' alcohol is an important part of male culture (Myers, 1982; Jackson, 1990), and has been central to the socialising taking place after male sport (eg. Dunning, 1973).

Sands (1982) argues that male PE students are more likely than females to adopt an 'anti-intellectual' stance and are less likely to see the wider professional development as central to their training. The 'muscle head' PE teacher image - a man of 'all brawn and no brain' - is an image, he argues, which is reproduced and perpetuated through male rather than female students. However, Sands does not recognise the way in which institutions produce a range of masculinities. Not all of the male students are part of the drinking, anti-intellectual crowd as these comments from first year students suggest. Many students clearly showed commitment and involvement to the academic aspects of the course. However, Dewar (1990) argues that such students, which she calls the 'ordinary jocks' (male students who

achieve a balance between work and sport) can only do this if they were first and foremost, good performers.

They knew that they could be good students, sensitive and caring as long as they were also seen to be skilled, aggressive competitors in traditionally defined masculine sports. If they were not seen in this way, they risked having their intellects and sensitivity used as evidence of a lack of heterosexual masculinity....If they were excellent performers, the boundaries for expression of alternative expressions of heterosexual masculinity appeared possible. (Dewar, 1990, p.90).

Although some students are able to move outside the narrowly defined behaviour of the 'super jock' PE image this is only if they are able to demonstrate an adherence to the 'baseline' of masculinity, based on an appropriate display of performance and heterosexuality.

#### **Women students at Heydonfield**

At Brickhill many of the staff welcomed the opportunity to talk to me about how the institution had changed since men had been accepted onto the course. Here, many staff suggested that male students were more questioning and more critical of the material presented, and that they were generally an addition to classes. (The exception was their inclusion in 'feminine' activities as already described).

At Heydonfield, the influx of women students had been largely seen in terms of the 'problems' they had brought. As Chapter Five noted, there was concern that the curriculum would have to be changed to meet the needs of women. Games such as netball and lacrosse were introduced specifically for



the women after initial attempts at mixed soccer had 'failed'. Similarly, as the discussion above shows, many staff felt that they had to make special arrangements such as organising single sex teaching groups to enable the women students to 'cope' with the activities. Observation of some of these classes suggested this often resulted in the women being made to feel inadequate or inferior in practical sessions. The effect on the women students seemed to be to work harder, and to try and reduce the extent to which they were seen as 'feminine' - to manage the presentation of themselves as women. For example, in contrast to many of the women students at Brickhill, it was noticeable that few at Heydonfield wore makeup or adapted their dress. Most wore very traditional 'PE' kit of tracksuits and trainers. Whilst it would be wrong to stereotype all women as diligent students, staff suggested that the women were '*generally harder working*', '*better organised*', '*always arrive on time*', '*better on paper than the men*' etc.

Steve also suggested that taking women students on to the course had had beneficial effects on the behaviour of the men students:

*there has been a change in the behaviour of male students...when I first came here there were only eight or nine girls in the first year and the boys were still typical jocks...There was a lot of trouble, I mean with the present fourth years, they got drunk and smashed up the hall of residence - you know typical PE students. Er..that has gradually died out over the last two or three years...I think that the boys have changed because of the large numbers of female students - there is less hard drinking now. [Steve, head of PE, Heydonfield, taped interview, my emphasis].*

The women students were viewed as having a 'civilising' influence on the behaviour of the men students in much the same way as the introduction of girls into boys' schools (Arnot, 1984). The effects on the education of the girls involved in such moves are rarely questioned. As the previous chapter showed, even though there were far fewer men than women at Brickhill, they had a considerable impact on the nature of interaction within lectures, and on the content of the curriculum itself. At Heydonfield, although there were only small numbers of women in the fourth year, the numbers were increasing in each cohort, and at the time of the fieldwork, they made up half of the first year cohort. Yet despite their increasing numbers, they struggled to have their views heard. Sessions were organised in order that male students' needs were met (for example, mixed soccer was abandoned because the men 'wanted to perform'; men were allowed to opt out of dance in year four, etc). I observed few examples where women students questioned their course, at least overtly, with members of staff, although there were times when groups of women students were far from happy and were quite willing to talk openly to me about it.

This section has focused largely on the use of gender and sexuality by male lecturers in their teaching at Heydonfield. In comparison with Brickhill, there were less overt displays of masculinity by male students. It is important to stress that I was not able to observe as many practical sessions, and in particular single sex sessions, as I did at Brickhill where such displays might have been most prevalent. Instead it seemed that male staff were more actively involved in constructing and reinforcing gender divisions, often resulting in put downs of women students. The next

section explores the experiences of the three women PE staff at Heydonfield.

#### **Women staff - invisible and extra-visible**

As Chapter Two showed, women are vastly under-represented as academic members of staff at university level. It was not surprising therefore, to learn that women were acutely under-represented within the academic staff in the School of Education at Heydonfield, and particularly so at the higher levels. There were just ten women lecturers in the School of Education out of a total of ninety two. All the senior lecturers (nineteen) and professors (four), plus the head of department, were men, as were all of the course leaders apart from the inservice coordinator. There were just two women lecturers, and one tutor working within PE.

Whilst an analysis of the statistical under-representation of women in universities presents useful information about where women are in higher education, it tells us little about how they experience their lives within such male-dominated organisations. Ramazanoglu (1987) and Morgan (1981) argue that the work ethos of most university departments in which competitiveness, aggressiveness and ruthlessness are the norm, contribute to women feeling uncomfortable, alienated and undermined. The experiences of women academics in higher education have only recently begun to be explored (eg. Acker, 1980; Acker and Piper, 1984; Ramazanoglu, 1987). Acker (1980, p.84) suggests that being the only woman or one of a small minority of women in a university department 'makes one paradoxically both invisible and extra-visible'. Women are invisible, she suggests, in the

way in which they are excluded, often overtly, from informal networks, and invisible is the way in which women are made to feel in most committee meetings dominated by men, where even to 'enter the discussion requires an aggressive style' (p.84). On the other hand, women in a minority can soon become uncomfortably extra-visible, simply because they are different. Details about women, such as what they wear, who they talk to, and what they do in their leisure time all become subject to gossip and scrutiny (Hearn and Parkin, 1987; Kanter, 1977).

Ramazanoglu (1987) argues vociferously that women in higher education are constructed as 'abnormal' and subordinate by men, and that this is one of the major ways in which male academics reinforce and reproduce male power and privilege. Whilst academia may not be characterised by the violence of a physical assault sense, she argues that it nevertheless an appropriate description of the kinds of male/female interaction endemic within higher education:

A violent academic situation is not so much an experience of fisticuffs and flying chairs as one of diminishing other human beings with the use of sarcasm, raised voices, jokes, veiled insults or the patronising put-down (Ramazanoglu, 1987, p.65).

The process of subordinating women, she argues, should be seen as violence. Any woman who resists the male domination of higher education will, she suggests, find their resistance itself experienced as violent. Women who complain, for example, about sexual harassment often find themselves being accused of attacking the rights of men to behave as 'normal' sexual beings! Like Mahony (1985), she suggests that verbal and vocal violence, together

with sexual harassment, are the two main forms of violence used in academic life in the social control of women. Whilst individual women have adopted many different styles of coping with the strains of academic life, what is important, she argues, is to place these within the context of an institutionalised power struggle, where such violence is never openly acknowledged as a 'problem' except as problems initiated by women. As Smart and Smart (1978) stress,

Exploring the nature of the social control of women entails the problem of showing the existence of specific covert forms of oppression and control, and of revealing that their location lies in the public sphere rather than in the individual psychologies or personal lives of oppressed women (Smart and Smart, 1978, p.2).

How then did the women PE staff experience their work within such a department?

I have found this section of the research a particularly difficult one to write, and I am indebted to Greed (1990) for her account of her experiences as a feminist surveyor doing research on the position of women in surveying. She describes the intense difficulties of doing research on a world of which she is a part. This prevented her from adopting what she calls a 'hit and run' mentality to her research since she knew she was likely to meet the women she interviewed again on a personal or professional level. She also notes how her own personal experiences of working in such a male-dominated profession had already sensitised her to many of the issues, but how this made it more difficult for her to 'make the familiar strange'. Finally she describes her sense of responsibility and despair when she realised that her interviews with the women might

simply have opened a Pandora's box and brought to the surface a mass of insoluble issues in their lives.

Like her, I feel a great tension and sense of unease, that after developing a close relationship with one particular woman at Heydonfield whom I have called Anne, I am now sitting down and 'objectifying' her experiences. After several weeks of feeling somewhat uncomfortable about building up a friendship with Anne, a comment from her to the effect of *'I hope that you are not going to go home now and write this all down'* made me begin to try and explain to her my feelings about the whole research process. After a long discussion, we seemed to appear to reach the stage which Greed (1990) reports:

at a certain point, the conversation seems to change gear and they will then proceed to say many other things that may actually contradict what they said earlier. It is almost as if women are so used to having to keep face both with men and other official women, and acting out the role of the equal woman, that they cannot easily let go of this image. Once they have sized me up, then they can trust me to say what they really want to say (Greed, 1990, p.154).

Sharing my experiences of working in a similar male-dominated institution no doubt helped this process. Anne was relieved to hear that things were as *'as bad at other institutions'*, that it was not *'just her'*, and I felt much more comfortable after she later suggested that I should,

*...get to know what it is really like...some people think that we ought not to be airing our dirty linen in public, but I think that you should write about the full picture, what it's really like!.*

Although I did not spend as much time with the other two women, who I have called Gill and Helen, both seemed glad to have me around as a sympathetic listener. Helen, for example, who had been appointed as a tutor on a two year contract which involved some practical teaching together with the opportunity to do a higher degree, was very willing to share her experiences of working at Heydonfield. In fact she made a point of asking me when I was going to interview her about her experiences, an interview which lasted well over an hour and a half! Since she had '*nothing to lose*' (that is, she was due to finish her tutorship that year anyway) she told me she was able to be '*honest*' about her largely negative time in the department.

Throughout the fieldwork, I was continually struck by the way in which these women managed to '*survive*' in what was often a very alienating environment, and it was clear that an important element in this was the support they gave one another. As Anne suggested,

*if Gill and I had had bad patches at the same time, we would have both gone to Russell (the head of department) and told him what he could do with the jobs! But you tend to keep going and support one another through the bad times and try and think that things aren't so bad.*

#### *Strategies of 'gender management'*

Being one of a minority makes women very conscious of trying to '*blend into*' the institution, trying to be seen as just another academic rather than a woman academic, trying to avoid being constructed as '*other*' (Acker, 1980). A central element for women in successfully blending in entails

what Sheppard (1989) has called gender management - managing the presentation of their femininity and sexuality, by taking care with dress and the presentation of themselves generally in the work setting.

#### *Dress and appearance*

The women at Heydonfield saw clothing as very important to their credibility as lecturers, and an important way of 'blending into' the culture of the department. There were two aspects to this: one was the awareness of the low status of PE amongst colleagues; the other was to do with their presentation as women. Anne was very aware of the perceived low status attributed to practical PE work in the department, and had noticed how none of her male colleagues walked around the campus in tracksuits - a sign to others that they had been involved in this 'low level' work. Like her male colleagues, she took care to change into formal clothing after practical sessions, yet at the same time admitted she would 'love to wear something [like a tracksuit] that was warm and comfortable'.

Treading a line between being dressed 'professionally' and business-like, and being 'appropriately' feminine was also crucially important to her. Acker (1980), Sheppard (1989) and Henry (1990) have all noted how for women who are in the minority in their work situation, controlling the degree to which they are seen as feminine or sexual plays a major part in the way in which they dress for work, and yet is a very precarious business. Women are often in a no-win situation, for whilst,

femaleness embodies sexuality which must be contained  
..being seen as 'unfemale', ie. not sexually attractive



or available to men... still means that a woman is perceived in sexual terms' (Sheppard, 1989, p.147).

For women who are not heterosexual, the presentation of self in institutional life is perhaps even more difficult and alienating (see M. Hall, 1990; Hearn and Parkin, 1987).

For Anne, avoiding being seen as too 'masculine' meant that she was careful to be seen wearing skirts for much of the time at work, although she admitted to being far more comfortable in trousers. She described how she and Gill had deliberately gone out and bought what she called their 'power dressing suits and high heels' to wear at a conference they were organising, so that they would 'feel the part'.

Despite these efforts to blend into the culture of the university through the wearing of formal dress, the tradition within the department of male lecturers wearing university sweaters and ties effectively marginalised them. On one occasion, I remember braving a visit to the staff bar on my own early one evening only to be confronted by seven men, all but one of whom was wearing the sweater and matching tie! The process of male bonding operates to affect even the clothes which men wear (Jackson, 1990; Sabo, 1985). Being part of the male 'club', Sabo (1985) suggests, encourages conformity amongst men, in things as diverse as their attire, as well as their behaviour and attitudes, and in doing so, effectively marginalises and excludes women.

As well as being careful about their dress, women in minorities may also

'police' their own movements and are careful not to be seen together or in groups, since this marks them out specifically as 'women' (Rogers, 1981). Rogers (1981) for example, notes how women MP's rarely sit together in the House of Commons for this reason. The women at Heydonfield were also conscious of not being seen to spend significant chunks of their time together 'in public', and were very wary of being labelled collectively and dismissed as 'the girls'. Because of this, Anne told me that they restricted the numbers of time they had lunch together in the staff bar, arranging to meet off campus, or to speak to one another on the telephone on the other days.

Several authors (eg. Deem, 1986a; Green et al, 1990; Rogers, 1988) have described how men are threatened by women socialising together (particularly if the occasion involves alcohol). The 'women's night out' is seen by male partners as an opportunity for women's contact and liaison with other men, and perhaps as a signal of the beginning of a search for a new partner (Green, Hebron and Woodward, 1987).

A specific incident at Heydonfield serves to illustrate how male staff felt threatened by women spending time together socially. After Gill had invited me around for a meal with Anne one evening, I was amazed to find the next day how many men had heard about the meal and asked whether I had had a 'good girls' night out!' (5). Such interest in women meeting together is in direct contrast to the easy and taken-for-granted ways in which males gather to spend social time together, and did so at Heydonfield. Morgan (1981) argues that this kind of male 'homosociability' is central to the social reproduction of male power. These social

gatherings are not just important sites of male bonding but also act as a practical source of information and contacts (eg. see Hey, 1986). Whilst these do not necessarily have deliberately to set out to exclude women (although some clearly do), they often do so in more subtle ways, through, for example, the choice of time and venue, or the topics of conversation. Also it is important to recognise that such leisure time for men is often only made possible at the expense of other people's work - usually that of their female partner or spouse (Green, et al, 1990).

On Friday evenings, the local pub was the venue of such a grouping within the PE staff, and although the women 'had been invited', and they recognised the importance of such settings in terms of the informal decision making which may take place here, joining the group on a regular basis was not seen by them as a particularly attractive or relaxing way of spending the evening. If women do decide to join such gatherings they have to be able to be prepared to 'go along' with the jokes, topics of conversation, or risk being labelled 'spoil-sports' or someone who can't take a 'joke' (eg. see Sheppard, 1989).

*I'm not a feminist*

As well as being careful about dress, the women also actively avoided taking on stereotypical female tasks, such as taking the minutes or pouring the tea at meetings. Anne said that she deliberately had not learnt to word-process so that all her typing would have to be done by the support staff. She also suggested that she made sure that she was seen to be applying for posts of responsibility, such as the Chair of the PE section

(see below), even though at times, she felt it was important that she should be seen to be applying, rather than because she really wanted the post.

Perhaps less consciously, she also took care to avoid been 'labelled' by the men as a feminist. On several occasions during the fieldwork, when Anne had been objecting to me about some aspect of the university culture, or we had been discussing my work, she stressed that although she objected to much that was going on, 'she wasn't a feminist'. However, like the women in Greed's (1990) research, it was clear that whilst Anne may not have been necessarily familiar with concepts such as 'patriarchy', she could describe its effects, and in fact spent much time talking about what were essentially feminist issues. Her reluctance to become associated with feminism has to be seen in relation to the negative way in which it is viewed by men (Cockburn, 1990). Acker (1980) suggests that being a feminist in a male-dominated university department and protesting about practices which show some degree of sexism is one of the main ways in which women do become uncomfortably visible. Reactions of other women make it difficult too, and often act to deter individual women from becoming interested and involved in feminist issues (6).

On a number of 'public' occasions Anne made it clear she did not want to be identified solely as a person who would raise gender issues within the department. For example, during the fieldwork, she reported back to staff on a small piece of action research she had agreed to undertake at the request of one of the (all male) senior management team, which focused on the 'female experience' within the department. At the end of the

presentation, when another woman suggested that there was a clear need for further research, Anne quickly stressed that she would not be interested in doing this. A comment made by one of the male lecturers to me later confirmed her strategy had been successful at least in his eyes. Whilst we were talking about the lack of women staff at Heydonfield, he commented that he felt that Anne and Gill were *'really nice'* compared to another woman who he called a *'real radical feminist..who was always getting people's backs up'*. Observing the way in which this particular woman operated in an education committee meeting confirmed that she would raise awkward (and important) questions. In one meeting, for example, she spoke strongly in support of a planned creche for the department. As Ramazanoglu (1987) notes, the choice for academic women is either to show deference to men, or to risk being labelled by them as *'aggressive'* and *'extreme'* if seen to challenge them.

At one time there had been a fully constituted Equal Opportunities working party within the School of Education at Heydonfield. Initially a mixed group, this had eventually become a all-women forum (largely, I was told, as the result of some of the women *'shutting out the men by just missing them off the minutes list'*). This now only met infrequently. As one suggested, it was a *'case of finding the time and the energy to meet in the lunchhour or in our own time'*. She was bitter that the group and any recommendations made were rarely taken seriously by the management team, and she was therefore reluctant to spend time in Equal Opportunities meetings at the expense of what she saw as her career advancement.

During the fieldwork I was invited to join a group of women meeting to discuss the findings of Anne's report of the 'women's experience' and how best to progress these further. Some of the women explained about their early reluctance to attend any of the first meetings of the Equal Opportunities group. One suggested that she had been so concerned with getting herself 'established' in her first year or so in the university and that she was working so hard, that she didn't really recognise how '*bad things were for women*'. Another admitted that she did not attend any of the early meetings for fear of becoming '*labelled as a feminist*' by the men, which she felt could only be detrimental to her progress within the department.

Cockburn (1990, p.85) maintains,

Although women must ultimately bear responsibility for their own ideology and politics, the anti-feminist discourse of men has to be seen as a policing of women's consciousness and as an important mechanism in the reproduction of male power.

She adds that defining when women are different is only accepted when it is men who are defining and constructing the difference. Few men in the organisational settings she researched were supportive of single-sex activity organised by women, seeing such groups as divisive and setting up a negative 'us and them' situation. Fear of the 'backlash' which might ensue make many women feel uneasy about getting involved in what could be a supportive venture with other women.

As the above discussion suggested, there were similar concerns amongst at least some of the women at Heydonfield. The women who attended the meeting

to discuss Anne's report were very aware of the effects of them gathering as a group of women, and felt that many men viewed this as a threat. Most seemed to accept, however, that meeting as a group of women was important, and that the advantages - the support and strength such a gathering could provide to individual women - were worth this reaction. One woman expressed her delight at their power in '*stirring the men up!*' simply by holding the meeting.

It was soon apparent that the meeting had not gone unnoticed. During the meeting, one man put his head round the door to see '*who it was that was meeting*' - despite the fact that the room had a long window which allowed all the occupants to be clearly seen! Another condescendingly asked me later what the '*mothers' meeting*' had been all about. Some days afterwards, when Anne presented the report to a wider group of staff, Richard, the former head of PE, immediately questioned the fact that the survey had only focused on the women's experience, arguing that the results were not really very valid without the '*men's experience to balance the story*'. As Cockburn (1990) notes, men often cleverly turn around equal opportunity initiatives by insisting that if women want equality, then they cannot argue at the same time that they are different. Yet it is clear, she concludes, that many institutions (and individual men within it) benefit from, and are involved in the construction of women as 'different'.

#### *Being female and a tutor*

For Helen, being a female and a tutor in the department had contributed to her largely negative experience in the department. She felt that as a

woman tutor she was at the bottom of the status hierarchy within the department, which she saw as being,

*research and then teaching, then the male staff, then the female staff, and then the tutors, and if you are a female tutor, you are at the bottom of the pile...[Helen, female tutor, Heydonfield, taped interview]*

Whilst she now realised that the tutors were 'used to fill all the gaps in the timetable' - mostly practical work which the other tutors did not want to do and which was seen as low status work - she felt that she had been unfairly timetabled compared to the male tutor:

*Because firstly I am a tutor and secondly I am female ...means I am the odd man (sic) out....lots of reasons...I look at the timetable that I have been given and the timetable that Henry [the male tutor] has been given - this is the only thing that I look at - and he has managed to get out of things, and when have asked, I have been told no....I don't know, I think it is because it is a male dominated department that he seems to fit in to it a lot better and I don't ...and also he know Merv [male lecturer] so that makes it better for him....[Helen, female tutor, Heydonfield, taped interview]*

She also felt that her personal research had progressed less well because of the way in which she had been treated by her tutor, one of the male members of the PE staff. She commented, 'don't get me wrong, he is very nice, but he really couldn't give a damn about anyone else's work but his own....'. She also felt that because her work was qualitative, rather than quantitative, it was not perceived as 'proper' research. As she put it, 'you get slagged off for doing that around here'. In contrast she felt that because Henry was working on a project which was positivistic,



scientific, and quantitative, and which was linked directly to Steve's own work, he was getting far more support and help.

Whilst this section has suggested how the ethos of the department might have influenced the experiences of the women PE staff generally, there were also some disturbing examples of direct and overt intimidation by male staff used to control their initiatives and influence in the department. The two incidents described below both occurred to Anne.

#### *Voting for a new PE 'chair'*

The PE section of the department was administered by an academic member of staff who 'chaired' for three years. Since the current head of the PE section, Steve, was due to finish his three year position at the end of that academic year, one of the PE meetings during the fieldwork had included the appointment of the new Chair on its agenda. Anne had told me that she had applied despite the fact that she felt that some of the staff in the section would not support her. She was annoyed that Steve had not discussed her application with her, yet was not at all surprised since she suggested that it was 'obvious' that he did not want her to have the post.

The atmosphere before the meeting started was quiet and tense. Steve introduced the item on the agenda and summarised the importance of the position. He stressed that from 'his point of view' the new 'Chairman' (sic) needed to have two major qualities: an ability to argue well at the finance committee, and 'someone with a high profile to outsiders'. He went on to stress that the outside perceptions were very important. The new

Chairman therefore needed to be involved in PE on a wider scale and a regular attender at national conferences, where the presentation of research was vital to give the 'right impression' of the department. No one spoke whilst he was saying this, and there was a prolonged silence when he finished. It was clear that most of the staff knew that Anne had applied for the chair, and that the way in which the qualities of the post, particularly the external profile, had been described by Steve had effectively ruled Anne out of the competition - at least in terms of her current position and experience.

After an uncomfortable period of absolute silence, Anne then commented that she had made an application and would like to do the job. She got no acknowledgement from Steve, whose only response was to ask if there was anyone else interested in the position (and this was despite the fact that applicants had been asked to indicate their interest *before* the meeting!). After getting no response from the others, Steve concluded that it *'looks like the new Chairman, if no one else is interested, is Anne'*. He offered no other comment.

The whole scenario was an apt example of the 'violence' which Ramazanoglu (1987) argues faces women who refuse to defer to men. After the meeting, Anne was furious about the way in which Steve had treated her, and vowed to do the *'bloody job, even if it kills me!'*. Whilst she had successfully gained the position, it was clear from the tenor of this meeting that there would be very little help available for her in actually *doing* the job, at least from the outgoing Chair.

### *Challenging the scientific paradigm*

Although Anne had only recently finished her Masters degree, like the other staff in the section, she was feeling under pressure to start research, and to publish. One short article of hers which she had co-authored with another lecturer from the department, had recently been included in the department's own research papers. The article criticised the way in which PE research was becoming increasingly dominated by the 'scientific' paradigm, and it called for an extension of research which included more qualitative experiences of physical activity. The article went on to use some of Steve's own quantitative survey research as an example of the kind of research which raised more questions than it answered. Steve had been 'furious' about the article, especially as it directed its attack at his own work, and that it had been published in the department's own research papers. As a result, he had written to Anne, and although she was not prepared to share the contents of the letter with me, it was clear that she was both shocked and intimidated by its contents.

Both these incidents serve as examples of ways in which women's confidence and abilities are undermined. As Ramazanoglu (1987, p.68) notes,

A woman who talks as much as a man, who presents herself as confident and powerful, who objects to being interrupted when she starts to speak, is experienced as a threat to the way academic men exercise power over women and to male sexuality.....They must demonstrate deference and every known feminine wile if they want to remain socially acceptable.

On both accounts, by taking on the leadership role within the PE section,

and openly challenging the dominance of scientific research within the profession, Anne was refusing to demonstrate such deference. Unfortunately for her, the violence which Ramazanoglu (1987) argues accompanies such lack of deference was indeed evident.

### **Summary**

This chapter has described the gender regime at Heydonfield, which like that of Brickhill, was dominated by men and masculine values. Here however, the heavily scientific curriculum supported an ethos characterised by strong 'masculine' values of authority, discipline and rationality. There was less evidence of the very overt 'macho' posturing of the male students which characterised the classrooms at Brickhill. Instead, gender divisions were explicitly reinforced, particularly by the older male PE staff, through the organisation and structuring of their teaching groups, and their interaction with men and women students. The use of sexual innuendo and 'gender joking' by many of younger male staff was common, designed to engage male students, at the expense of the women.

Negotiating a gender identity for the women students and staff within such a rigidly masculine regime entailed trying to conform to the established 'male' norms of the department. This involved the careful management of themselves as women, through self policing strategies regarding dress, manner, and behaviour. The women students at Heydonfield did not simply accept sexist remarks or behaviour; responses varied, with some laughing along with the jokes, and few overtly challenged them. Many examples of put downs and subtle gestures designed to undermine women's confidence were

evident in the classes at Heydonfield, although the most extreme examples were from some of the male staff.

Despite the fact that Heydonfield had moved more quickly towards co-education than Brickhill, and there were increasing numbers of women students, the ethos and atmosphere, as this chapter has attempted to describe, had remained very firmly masculine. As was the case at Brickhill, any attempts to raise gender issues as part of the formal curriculum have to be evaluated and set against the picture of everyday interactions and practices presented here.

The final chapter identifies the key findings of the research and considers some of the policy implications necessary for future practice.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

## CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

### Introduction

This research has attempted to extend the recent work on the relationship between schooling, PE, and the reproduction of gender power relations to include a consideration of ITE in PE. The previous chapters have shown how gender power relations are reproduced not just through the institutionalised practices within ITE in PE, but also at the level of relationships between men and women, although this did not operate in a simplistic or straightforward way. A central finding of the research has been the way in which 'doing' masculinity played a major part of the experience of ITE, for both staff and students at Brickhill and Heydonfield. This chapter summarizes the major findings of the research, and explores their implications for future practice. It is divided into two parts. Part one summarizes the major findings of the case study research, and presents an analysis of the key factors involved in the relationship between gender power relations and PE ITE, drawing on the research and the contemporary feminist literature reviewed in Chapters One and Two. Part two addresses the policy implications for future practice, and identifies areas where further research is required.

This research has identified two major aspects which are central to the relationship between PE ITE and relations of gender; the content and structure of the curriculum, including how this was assessed, and the nature of classroom interaction and institutional ethos.

As Chapter Five described, the content of the PE ITE curriculum at Brickhill and Heydonfield did little to raise students' awareness of the significance of gender in the teaching and learning process in PE. Whilst students were introduced to these issues on the two undergraduate degrees, this was in short units of work only, situated within the second year Professional Studies elements. The fact that these units of work came so early in the degree meant that they were not elements which formed part of the students' final degree assessment, and hence carried little importance in the eyes of students. The work stood as 'one off' courses, and was not progressed or developed through the later years of the degree content. Professional Studies is also the area of work which students view as least relevant to their development as teachers (Denscombe, 1982). Since neither member of staff involved in the teaching of these units of work demonstrated a commitment to gender equality, it is highly unlikely that these units of work would do much to raise students' awareness of these issues. Whilst there were opportunities for students to develop their interest further in this area, for example, through choosing to study gender in their final year project, or by opting into a sociology module, these short units formed the only compulsory parts of the course where gender issues were directly discussed with all students.

There was less attention to gender issues on the two PGCE courses, particularly at Brickhill where they were not formally discussed with students at all. Here staff suggested they relied on raising these issues through 'permeation' - discussing them when or if they arose as part of other teaching. However the observation in both institutions revealed little evidence of this in practice. Alternatively, there was a lot of



evidence of staff making comments in their teaching which reinforced gender stereotypes, rather than challenged them. The interviews with the key decision makers in the institutions, together with informal conversations with other staff, revealed mainly apathetic or hostile attitudes to gender equality, mirroring the findings of the EOC's (1989) national study. However, there were a few staff who did recognise the importance of raising gender issues in their work, and also a minority of students who were prepared to do this too. Overall, however, this research has shown that gender issues had little legitimacy and visibility in these ITE courses.

The research was also concerned with analysing how the institutions had adapted to co-education in terms of the practical activity content of the courses. Chapter Five revealed strong gender ideologies influencing the nature and structure of the practical PE curriculum. The balance and range of practical PE activities included in the curriculum reflected the gendered histories of both institutions. However, in both institutions, strong gender ideologies about the nature of men's and women's physicality and sexuality, underpinned the sex differentiated curricula. The dominant knowledge forms included within the theoretical PE Studies - largely bio-behavioural knowledge - reinforced, rather than challenged the ideologies of biology on which this differentiation was based.

Although gender did not form a major part of the explicit curriculum, it was nevertheless a significant and important influence on the nature of classroom interaction. Not surprisingly, given their histories, the institutional ethos in the two institutions was very different. At Brickhill, although male students were very much in the minority, they had

a very obvious presence in the classroom. Classroom interaction was dominated by masculine identity work, which involved male students in attempting to out-do one another physically, or boosting their own egos through putting down others. The kinds of identity work displayed depended heavily upon the particular physical context, and the opportunities it offered for reinforcing their masculinity, but also on the behaviour of the member of staff. At Heydonfield, overt masculine identity work was less evident from male students. Instead, gender differences were confirmed and reinforced largely by the actions and behaviours of the staff.

At both institutions, the fieldwork showed women's experiences within PE ITE to be contradictory. On one hand, women's presence within PE clearly challenged dominant ideologies of femininity. However, classroom observation showed that the negotiation of a gender identity for most women involved finding a balance between their sporting prowess, and their 'femininity'. For many, this meant the adoption of a number of 'gender management' strategies, such as restricting the type of activity they became involved in, or a deliberate 'feminization' of their appearance through the wearing of makeup and jewellery.

It is important to stress that although the research revealed dominant forms of behaviour linked to both femininity and masculinity, these were not necessarily displayed in a consistent or coherent way by all of the men and women students or staff. Similarly, the research has identified particular *varieties* of hegemonic masculinities which are dominant in PE ITE, rather than a simple, unitary form. Chapter Six, for example, showed how physical competition, and displays of sexuality based on heterosexual

objectification and conquest, were characteristic forms of behaviour amongst groups of male students at Brickhill. Whilst these were also evident at Heydonfield to some extent, this kind of male behaviour competed with a different form of masculinity which had intellect and scientific rationality at its core (see Chapter Seven). The research has also shown the ways in which different varieties of feminine behaviours existed in the institutions. Whilst some young women students at Brickhill went out of their way deliberately to feminize their appearance for example, and collude with accepted notions of feminine heterosexuality, there were others who challenged these definitions through their dress, actions and behaviours.

The research also highlighted aspects of the experiences of women staff within PE ITE. Classroom observation at both institutions showed how many women staff, regardless of status, were subject to sexual innuendo and gender joking by male students or colleagues, which served to undermine their authority and confidence. The negotiation of a gender identity for Anne and Gill, the two women members of staff within the male dominated department at Heydonfield, involved the adoption of a series of gender management strategies to try and avoid being labelled as 'other'. These included paying careful attention to their dress; their movements around the campus, and the issues they were prepared to openly support.

Drawing on these findings, and the literature reviewed in Chapters One and Two, the next section explores the nature of male power within PE ITE in more detail.

## Part One: Male Power and PE ITE

### 1. Physicality, skill, sexuality.

This research has focused on a particular social practice where the body and ideas about the physical are central. Existing accounts of PE ITE have largely concentrated on the reproduction of gender relations through the curriculum (eg. Dewar's work, see Chapter Two) but have not focused on the way in which the physical is central to the operationalisation of this curriculum. Chapters Five and Six described the part played by ideologies of male physicality in structuring the relationships between men, and between men and women, as well as informing the justification and rationale for the organisation and timetabling of the practical PE activities.

The lecturers' attitudes and beliefs about male and female students' physical capabilities, revealed in these justifications (see Chapter Five) demonstrate the strength and persistence of accepted and differentiated ideologies of physicality. Like the teachers in Scraton's (1989) and Griffin's (1985) research, many of the lecturers in my research differentiated between the men and the women students as two separate groupings, failing to recognise the differences which existed amongst the men, or amongst the women. In some incidences, the strong ideas of gender difference resulted in students being specifically grouped by sex even when there was no physical activity involved (see Chapter Seven).

The analysis in Chapters Six and Seven focused largely on the actions and behaviours of male students and staff, since it was 'doing' masculinity

which dominated much of the classroom interaction. The demonstration of a 'masculine' physicality, together with an overt display of heterosexual behaviour, were two key aspects of hegemonic masculinity revealed in the research, and which are discussed in more detail below.

#### *The ideology of male physicality*

Hegemonic masculinities in PE remain only to the extent that they are able to mobilize ideologies of the male and female body. Whilst conceptions about the 'idealised' feminine and masculine body are never static, and may change over time, as well as differing across cultures, and age, class or ethnic groups, dominant, stylised images are recognisable and reproduced through the work of ideology within institutions such as the media, the health service, sport, etc. A key feature of these ideologies is that they are constructed in terms of difference and polarisation: conceptions of an ideal feminine body rely on, and are in opposition to, a conception of idealised, male physicality.

This research has shown how gender differences in physical abilities and skills were reinforced, maintained and reproduced by practices within the two case study institutions. For example, at Heydonfield, this was done through the way the student cohort was divided up into male and female groups for basketball. Within PE ITE, a key form of hegemonic masculinity revolves around a particular body shape, the muscular mesomorph, which fits the accepted cultural views of masculinity, prescribing men as powerful, strong, confident, and dominant (Mishkind, et al, 1987). This 'idealised' conception of the male body shape is constructed so that it contrasts

directly with the idealised women's body, which incorporates a physicality whose primary objective is to look good for men (Scraton, 1987b). This 'emphasised femininity' (Connell, 1987), is a form which is orientated to accommodating the needs and interests of men, and may contradict with the kind of physicality required for success in many physical activities. Chapter Six, for example, noted how many of the women students went out of their way to 'feminize' their appearance through the wearing of short ankle socks, makeup and jewellery, though this was often totally inappropriate for the activities in which they were involved, and the kinds of physical responses required (1).

Images of the 'ideal' male body shape have also embedded within them ideas about the uses of the body. Men's 'appropriation' of muscles enable them to monopolize physical power in a variety of contexts, in public spheres (for example, in work (Cockburn, 1981), sport (Messner, 1990) and also in the private sphere, in their relationships with women (Kelly, 1988). In sporting contexts, Messner (1990) has argued that men's bodies become 'weapons', and their muscles 'instruments' of power, since, as Bryson (1990) suggests, it is particular games, the competitive, combative and physically violent games, where skilful performance involves the physical submission of one's opponents, which become defined as real 'men's' games.

Chapter Five described how both of the case study institutions preserved rugby and soccer as male-only spaces on the curriculum, and how the moves to co-education had proved problematic specifically in terms of these activities. Violent and aggressive play was considered 'natural', 'typical' and unproblematic behaviour from male PE students, but only

within all-male settings, as part of acceptable male physicality. In contrast, netball, a game specifically created to restrict physical movement and bodily contact was seen as a game suitable only for the women. However, despite the ideology of men's 'natural' physical superiority and aggressive natures, the reality for most men is very different. Most men do not 'fit' with what Connell (1987) has called the 'stylised and impoverished' forms of masculinity which are the cultural ideal (or ideals) of masculinity, nor are they actually involved in playing sport (although clearly these activities are supported, in terms of spectatorship, by large numbers of men).

Accounts such as Jackson (1990) have now begun to explore the process by which young boys acquire a 'He-Man masculinity' - a process which, he suggests, involves long hours of 'work' to develop what is seen as the 'natural' sporting or physical prowess of men and boys. The male appropriation of the weight-training room at Brickhill (see Chapter Five) can be seen as an example of the 'work' many men are prepared to put into trying to achieve (or maintain) the 'embodiment' of masculinity. Arguably, the male students (and staff) at Heydonfield and Brickhill could be described as a group of men who did embody the elements of hegemonic masculinity central in PE, in that they have been specifically selected partly on the basis of their physicality and prowess in 'male' sports (factors which are clearly closely linked).

Both institutions placed a heavy emphasis on students' levels of practical performance and ability - in the initial interview procedures, and in the

subsequent assessment of students on the courses (see Chapter Five). But as the previous chapters have showed, not all male students either physically 'embodied' masculinity, nor behaved in ways which characterised the 'lads' described in Chapter Seven. However, hegemonic masculinities operate to reduce the variability in masculine behaviour, and to induce conformity. Jackson (1990), for example, argues that it is through the process of male bonding that all men are 'locked into' confirming and reproducing patterns of behaviour which support and reproduce existing gender power relations, even though as individuals, they may not necessarily feel comfortable or happy with this kind of behaviour. This is not to deny the ways in which hegemonic masculinities can, and are challenged, but rather to emphasize the strength of the processes by which they are reproduced. As Jackson notes,

Male bonding is not just about group dynamics. It's a political process because it viciously exploits men's internal contradictions and uses these to sustain patriarchal power over other people....to survive [boys and men] learn to consent to the accepted codes and conventions of heterosexual masculinity..that [make] up the rules of the male club (Jackson, 1990, p.170).

Whilst not all male students behaved as the 'lads' did at Heydonfield, there was little evidence either, of any overt challenge to the disruptive or sexist behaviour of their peers.

The rules of the 'male club' within the ITE institutions in this research included the demands on male students to respond competitively and aggressively, not just in their involvement in 'male' activities, such as rugby or soccer, but also in their relationships and interactions with each



another. To display other forms of behaviour, such as showing an interest in activities outside those defined as 'male' (such as dance) risks men being excluded from the 'club', since this threatens to undermine a central tenet of hegemonic masculinity - heterosexuality.

If the findings of this research are endemic to institutions involved in the training of PE teachers more widely, PE ITE reproduces an ideology of male physicality as strong, aggressive and 'naturally' competitive, which influences and effects the experiences of all men. This also has direct consequences for the experiences of women within ITE in PE, whose physicality is defined in relation to, and in comparison with, male-defined standards. The close link between physicality, 'performance' and accepted notions of good PE teaching, means that women PE students are involved in a constant struggle to resist being defined in terms of 'other' (see below) (2).

The struggles involved in gaining and maintaining a 'male' identity within PE, are important not just in terms of the implications for the experiences of male students in training, but also in terms of how this affects their teaching strategies once they go on to work in schools. Although, as Chapter One noted, we have little research on the nature of boys' PE at school, there is some evidence to suggest that the elements of 'masculinity' revealed in this study, such as the use of competition and aggression as motivating strategies, are used in schools too (see Pollard, 1988). Pollard suggests there is a danger that masculinity may be a key strategy of control used (and abused?) by male PE teachers - what he calls the 'if you can't beat them, join them' strategy - where teachers simply

accept aggressive, violent or competitive behaviour from male pupils as something that they will be faced with regardless of their teaching, and so adopt the easiest coping strategy of using this themselves to engage pupils in the activities (see also Benyon, 1989).

Elements of this strategy could be seen in my research in the way in which competition and aggression, but also sexuality, were used in the relationships between male staff and students. The significance of this for women involved in teaching of PE, both at school and higher education level, (and indeed all women teachers) is apparent. Although it may be the case that women teachers can and do use their femininity and/or sexuality as a resource in their teaching (see Wolpe, 1988), I think that it is problematic to suggest that they are able to do so in the same way as men use their masculinity. This ignores the existing power differentials between men and women, which mean that male pupils or students can use masculinity to undermine women teachers regardless of their status (eg. see De Lyon, 1989). The previous chapters have shown how these latter kinds of interactions were common between some male students and women lecturers in the two case study institutions of this research. It is male sexuality, closely tied in with ideologies of male physicality, which forms a second major facet of hegemonic masculinity in PE ITE, and which dominated institutional life in this research. The next section analyses the ways in which this emerged within this research.

*Male sexuality in PE: heterosexual displays and homosexual taboos*

Implicit within the ideal of male physicality in PE is a dominant form of male sexuality. As Hargreaves (1986, p. 112) notes, 'muscularity is a... 'sign' of male power which also engenders sexuality', and it is heterosexuality which is defined as the accepted form of sexuality, and homosexuality which is constructed as deviant. Carrigan (et al, 1985, p.586/7) argue,

It is ...a fundamental element of modern hegemonic masculinity that one sex (woman) exists as potential sexual object, while the other sex (men) is negated as a sexual object. It is women, therefore, who provide heterosexual men with sexual validation, whereas men exist as rivals in both sexual and other spheres of life...It is, then, precisely within heterosexuality as it is presently organized that a central dimension of the power that men exercise over women is to be found.

Mahony (1985) suggests that the social construction of male sexuality revolves around three basic notions; objectification, fixation and conquest. Women bodies become the 'objects' of male sexual desire, and particular bits of women's bodies become the focus of attention. Breasts, legs, and faces are appraised and judged, independently of the person to which they belong, by male standards of sexual attractiveness, and if they are considered 'acceptable', become the focus of a sexual conquest. As Chapter One noted, current feminist analyses of schooling have identified the ways in which this kind of male sexuality is evident in boys' interactions with girls. Girls are subject to verbal abuse, have the size of their breasts commented upon (Jones, 1985) or are 'felt up', 'groped' or 'got at' by boys (Halson, 1989).

My research has shown how displays of sexuality, by both male students and lecturers, control and restrict women's involvement and experience in PE. Chapters Six and Seven described how women, regardless of the context, or their status, remain vulnerable to objectification by men, whether this be at a relatively 'harmless' level of comments, gestures, glances, or at the more extreme level of physical violence and abuse (3). My data and its theorisation extends the work carried out in other organisational contexts which shows how men's sexuality and organisational power are inextricably linked (eg. Collinson and Collinson, 1989).

However, it is important to stress that the social control of women by men through the use of sexual harassment is not a simple or straightforward one which renders women powerless to men, or one which necessarily includes all men in using their sexuality and power to control and put down women. Women are active in adopting both a variety of self-imposed 'policing' strategies aimed at controlling the definition of their sexuality, as well as strategies which resist and challenge male access to their bodies (see below). Despite this, men's physical power, aggression and sexuality remain an important facet of their social control over women; the threat and reality of male sexual violence operates to control, restrict and limit many women's lives (eg. Green, et al, 1990; Kelly, 1988). The close association of male sporting culture with aggression, homophobia and misogyny has suggested to some (eg. Curry, 1990; Melnick, 1992; Whitson, 1990), that the violence and aggression encouraged in male combative sport may have a spill-over effect into sexual violence towards women (4).

It is important to note, too, that hegemonic masculinity relies on tensions not just between the construction of a male versus female sexuality, but also between dominant and subordinated forms of male sexuality itself (Carrigan, et al, 1985). The historical construction of homosexuality has been a central challenge to the taken-for-granted assumptions that heterosexuality is the normal and acceptable form of male sexuality (Carrigan, et al, 1985).

The previous chapters have shown how this affects the practice within ITE PE. It puts pressure on men to demonstrate overtly their heterosexuality, in a whole host of different ways, including the way in which they present themselves in dress, and the way in which they relate to women, as well as to other men. Hegemonic heterosexuality not only ensures that men are in some way tied into the demonstration of heterosexuality, but also that they are involved in an active distancing from, and rejection of, any kind of activity, or behaviour which is remotely connected with a questioning of their heterosexuality. The close connection between male sport and PE and dominant images of masculinity may result in homophobic behaviour being more overt within the institutional settings of ITE in PE than other higher education contexts. Such an ethos does not just make PE ITE a hostile environment for any student, or member of staff, male or female, who is not heterosexual, but also prevents sexuality being recognised as a crucial educational issue for physical educationalists to address, a point which is discussed further below.

Ideologies of the physical, including sexuality, are central to the reproduction of hegemonic masculinities and male power in PE ITE. As

others have suggested (eg. Scraton, 1987b; Bryson, 1990) male physical power needs to be included in feminist analysis of men's power, alongside considerations of their social, economic and political power. This research has focused on two co-educational institutions with very different gender regimes. In different ways, both were involved in the reproduction of ideologies of female and male physicality constructed in terms of difference, and therefore in the reproduction of male physical power.

Since work such as Scraton's (1989) clearly shows that the reproduction of dominant gender ideologies is fundamental to single sex PE, this raises the question whether co-educational PE ITE provides a better alternative to its former organisation on single sex lines. Although Arnot (1984) is here talking about co-education at school level, the point she is making is pertinent here:

The content of what is taught, school ideologies about the relations between the sexes (irrespective of whether they are both present or one sex is absent), the structure of classroom life and the sex of the teacher, all play a part in either contributing or challenging boys' assumptions about sex differences and their own sexual identities. The presence of girls in mixed schools may have different effects on boys' self-image and their attitudes to women, but it is not clear that either type of school in and of itself will reduce the sexism of boys (Arnot, 1984, p.52) (my emphasis).

She concludes that the introduction of co-educational schooling has done less to challenge the reproduction of dominant gender relations but rather has modified the form of its transmission (Arnot, 1983).

In agreement, this research has shown that existing gender power relations have not disappeared with the reorganisation of PE ITE on co-educational lines, but that their form may have been modified from that which existed within single sex PE ITE institutions (Fletcher, 1984). Certainly, the effects of moving to co-education has had very different results for Brickhill as a former women's institution accepting men, than for Heydonfield as a former men's institution accepting women, as the previous chapters have described.

The acceptance of men into Brickhill has meant a shift in the reproduction of ideologies of femininity, away from those based on a restricted physicality and a 'controlled', modest sexuality, characteristic of the former women's PE colleges, (Fletcher, 1984; Scraton, 1989) towards one based on heterosexual attractiveness.

At Heydonfield, the move to co-education has done little to change what Arnot (1983, p.84) has called 'the socialization of boys into prejudiced men', although the processes involved in male identity work may now be different. As other research has demonstrated (EOC, 1982), a mixed environment may well be less violent and homophobic (as Steve, the head of PE, suggested, the 'girls' had had a civilising effect on the men) but this is only because men can use the women, rather than (or at least as well as) one another, in their masculine identity work. Arguably, the male students could be more 'civilized' because they were able to confirm their masculinity, not so much by violence and aggression towards each other, but by the use of women as negative reference points, both in terms of sexual objects, and 'inferior' performers.

For co-educational PE ITE to challenge, rather than reproduce gender power relations, there will need to be much more fundamental changes than the organisational change which had been externally imposed on Brickhill and Heydonfield (see Part Two below).

This section has discussed the ways in which particular forms of hegemonic masculinity were reinforced and reproduced within classroom interactions and the practical elements of the course. However, other forms of hegemonic masculinity are also supported and maintained through the dominant scientific knowledge base within PE. The association of the natural sciences with masculinity (eg. Birkes and Vines, 1987; Thomas, 1990), gives support to a different form of hegemonic masculinity from one based on physicality, which is considered below.

## 2. Knowledge in PE ITE

### *The body as machine*

Chapter Five showed how feminist knowledge has yet to be accepted as legitimate knowledge in teacher education, despite the now extensive evidence to show the effects of gender on teaching and learning in schools. PE ITE, specifically, is in a good position to challenge the strong existing gender ideologies about the male and female body which contribute to, and maintain gender power relations, since the physical is the focus of its work. However, as Chapter Five has shown, particular forms of knowledge about the physical have become seen as legitimate, valued and



important to the teaching of PE, and these operate to bolster and maintain gender ideologies. The dominant forms of knowledge within ITE courses are those which define PE in terms of the improvement of performance, and hence, the image of the body promoted within PE ITE has become a reductionist one, that of the 'body-as-machine' (McKay, et al, 1990).

Although the structure of the two undergraduate degrees at Brickhill and Heydonfield were very different, in both, socio-cultural knowledge remained optional in the final years of the degree (see Chapter Five). Hall (1989, p.1) argues that the PE profession now sees the body as an 'objective entity to be dissected, manipulated, treated, improved and utilized as an instrument for achievement' - PE has focused on the body, but at the same time, has disembodied the focus of its discourse, so that the body becomes a machine to be controlled by scientific regimes, in its quest to 'maintain' a healthy body, and to produce better and higher performances.

Adopting an understanding of PE based on a performance model has significant implications for the work practices of PE teachers, and as my research has shown, for gender power relations. The body most frequently scrutinized is that of the top class male athlete, for this represents the ultimate of what sports science can do in terms of developing sporting talent. The female athlete receives attention only in terms of how women's physiology differs and limits their performance, compared to men. Very often, women have not been included in scientific study samples for fear of 'contaminating' or skewing the results, and so students are introduced to facts about human performance, which are essentially facts about male sports performance. It is male characteristics, attributes and standards

which are accepted as the norm, from which women are viewed as more or less deviant.

Much of the 'scientific' research which has focused on the female athlete considers the possible 'detrimental' effects of exercise on their role as women - the effects of excessive exercise on menstruation, ovulation or pregnancy, or the 'masculinizing' effects of exercise on the female body (Lenskyj, 1986). Women and girls are defined as 'problems' who need to be 'encouraged' or motivated to get more involved in sport, and as a group, are defined as different and inferior to men and boys. However, the reality is that PE teachers' technocratic ideologies and limited focus on the development of skilled performance has failed to offer positive physical experiences for most boys as well as girls (see Armstrong, 1992), who have neither the physique, nor the high level of skills necessary to achieve success in the activities on offer.

#### *The 'heterosexy' body*

Contemporary images of women's involvement in exercise revolve around the improvements it can offer to their physique and their physical attractiveness (5). Women's involvement in physical activity is now far more acceptable, but this remains within tight boundaries about the kinds of activities which are deemed suitable. Lenskyj (1986) suggests that women are encouraged to take part in exercise to the extent that it will enhance their heterosexual attractiveness, which has replaced motherhood as the central underpinning of contemporary images of femininity.

Whilst there have always been pressures on women involved in sport to maintain their *feminine* appearance, Griffin (1992) argues that this is now much more extreme, and involves a presentation of women as 'heterosexy' - towards an image which incorporates a more explicit display of heterosexual appeal. The previous chapters have shown how this has contributed to women's often contradictory experiences within co-educational PE ITE. In many ways, as talented performers, their position on the courses actively challenges many of the stereotypes of passive, fragile 'feminine' physicality. However, as the classroom observations revealed, within a mixed setting, they continued to be defined first and foremost as women performers. Women students' experiences of practical PE Studies, together with the dominant knowledge forms within their courses, act to prevent them from moving beyond biological explanations of women's and girls' position in sport and physical activity, as well as serving to undermine their own confidence and development of skills.

The teaching of girls' PE remains problematic for many women. Both Leaman (1984) and Scraton (1989) found that female PE teachers have altered the PE curriculum on offer to adolescent girls to try and make it more meaningful and attractive to them, often adopting curriculum options which build on, and use the culture of 'femininity' to interest girls. If PE teachers are to be able to offer a PE which can move beyond this they will need access to knowledge forms which are able to explain gender in ways other than sex/physiological differences, and which can help them challenge accepted and limited definitions of women's physicality.

However, this will not be easy, for, as this research has shown, women students (and staff) are involved in actions and behaviour which often collude with, rather than challenge, patriarchal definitions of 'acceptable' femininity. For example, the 'feminizing' of the PE kit by some of the women students at Brickhill could be seen as a positive form of resistance to the institution's attempts to reinforce a responsible and 'controlled' form of female sexuality. However, this form of 'resistance' remained within the boundaries of accepted heterosexual femininity, and in this sense, the women students were 'both saved by, and locked within, the culture of femininity' (McRobbie, 1978, p.32). As Deem (1986a, p.138) notes, transforming existing gender relations will mean that women's identities will also need to change, and this will not be easy, since, 'it is not only men but women too who are desperate to hang on to certain valued differences'. Many of the women in my research held contradictory views about their identities, and personal relationships, which changing the patriarchal knowledge base perpetuated through PE ITE would not necessarily alter.

#### Co-educational PE - a move towards equal opportunities?

##### *A male-defined PE*

One of the aims of my research was to consider the implications of co-educational organisation for current ITE PE practice, including the way in which PE is defined. As Chapter One noted, a number of feminist analyses of PE at school level have identified the implications of changing to mixed

PE for the nature of the curriculum content (eg. Scraton, 1989; Talbot, 1986), stressing that it is a male-defined PE which becomes dominant.

My research shows that the same kind of process is in operation within PE ITE. The present ITE curriculum of both Brickhill and Heydonfield remained strongly rooted in their histories. Not surprisingly, given the very different natures of men's and women's PE, the transition to co-education at Heydonfield and Brickhill had not been smooth, although, as noted earlier, the processes of accommodating co-educational student cohorts differed significantly between the institutions. My research has highlighted how contemporary practice at Brickhill and Heydonfield was characterised by struggle and conflict in relation to the nature and content of the PE Studies curriculum, and that gender power was central to such conflict. Conflicts were evident not just at the level of debate and decision-making between lecturers, but also within the behaviour and responses of students to their course content. The previous chapters have shown how many of these have been, or are being, resolved in favour of male students and what has historically been 'male' PE. For example, the striking/fielding module at Brickhill, which had aimed to consider the games of rounders and softball as well as cricket, had been altered to cricket, because of complaints from the men; dance in the fourth year at Heydonfield had become optional, again, largely as a result of complaints by male students.

Whilst the process of curriculum change and development in PE has to be seen as a complex process, involving not just those within the profession (including students and lecturers in ITE) but also influences from outside

it (see Evans, 1990a; Williams, 1985), the practices of ITE in PE can, and do play a central part in the preparation of new teachers of the subject. If the two case study institutions in this research are representative of PE ITE more broadly, contemporary practice is playing an important part in the construction of a male-defined PE.

*Co-educational grouping: skill, experience, sexuality*

The previous chapters have described the consequences, particularly for women students, of the general failure of lecturers to address the differential, gender-based physical experiences of incoming men and women students. The major games in particular presented real gaps in both physical experience and skill level between men and women, although it would be wrong to deny the differences within the gender groups, as well as between them.

The kinds of scenarios described in Chapters Six and Seven, in the cricket sessions at Heydonfield, or the PGCE soccer sessions at Brickhill for example, mirror the ones described by Scraton (1989) and others (eg. Evans, 1989) who have analysing mixed PE sessions at school. Scraton draws on Deem (1984, p.xiii) who points out that, '...the sexes do not stand equal on admission to secondary school, and offering both girls and boys the same opportunities and facilities cannot lead to equality of opportunity, still less equality of outcome'. Without a recognition of the different physical abilities and experiences which boys and girls, men and women, bring to their PE sessions, whether this be at school level, or at ITE level, it

seems inevitable that co-educational groupings will be likely to be fraught with problems.

Male and female students entering ITE are likely to have had very different experiences of PE, and yet the evidence from this research suggests that ITE institutions are currently failing explicitly to address these and their implications for practice. To the extent that PE teachers are most likely to teach those activities in which they feel competent and enjoy themselves (Sikes, 1988), the nature of the practical work in ITE courses, as well as the experiences of students within these sessions, has crucial significance for the development of the subject in the future. The practical work in both case study institutions, in terms of the organisation and timetabling, as well as in terms of the emphasis placed upon personal performance, particularly in the undergraduate degrees, reinforced, rather than challenged existing gender stereotyping of PE activities (see Chapter Five).

But perhaps what is most significant about these sessions, is the way in which high level practical performance in physical activities (or at least in some activities) was seen unproblematically as the central factor in becoming a competent PE teacher. Not only is this belief questionable in terms of the skills and abilities which PE teachers actually use regularly (see Sports Council/College of St Marys, 1989), but linked with the dominant theoretical knowledge input students receive, this essentially reduces the teaching of PE unproblematically to the production of skilled performance. Students need to be helped to become sensitive to, and aware of the ways in which pupils (and themselves) are differently positioned -

because of their physiques, gender, culture, class, etc - to benefit from, enjoy, and be successful in PE as it is currently constructed. They also need to be encouraged to become involved in helping its transformation.

#### *Resistance and challenge to patriarchal power relations in PE*

Whilst gender remains a largely unacknowledged feature of the teaching and learning process within ITE PE, it was a crucial part of the way in which the process was experienced, by staff as well as students. Women PE students in my research experienced contemporary training in very different ways to the sexless, 'Peter Pan' world of ITE described by Fletcher (1984).

The previous chapters have shown how heterosexuality is a crucial aspect of contemporary practice, and is used as a means of control over the actions of women (as well as having a constraining effect on the actions of men too). Women who display too much initiative or skill are likely to have their confidence subtly undermined by comments, looks or gestures from men, which serve to remind them that they are first and foremost women students. Co-educational PE grouping is problematic in that it provides a context for women to become vulnerable to sexual innuendo, comments and leers. Some of the formal policies within the institutions contributed to this process, for example, at Brickhill women students were required to wear tight, shape-revealing leotards for their gymnastics, which many found embarrassing and inhibiting.

However, it is important to avoid an overly deterministic analysis of male power within ITE in PE. Chapter One noted the importance of cultural



resistance within the reproduction theories of education. Masculinity and femininity are not produced without resistance, negotiation and opposition. The reactions of women students and staff to the sexualisation of situations at their expense were varied, and not straightforward, and it was not the case that the women allowed themselves to be controlled completely by patriarchal assumptions of men's and women's sexuality, physicality and capabilities. Neither was it the case that all men were involved actively in actions which put down women.

Women PE students restricted and controlled 'access' to their bodies by men by using a number of strategies, and actively resisted male definitions of their physicality and sexuality. For example, the wearing of teeshirts in gymnastics at Brickhill was a strategy which enabled the women students to perform much more comfortably in a mixed group, and some women students called for gender-specific practical grading in staff-student committee meetings, to challenge what they saw as the unfair assessment procedures.

However, the women's strategies of challenging male power and sexuality were based on expedient cost-benefit judgements (Skeggs, 1991). For example, Chapter Seven described how women 'booed' the male lecturer who suggested that the men and women should be split for basketball, but they were not prepared to challenge him openly; their responses indicate the limits within which they were willing to compromise in order to gain their educational 'ticket'. However, other examples show the extent to which women are prepared to resist, even despite enormous pressures, and how they are often successful in challenging patriarchal assumptions. Chapter Seven, for example, showed how Anne, one of the female lecturers at

Heydonfield, was prepared to resist considerable pressure from Steve, to become the next chair of PE. Challenging male power in this overt way is always a struggle, and carries with it the risk of being labelled as a 'trouble-maker'. Whilst Anne did gain the position of authority, it is unlikely that doing the job would be an easy one, or one in which she would have Steve's support. As Chapter Two noted, many women teachers do not apply for promotion for exactly this reason - having to cope with the negative attitudes and reactions of male colleagues.

*The relationships between gender, race and class*

Despite the fact that gender is a powerful structuring and ideological force, it is not the only factor which shapes women's (or men's) lives, and although this research has focused specifically on gender, it has highlighted the need for research which considers the ways in which social class and race inequalities accentuate and affect the gendered experiences of staff and students within ITE in PE.

In many ways, women PE students have already challenged existing definitions of femininity and set themselves apart from most of their female peers, in that they have successfully continued their involvement in physical activity after leaving school, and chosen to enter a career linked to this. Since women's social class is influential in their continuation of physical activity (eg. see Matheson, 1991), an analysis of women's experiences of PE or sport must acknowledge the interrelationship of class and gender. It is largely middle class, white women and girls who have been able to overcome the practical and ideological constraints which

inhibit large numbers of other women from being involved in sport and physical activity. Whilst this research was not able specifically to assess the social class backgrounds of students, the majority of the women were privileged both in terms of class background, and in terms of their previous successful educational experiences (see Appendix Two). There is a need for further research which explores the potentially different, and specific experiences of sport and PE, of women from different class backgrounds.

Also, since all but a very small number of students were white, this study was able to provide little insight into the specific experiences of black PE students (or staff). This research has highlighted the extreme under-representation of black students and staff (male or female) within PE ITE, and although it has shown glimpses of how racism, as well as sexism, are reproduced within the practices of PE ITE, it also identifies this as a crucial area for further research (6). Recent studies such as Siraj-Blatchford (1991), which have begun to explore black students' experiences of ITE, are essential and need to be extended. There is a need for further research which focuses not only on the experiences of those who are accepted into ITE, but which also explores the perceived (and real) barriers and inhibitors which act to prevent many (and especially black) young people from applying for PE teaching as a career in the first place.

Whilst acknowledging the need for accounts which recognise the complex ways in which race, class, age, sexuality etc affect the way in which gender is experienced, it is also crucial not to lose sight of the way in which gender oppression affects all women. Whilst it is clear that hegemonic

masculinity operates to disadvantage some boys and men, this research has shown how easily the confidence of all women, regardless of physical competence, status or social class, can be undermined through men's power over their sexuality and physicality, which can and does operate independently of other relations of oppression.

Having analysed the major findings of this research in the first part of this chapter, the second part considers some of the policy implications arising from these.

**Part Two: Policy implications and future directions.**

Although feminist research aims to describe and analyse how gender inequalities are perpetuated and reproduced through social practice, it also attempts to highlight avenues for feminist action and change. Feminist theories must provide guides to action, as well as guides to understanding gender inequality if they are to fulfil their political aims of helping to change and improve women's lives (Acker, 1987). The previous chapters have described how contemporary practice in ITE in PE continues to reinforce existing gender power relations, and is involved in reproducing new forms. However, the research has also shown the potential of ITE in PE for challenging ideologies of femininity and masculinity, and for transforming future PE practice in schools. Whilst I have shown how gender ideologies are firmly embedded within the everyday practices and experiences of ITE in PE, I have also provided evidence of ways in which these were being challenged and resisted. PE ITE does reinforce gender power relations, but there is always resistance and negotiation in the way in which 'masculinity' and 'femininity' are reproduced. Hegemonic masculinity is never total, and is always a site of struggle.

Teachers have had an important part to play in the process of challenging gender inequality. Similarly, teacher educators have an important part to play in this process, in shaping both the attitudes, value positions, and the practices, of future groups of teachers, although, as described in Chapter Four, the recent changes imposed on teacher education may reduce their impact in relation to that of practising teachers, as courses become more school based.

Chapter One described the development of the different strands of feminist theory within education and sport. Since there is no general agreement amongst feminists about the nature of women's oppression, there continues to be, not surprisingly, debate about what change can, or should be brought about, and how this should be done. Several authors have identified a dichotomous view of change within education: either an 'equal opportunities' approach, originating from liberal feminism, and which is concerned with issues of access to all educational benefits, seeking more 'moderate' changes within the existing capitalist patriarchal structure, or an 'antisexist' approach, which views change in a much more comprehensive and structural way, and which 'places the relationship between patriarchy, power and women's subordination at the centre of their thinking' (Weiner, 1985, p.9).

However, the problem with this dichotomous view of change strategies is that,

Reform and change are often counterposed to each other as though reform were not really worth the effort because it does seek to alter things within the existing framework, whereas change is conceived of as something much more radical and hence inherently worthwhile and worth waiting for, even though the scale and nature of what is being sought is such that there is little or no possibility of them being achieved in the foreseeable future (Deem, 1986a, p.139).

I would agree with Deem, when she suggests that whilst 'visions of radical social transformations' are much needed, these are not going to happen (except by widescale violence or force) unless there is a measure of

consent to the changes taking place. So whilst this research concludes that change at the level of ITE alone will be insufficient, and that a feminist analysis of ITE in PE needs to be situated within a structural analysis of capitalist patriarchy, nevertheless, it acknowledges that short term strategies can be useful. As Whyld (1983, p.297) writes, 'working within the system does not mean giving up the fight to change it'. However, what is important is that strategies for change should not simply remain at the level of equal opportunities initiatives within ITE but work towards the transformation of the structures of gender power more widely. For example, Chapter Five noted the problems within the inclusion of a section of work on 'equal opportunities' and gender inequality within the Professional Studies area of the ITE courses, whilst leaving the overall course knowledge structures and institutional ethos unchallenged.

However, such wider and fundamental change will not be easy, for although it will entail struggle and negotiation by women, ultimately it will be men and men's lives which will have to change. As Deem (1986a, p.147/148) notes,

Very many of the constraints women experience ...are crucially connected to the way men live, work, act and think....Changing women's social position.... requires the kinds of changes which will dramatically affect men's power, lives and rights.

Whilst there is evidence to suggest that women are making valuable moves towards controlling the definition of their physicality and sexuality - through, for example, their increased participation in exercise and sport, the setting up of community health groups, well woman clinics etc, there is

## 1. Curriculum knowledge and pedagogy in ITE in PE

### *Equality issues*

Issues of equality must be given a greater legitimacy and visibility within ITE courses, as well as more generally within the institutions in which they are based. There is a need to ensure that all students are required to study gender issues as a compulsory, central and assessed part of their training. However gender work with students must not remain embedded within a discourse which defines women as deficient and in need of 'special' treatment. Education, schooling, PE and masculinity needs to be seen as the problem, not women and girls.

There is also a need to extend work on gender equality to include issues of sexuality (Griffin, 1989; 1992; Kelly, 1992). As this research has shown, without a consideration of the way in which sexuality operates as a key structure of gender power, anti-sexist initiatives will inevitably be limited in their effect. Addressing such issues may not be easy, particularly given the homophobic atmosphere within PE ITE revealed here, but there may be openings towards this kind of discussion within PE Studies (see below).

In agreement with the EOC (1989) survey recommendations, gender awareness does need to be structured into students' teaching practice experience. Whilst this raises the question of whether it is realistic to expect students to demonstrate a sensitivity to gender issues on teaching practice (as well as raising questions about how this might be assessed) given their



powerless position and their propensity to adopt survival strategies, there is encouraging evidence from one research study that this would be a worthwhile initiative (see Coldron and Boulton, 1990).

Coldron and Boulton's attempts to structure gender awareness into the assessment of teaching practice were very well received by some teachers in school, who saw this as positive support for their own struggles to address these issues, and it resulted in gender equality being firmly established as a legitimate educational issue. Cooperation, support and the building of networks between individuals centrally involved with 'equality work' are important in helping to prevent isolation and alienation which can often be experienced by individuals working within their own institutions. However, positive outcomes such as those in Coldron and Boulton's work rely heavily on the nature and practices of the individual schools. Since as research shows, few teachers are actively involved in supporting gender equality work, including those in PE, the implementation of these kinds of initiatives will be far from straightforward.

Work which involves the students in a understanding of gender equality needs to be staggered throughout the course, rather than in a single block, and raised within all the different components of the course (eg. Subject Studies, Professional Studies, etc - see the discussion on PE Studies below). The limitations of a short, 'one-off' course on equal opportunities has already being described in this research (see Chapter Five). These kinds of changes will not be straightforward or automatic, especially if the largely disinterested and entrenched attitudes of PE lecturers revealed in this research are endemic within teacher education.

The work must be structured so that the issues are raised in a progressive way, so that the level of discussion matches the level of professional development of the student and recognises students' particular concerns at specific times during the course (Shah, 1989). Sikes (1991) has suggested that one of the ways in which input can be structured 'from where students are' is through the use of life histories or biographical approaches.

Teaching methods are a crucial consideration when sensitive issues such as gender or race are under discussion (see below). As Sikes (1991) concludes, whilst the mass lecture may be a cheap way of raising issues with large numbers of students, and one which may be increasingly used as a teaching method, it remains incongruent with the non-hierarchical principles of anti-sexist teaching, and a largely inadequate forum for this kind of discussion. A promising strategy used by Coldron and Boulton (1990) and Daniels (1989) with PGCE students is the student-led conference. Daniels concludes that the process of student-tutor collaboration involved in such a venture represented a step towards the very important, wider aim of breaking down the traditional hierarchical pedagogical relationships between staff and students in ITE. The presentation of the conference by students to their peers also helped to make the issues much more accessible and acceptable than might have been the case from a top-down delivery by tutors.

This research has identified how little attention is given to helping students understand the complexities of gender (and race) inequalities and how they are perpetuated through education and schooling. The same seems to be true, however, of social class and special needs issues. Teacher

educators must consider how to make clear and careful links between work on gender, and that on race, class and special needs issues. However, whilst making links is important, this should not be at the expense of clarifying the very specific facets of the different structural aspects of inequalities of gender, race and class, as well as between these, and those individually based special needs.

PE students also need to be sensitized to the way in which physical ability plays a central part in determining access to, and positive experiences of, their subject as currently constructed. Mixed ability teaching strategy remains a central and problematic issue which I feel the PE profession has not yet adequately addressed.

#### *Feminist pedagogy*

Whilst the above changes to the curriculum content would be necessary changes, they need to be situated within wider pedagogical changes within ITE. Discussions about the development of a feminist pedagogy have been scarce within Britain, and especially so within PE (but see Bunch and Pollack, 1983; Culley and Portuges, 1985). Dewar (1991b) argues that feminist pedagogy is concerned with challenging the assumptions embedded in a traditional view of teaching and learning, where the teacher is assumed to be the 'expert', presenting objective, rational and value free knowledge to willing, accepting and largely passive students. Feminist teaching, she suggests, must

create ways of learning where theory and practice are integrated and where learning is designed to allow

students to be critical of, and reflect about, the knowledge that they are learning and the conditions under which they are learning it' (p.69/70).

She does recognise though, the difficulties of putting such pedagogy into practice. Given the existing nature of pedagogical relationships revealed in this research, and particularly the experiences of women lecturers, I would suggest that whilst the adoption of such a pedagogy may provide less rigid classroom relationships, it may not necessarily result in improved experiences for women (7). However, ITE institutions must be concerned with changing the pedagogy of their own practice, to incorporate women's circumstances and interests as well as men's (Leonard, 1989).

#### *Working with men*

Negative reactions from male students to gender work reported in the literature (eg. Coldron and Boulton, 1990; Daniels, 1991; Sikes, 1991) match those I have experienced personally in my teaching about gender, and raise questions about student grouping, female-only space, and the focus and scope of anti-sexist work with men. This research has shown how there are problems with both mixed PE classes, and with female-only groups, where there is no sensitivity on the part of the lecturer to gender and its effects on classroom experiences and ethos. As suggested earlier, the debate should not remain focused on grouping issues, but about ways in which male power can be challenged in its different forms, including those in single sex, as well as co-educational settings. To argue for a return to single sex PE ITE would not be either possible, or desirable as a long term goal of feminism. Co-educational ITE PE classes will remain, so it is

vital that there are positive interventions and strategies by lecturers to challenge the male domination of such contexts. For issues of femininity, masculinity and sexuality to be discussed openly within the PE classrooms will require professional development and consciousness raising on the part of staff, although it may be that this process begins from the 'bottom up' too, through contributions from students.

However, whilst challenging the nature and ethos of the co-educational classroom will remain a long term goal within ITE, this research has clearly shown that there may well be times when women-only groups may be appropriate, if chosen as a positive, enabling and short term strategy. Given the evidence presented here, which shows how men dominate the space, activities, and ethos of mixed sessions, such spaces are vital for women, for both lecturers and students. Women-only sessions may be appropriate for particular practical activities within PE Studies, but also need to be adopted for discussion/talks/presentations at both an informal, and formal level, for wider groups of women within higher education institutions, to support the development of female collectivity.

This leaves the question of how to work with the men. Connell (1989) warns that a major problem involved in the raising of consciousness with male students in higher education is that much feminist material leaves men feeling guilty (or sometimes aggressive and angry) and unable to see any real avenues for change. It may be that the more recent publications on boys and men, which analyse the social construction of masculinity, will provide more accessible material for male PE students, and provide an

opening for them to become involved in this work. Clearly, it is important that male tutors become involved here too.

## 2. The nature of PE

### *The PE curriculum*

Teacher education needs to question the nature of PE which it supports. This research has shown the strength of the institution's historical background in determining the shape and content of the practical curriculum. Despite differences in terms of gender, PE remains centrally involved in socializing children into the adult (and male dominated) world of sport. Games continue to dominate not just the boys' PE curriculum, but also the girls' (eg. Physical Education Association, 1987; Secondary Heads Association, 1991), reflecting, as this research has shown, the established practices of teacher education.

Scruton (1989) argues that 'PE needs to take a lead in the encouragement of a redefinition of male-dominant sport', and that, although idealist in its construction,

change within the institution of sport has to be a long term objective for feminist struggle given that sport is an arena centrally involved in the reinforcement and reproduction of hegemonic masculinity' (p. 482).

I would agree with this, and suggest teacher education has an important role to play in the process of challenging the nature of PE at school, through the activities it includes in the curriculum for PE students, and

through the ethos and philosophy it espouses within its courses. There are already positive moves from some of the sports governing bodies themselves to develop sport forms more suitable for children and co-educational groups, such as new-image (non-contact) rugby, mini-cricket, korfbal etc. Yet worryingly, there was little evidence in this research that students were introduced to these in any systematic way.

However, whilst changing the game forms to make them more accessible to children may be an important step forward, this does not in itself challenge the male dominance of sport. Hargreaves (1986, p.117) suggests that,

Perhaps the greatest practical threat to male hegemony in sport comes from both men and women who are involved in alternative sports which stress health, enjoyment, cooperation and de-emphasize destructive competition. Such sports are proliferating, as exemplified by the aerobics, jogging, fun-running, body-building, body-popping and tap-dancing crazes, and the increase in family sport and mixed community recreation for people of all ages.

The available evidence from this research, and elsewhere (Sports Council/ College of St Paul and St Mary, 1989) suggests that ITE in PE currently contributes little to this process, and continues to produce teachers with both a relatively narrow range of skills, and a largely uncritical and protective view of PE and its contribution to children's education.

PE students need to be involved in critical debates about the nature and form of the PE curriculum, and its relationship to the differentiated and gendered community-based leisure opportunities and experiences available

for young men and women. This will involve a shift in ITE philosophy away from the production of PE teachers primarily concerned with the teaching of specific sports, towards one which places the educational process and physical activity more broadly at the centre of children's PE experience.

It will entail the adoption of a much more open attitude on the part of existing teachers and teacher educators about the changing role of the PE teacher (8). This will inevitably raise questions about the kinds of people we select for teacher education courses. Whilst the profession will still need physically skilled individuals, it must look for more than this in its recruitment procedures. It needs to attract a much more diverse group of individuals, not just in terms of race, age, or social class, but in terms of attitudes towards, and experiences of, physical activity in its broadest context.

#### *Challenging technocratic PE*

If there is to be a move away from a performance-led PE, there will need to be a major challenge to the scientific, bio-behavioural knowledge which currently dominates the theoretical PE Studies curriculum. This may be helped as the college-based parts of teacher education courses diminish within the new government regulations (see DFE, 1992b), and there is increasing pressure for this work to be relevant to the concerns of students' work in schools (9).

The daily practicalities and realities of teaching PE, for both male and female PE students, raise problems and issues which will best be resolved



through access to knowledge able to explore the social relations of teaching, rather than that which aims simply to improve performance. It may be that such changes in course structure will have the advantage of breaking down the hierarchies between theory and practice, building on the students' own knowledge of schooling and teaching, in the tradition of the teacher-as-researcher. The challenge for PE teacher educators will be to work alongside teachers in school to help students to reflect on their teaching at a level which extends beyond classroom management strategies and the development of skilled performance.

If gender equality is to have a high profile within these reconstructed courses, there is an urgent need for consciousness-raising amongst PE teachers in school, and, as this research has shown, with teachers at ITE level. Initially, this should involve setting up networks of those educators centrally involved in equality issues to share good practice, and to provide support and encouragement for one another. The recent European-funded national conference on gender issues in teacher education at Sheffield Polytechnic showed how many feminists are currently working to transform teacher education, and demonstrated many examples of good practice which do already exist on which to build (10).

### **3. Sexuality, bodies, health**

#### *PE clothing*

Issues of sexuality must become overt, legitimate issues for all PE students in training. Mixed PE raises important issues of sexuality which

students must be helped to discuss sensitively. However this may well be difficult given that many students find sexuality difficult to talk about as an abstract issue, and may still be struggling with their own sexuality. An immediate practical consideration must be to allow women students to control their own presentation in practical sessions. Scraton (1989, p.480) concluded her own research that this was vital in terms of girls at school level. Teachers, she suggests, 'need to develop a greater sensitivity to and awareness of the pressure on young women regarding body shape and appearance', and must allow girls to have effective control over the presentation of their physicality in PE classes. This is not going to happen whilst women PE students themselves, have little control over the presentation of their own physicality.

The move to co-educational ITE in PE has resulted in issues of sexuality being raised (even if they are not yet always formally acknowledged or recognised). Historically, both men's and women's PE teacher education have enforced the wearing of a specific set of clothing for practical work. This was not just for practical and safety reasons, but was also closely tied up with the idea of discipline and 'standards' and the development of group identity (Fletcher, 1984). Clothing is a central aspect of male bonding and group identity, and often acts as a key mechanism for excluding women (Jackson, 1990; Sabo, 1985) (11). These clothing traditions remained in evidence at both Brickhill and Heydonfield, and most of the other institutions I visited as part of this research had specific clothing regulations too. Whilst agreeing that there is a need for appropriate PE clothing on practical and safety grounds, teacher educators in PE do need to question the extent to the compulsory enforcement of particular dress

supports other, more questionable, ends. Is this, for example, compatible with the aim of producing autonomous, reflective and responsible professionals? To what extent does enforced wearing of traditional female PE clothing, at both school and college level, which today revolves around the display of the body (see Haug, et al, 1987), operate to prevent the development of physically confident and competent women and girls?

However, the issue of clothing for PE and physicality is not just important in terms of girls' and women's experiences of physical activity, but has implications, too, for the pressures felt by boys and men to attain the 'ideal' heterosexual male bodily norms. For example, the common practice amongst boys' PE of dividing teams into 'skins' (ie. those without shirts) and 'shirts', is likely to cause embarrassment to boys who do not fit the accepted 'masculine' mesomorphic body image (see Jackson, 1990). Male teachers need to be sensitive to ways in which their practice can so easily contribute to boys feeling ill at ease with their bodies. Student teachers also need to be sensitized to the crucial and important issues of cultural and religious differences in relation to dress and physicality, if they are to be able to offer a positive PE experience to all of their pupils (Temple, 1992).

#### *Touch, handling and support*

The issue of sexuality in mixed PE classrooms extends beyond the level of clothing and presentation of the body, to include the 'support', handling and 'touch' of children which often forms an important aspect of a PE teachers' work. Other professions requiring the handling of the 'client',

such as physiotherapy, or medicine, have well established codes of conduct. As Brackenridge (1990) notes, this is not the case with professionals working within the area of sport or PE, although some preliminary work has been done (eg. BISC, 1989). Whilst the potential for abuse of power clearly exists within same-gender teacher/pupil relationships, the sources of exploitation are extended within co-educational PE settings (see Brackenridge, 1990). Teacher education in PE needs to address this as a crucial issue, and work with students, as well as teachers in school, to develop and clarify guidelines for good practice. Links need to be made between this work arising specifically from PE, and attempts to raise students' awareness of wider issues relating to child abuse etc (12).

#### *Health and exercise*

PE has traditionally been seen to play an important role in the development of healthy lifestyles and this remains a contemporary concern for the profession (see Chapter Five). The profession, however, does need to question the kinds of knowledge it presents to students in relation to health, exercise and physique. Tinning (1985) questions whether PE contributes to the 'cult of slenderness' which pressurizes women to diet and exercise to extremes to gain an acceptable, hetersexually attractive, 'feminine' body. Although I know of little research which has focused specifically on women PE students, there is enough circumstantial evidence to suggest that these kinds of pressures are keenly felt, and may have been intensified within co-educational institutions (13).

Students need to be helped critically to assess the contribution which PE and physical activity can make to a healthy lifestyle, and move beyond the individualistic and elitist conceptions which are currently so strong. They need to be made aware of, and helped to critique, the pressures on women as well as men to attain 'ideal' feminine or masculine bodies through exercise and diet, but also through more dangerous practices such as drug-abuse, excessive dieting or exercise. PE teachers in school need to make more positive efforts to contribute to cross-curricular initiatives in this area, and to work alongside other teachers on issues of health, well being and leisure.

#### 4. Future research

In conclusion, this study raises a number of avenues where further research is needed:

##### *Policy changes to teacher education*

As teacher education is set to become more school-based over the next few years, there is an urgent need to chart the many changes which will undoubtedly be made to existing practice. In particular, these changes need to be carefully monitored in relation to their impact on debates and discussion on gender, and equal opportunity initiatives in education more broadly. There is a need to focus specifically on the wider mentoring role which teachers in school will play within initial training: who gets chosen and how, what kinds of attitudes and values do they hold, and what is the nature, if any, of their training? Alongside this, there must be ongoing

monitoring of when, where and how issues of gender are raised with students.

*The experiences of women lecturers*

Co-educational PE ITE has specific implications for the experiences of women lecturers as this research has shown. There is a need for further, indepth qualitative research which focuses on women's experiences of teaching within PE in higher education institutions. Co-educational PE ITE also raises serious implications for women in relation to staffing, and there needs to be a monitoring of the appointments made in the future, as well as further research on the sexual division of labour within the staffing of ITE in PE, and the implications of this for the development of the subject (see Appendix Two).

*Feminist teachers*

Most teachers are not committed to gender equality nor would identify themselves as feminists (see Chapter Two). However, some are and some do - and yet we know little about the factors which have contributed to the development of their political stance, or how their experiences of teaching and education are affected and shaped by this. There is a need for research which explores the experiences of women (and men) who do identify their political stance as feminist, and particularly those who are working within PE.

Middleton's (1989) research, for example, with four feminist teachers, suggests that each had had personal experiences of discrimination or marginality which helped generate the preconditions for the adoption of feminist educational theories in later life. But also, each had had access to feminist theory at a time, and in a form, which enabled to them conceptualise their personal sense of oppression as a wider social issue. There is scope here for this research to be developed within PE settings, as well as work which evaluates the outcomes of equality work with student teachers (eg. Coldron and Boulton, 1988; 1990).

#### *The National Curriculum in PE*

Research is needed on the implications of the National Curriculum for boys' and girls' future experiences of PE, both at primary and secondary levels, and for teacher education (14). The 'flexibility' introduced in the final orders at Key Stage three (DES, 1992b), which back-track on the working group's suggestion that dance or gymnastics should be compulsory in each year, may have significant implications for the future shape of the ITE curriculum, and can be seen as an erosion of central elements of women's PE.

The current government's 'market economy' philosophy for schools (eg. see Ball, 1991b), with its insistence on the publication of school examination results by which comparisons between schools can be made, will inevitably bring pressure to bear on the work of secondary PE departments to demonstrate their 'quality' too. Since this will be, in the main, without the help of formal examinations (GCSE and A level PE are increasing, but

most schools do not yet run them) this may result in an even greater emphasis on the development of skilled performers, at the expense of other aims. This could result in an increase of the kinds of crude gender stereotyping of abilities which was revealed in my research (if performance is stressed, Steve did not want the girls to mess up the soccer sessions for the men!).

There is also a need for future research into the way in which primary PE is delivered to boys and girls within the National Curriculum framework, and importantly, how ITE prepares future teachers for this role. Already primary teachers have expressed some concern about their capabilities to fulfil the requirements in this subject (eg. Williamson, 1990) (15).

#### *Race, racism and PE*

Research on race, racism and teacher education is a central area for future research. Much feminist work has been rightly criticised for its focus on white women's experiences, values and lives. Teacher education is a largely middle class/ lower middle class, white arena, and the research evidence available suggests that issues of race and racism, like gender, have had only a marginal impact on the curriculum (eg. ARTEN, 1988; Shah, 1989). Research is needed which concentrates on the physical activity experiences of women and men from different ethnic and racial groups, as well as that which specifically analyses the relationship between racism, PE and teacher education.



### *The empowerment of women and girls through physical activity*

Although this research has shown women's experiences of co-educational PE ITE to be contradictory, nevertheless, their choice of PE as a career suggests an overall positive experience of sport and physical activity. We need further research which identifies the positive, empowering experiences gained for women and girls through participation in physical activity, including PE, to build on existing work (eg. Wimbush and Talbot, 1988). This research needs to make links between class, race and gender.

### *Sexuality and gender power relations*

My research has identified sexuality as an important element of male power. There is a need for further research which explores the definitions of sexuality which are currently being made available to young people, including those from the formal and hidden curriculum of schools, and other educational institutions. Halson's (1989; 1991), and Mac An Ghail's (1991) work have usefully extended earlier existing work such as Mahony's (1985), by focusing closely on the construction of dominant forms of male sexuality. Further research is needed to analyse the nature and extent to which intending teachers are prepared to understand sexuality, and the part it plays in structuring and constraining educational practice.

### *Masculinity and boys' PE*

The social construction of masculinity and its link to PE, physicality, sexuality and power have been identified in this study. There are few

studies which have focused specifically on the role of schooling in the reproduction of dominant forms of masculinity (see Chapter One). There is an urgent need for research which explores the relationship between this and PE at school level. Chapter Three of this research identified some of the issues, limitations and difficulties raised for me as a female researcher in a mixed PE setting. It points to the need for men to become involved in research on PE which places masculinity and power at the centre of the analysis. This would allow access to contexts not normally open to women (such as male-only social contexts, changing rooms etc). A starting point would be to involve male PE students in small research projects with this focus as part of their training.

The above are suggestions where future research is needed. The second part of this chapter has also attempted to identify both short and longer term 'reform' strategies which could usefully be effected in future policy in PE teacher education if real challenges to existing gender power relations are to be made. At the same time, it has also recognised that there will have to be change at a wider, much more fundamental level, if the relations between men and women are to change.

#### **Concluding remarks.**

As Chapter One noted, some feminists have questioned the extent to which the development of feminist theoretical work is either a useful, or worthwhile, enterprise. As McRobbie (1982) notes,

..the distinction is made between those who are primarily involved in, and committed to, on the one

hand 'the practical' and on the other 'the intellectual'. Women whose work involves periods of intense privatized labour, like writing, painting or reading, are seen as less committed than those who spend the entire working day, and often more, working with other women - battered women, delinquent girls, school girls or isolated housewives (McRobbie, 1982, p.50).

However, like McRobbie, I would suggest that the development of research such as this, which aims to develop and extend feminist knowledge, is 'as valid a mode of political engagement as any other'. This research project has not been something separate from my teaching and interactions with students, but has informed, and has been informed by, my discussions and talk with them. Feminist practice can take many different forms, and as McRobbie concludes, what is important it that we look for the articulation between the different forms, rather than the intrinsic merit of one over the other.

Hall (1988) argues that the development of feminist critique, research and theory, including that which focuses on the social contexts of PE and sport, has an important part to play in the process of change:

Feminist scholarship, and the social movement from which it grows, are a direct frontal attack on the masculinity-as-culture discourse of gender and sport...Surely but slowly the discourse of gender and sport is finally moving away from an exclusive and restrictive focus on women and femininity to the nature of gendered social behaviour and the impact of gendered social structures on *both* sexes (Hall, 1988, p.338).

This research has attempted to contribute to that process.

## FOOTNOTES

### Introduction

1. Mills (1959) has suggested that the distinction between personal troubles and public issues is central to a sociological imagination. A sociological analysis recognises the effects of the structural aspects of society on the practice of individuals, whilst not denying their agency. Although there are disagreements amongst feminists about the use of the concept patriarchy (see Ramazanoglu, 1989a; Walby, 1990), it is agreed that society is currently constructed around the interests of men, rather than women.
2. The move to co-education was a result of European Law - the European Law of Equal Treatment - rather than as a result of a policy directive from the Department of Education and Science (DES) (see Talbot, 1990b). Some ITE institutions have had as few as five mixed sex cohorts emerging from their four year cohorts.

### Chapter One

1. Attempts to categorise the full range of feminist perspectives in terms of their philosophical and political bases, the insights they offer to an understanding of women's oppression, and their limitations, have now been documented (eg. see Abbott and Wallace, 1990; Arnot and Weiner, 1987; Connell, 1987; Segal, 1987; Tong, 1989; Walby, 1990), although as feminist theory becomes more developed, such categorisations are becoming somewhat simplistic or arbitrary.
2. Some feminists have argued that mainstream theory is better seen as 'malestream' theory, since it has been largely produced by men, and is about men's, rather than women's experiences.
3. Although some socialist feminists recognise the importance of sexuality in gender relations and provide detailed analyses (eg. Scraton, 1989; Walby, 1990; Wolpe, 1988) much of the work within this perspective does not consider this aspect.
4. See Brittan and Maynard (1984) for a good overview of race and class, and gender and class theories.
5. The relationship between sport and PE is often confused, and the terms used interchangeably. I am using the term PE here to describe those activities which are taught on the school 'PE' curriculum, or the ITE courses students would select to train to become a teacher of school PE. I am aware that I may well be contributing to the low status of PE in schools by reviewing research material about it within this section, alongside sport, rather than within the earlier education section. There are no strong justificatory reasons for this, other than since there is a scarcity of material generally about PE, and there are common features between this and the work focusing on sport (they are both concerned primarily with the body) I feel it is more appropriate to organise the material in this way.

6. Some authors continue to write gender-blind accounts within the sociology of PE, despite the extensive feminist accounts produced over the last decade or so which has critiqued such a position (eg. see Sparkes' 1988, 1990, micro-political analysis of power within a PE department).
7. 'Women First: the Female Tradition in English Physical Education, 1880-1980' is the title of a book by Sheila Fletcher (1984) which traces the historical development of women's PE teacher training institutions and its relationship to the much later development of men's training.
9. This is in contrast to other countries where the government has taken a much more proactive stance on the position of women (eg. see Ministry of Education, Western Australia 1987). A research project exploring the ways in which sex stereotyping is reinforced through secondary school PE in Ireland has also recently been published (Physical Education Association of Ireland (PEAI), 1991).
9. Ian Day is currently involved in research on the relationship between masculinity and school PE, based at Leeds Metropolitan University.

#### Chapter Two

1. Figures taken from UGC (1982), and DES (1981).
2. Fletcher (1984), for example, notes that men were appointed as heads of Human Movement Studies courses in many of the former women's colleges. At the time of the research, men held course leadership positions of the following ITE PE specialist, secondary courses:

Leeds Polytechnic	- BEd and PGCE
Brighton Polytechnic	- BEd
Loughborough University	- BA(Ed)
West Sussex Institute of HE.	- BEd
Warwick University	- BA (ED)
Exeter University	- BA (ED) and PGCE
West London Institute of HE	- PGCE
Sheffield Polytechnic	- BEd

The last six appointments made at Brickhill had been filled with men; one temporary one year appointment of a woman was made. Similarly, the last five appointments at Heydonfield within PE had been all male.

3. Occupational and career structures changes within the teaching profession, such as those relating to pay negotiations, salaries, curriculum and assessment procedures, affect all teachers, and have to be seen, Ozga (1988) argues, in relation to the wider, extra-school economic context. Similarly, Evans and Davies (1989) suggest that teachers' careers are also structured by ideologies such as those which influence and define the differential position and status of women and men in the profession, as well as the academic and the 'non-academic' curriculum, which have their bases in wider society too.

4. It is interesting to note that Atkinson and Delamont suggest that the women's PE colleges would be a good example of Goffman's 'total' institutions, where the professional socialisation was discrete and all encompassing.
5. The Department of Education and Science (DES) has recently become the Department for Education (DFE).
6. The Council of Europe has recently funded a series of projects within the EEC, focusing on gender issues in ITE (Association of Teacher Education in Europe, 1987). The British project was situated at Sheffield Polytechnic, and attempted to evaluate a new PGCE course by use of staff and student questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews with students (Coldron and Boulton, 1988; 1990). Evaluation of the success of the 'focused permeation' approach to gender issues adopted showed that students had become much more aware of the importance of gender issues in their teaching, although their conception of equal opportunities remained limited. This 'success' has to be tempered, however, with the reality of the school situations which students go into when they leave college, as well as with the large numbers of students who never enter the profession after their training in the first place.
7. It is interesting to note that a recent paper (Sparkes, Templin and Schemp, 1990) criticising teacher education in PE for failing to promote students' political understanding of the nature of a career within the 'marginal' subject area of PE, makes no mention of the way in which such careers are critically affected by gender.
8. See Introduction, note 2.
9. An analysis of the conference proceedings from the Standing Conference on Physical Education in Teacher (SCOPE) show little, if no attention to importance of gender issues within ITE in PE. Similarly, the recent AIESEP (International Association of Physical Education Schools in Higher Education) world convention (July, 1990) was largely devoid of papers considering these issues too. Both are important professional organisations involved in the professional education of PE teachers.
10. See Kirk (1990a) for an historical account of the way in which women's PE ITE concentrated on educational gymnastics, whereas men's stressed mainly Olympic gymnastics.

### Chapter Three

1. Feminists have used the term 'malestream' to refer to research which ignores gender, and its effects on social life (see also Chapter One, Footnote Two).
2. Changes to teacher education over the years has led to the development of very different course contents and philosophies, with very different management hierarchies in existence. The mergers of the old PE colleges with other teacher education institutions has meant that in many, PE staff from a separate PE department 'service' a degree

programme and teach the PE Subject Studies, whilst overall control of the degree rests with the Education department. In other institutions, notably the polytechnics, this divide is being broken down as departments are merged or rationalised into new and bigger faculties. This meant that at Brickhill, the head of the undergraduate, and PGCE courses were both 'PE people'. At Heydonfield, I interviewed the heads of the PE Subject Studies, rather than the overall course leader. This was the case with most of the interviews in the second part of the research too.

3. At the time of the research, Brickhill was still under the control of the Local Education Authority, and had not acquired corporate status.
4. Appendix One gives details of the areas which were addressed in the formal interviews.

#### **Chapter Four**

1. The Education Reform Act (1988) introduced many significant changes to the structure and functioning of the education system. The most notable changes revolve around the introduction of a National Curriculum for schools, including standardised testing of children at each of four key stages, and the introduction of new types of funding, management and assessment procedures of schools.
2. At Brickhill, PE remained the only Subject Study area for those students enrolled on the secondary PGCE and undergraduate ITE course. This meant that in contrast to students at Heydonfield, PE students did not mix with students from other disciplines for the Professional Studies aspect of their course.
3. The impact of the National Curriculum is already having a significant effect on what is taught within Subject Studies, see NCC (1991) and DFE (1992b; 1992c)
4. The publication of the recent White Paper, (DFE, 1992d) further reinforces the demise of the local education authorities through encouraging schools to move to Grant Maintained status.

#### **Chapter Five**

1. Alternatively, this could give a more accurate picture of the way in which the courses were structured, taught and received by students, and better reflect the kinds of tensions and conflicts evident between different groups of staff involved in the teaching of different sections of the courses.
2. See Ellsworth (1989), Gore (1990) and Smyth (1989) for good reflexive accounts.
3. See Parry (1988) for a critical account of areas of experience in PE.

4. The extent to which students perceived the course in terms of these coherent areas of experiences is debatable, since their individual timetables made reference not to the area of experience, but to the particular activity or discipline being taught (see Appendix Three). So, for example, the timetable of one of the first year groups on a Monday, read as follows:

8.45am - 9.45am	Professional Studies
10.00am - 11.00am	Gymnastics
11.30am - 12.30am	Stress Management
1.30am - 2.30am	Yoga
2.45pm - 3.45pm	Nature and Cultural Context of PE
4.15pm - 5.15pm	Professional Studies.

The fact that some areas of experience included a number of activities (for example, the Health and Well Being area of experience introduced students to yoga, circuits, jogging, and body conditioning) meant that the timetabling of this was in a series of small units, or block inputs. As Chapter Three suggested, I had to spend a long time drawing out detailed pictures of the Part One degree timetable to be able to plan my observation.

5. Since the PGCE students at Heydonfield were out in schools in the term of the fieldwork, it was impossible to observe any of their sessions, or gain much impression of their course.
6. PE ITE institutions became co-educational as a result of the European Directive on Equal Treatment of 1976 (see also Introduction, footnote Two)..
7. The PGCE course at Brickhill had two specific routes, a specialist dance route and a PE route. I chose not to observe much of the former because of time limitations. It is significant to note that the institution struggled to recruit for the dance route, and at the time of the research, all the students on this route were women.
8. Shah (1989) notes that the literature related to the meaning and implications of permeation is limited. Coldron and Boulton (1988; 1990) use the term to describe how far a professional legitimacy of a concern with sexism is conveyed. They argue for a concept of 'focused permeation' - where core sessions addressing issues of equality are supplemented by the raising of the issues within other, specified aspects of the course syllabus. The 'core' sessions in the courses have already being described. In this section I was interested in how or whether these issues would be raised by staff in the Subject Studies area.
9. Comments such as these were made to me during informal conversations with students during the fieldwork. I did not interview students formally, but particularly at Brickhill, spent a lot of time following groups of students to their various classes. I got to know the PGCE group at Brickhill particularly well, especially the women students, as



my gender allowed me access to informal settings with them, such as the changing rooms, where the content and nature of their lectures were often the focus of discussion. Dot, the student who made the comment above, was one of the few students I met during the fieldwork who had a particular commitment to race and gender equality. She confided in me that she had been on the point of withdrawing from the course several times because of the 'stereotypical and conservative thinking' of people involved with the course.

10. Brickhill's undergraduate course included a non-assessed teaching practical in year four. The undergraduate course at Heydonfield did not include teaching practice in year four, although as a result of the publication of the 1989 CATE criteria, changes to incorporate this were under discussion during the fieldwork
11. St Paul and St Mary College is the base for a Sports Council National Demonstration Project, 'From School to Community', which aimed to 'examine the relevance of ITE courses to the changing demands of PE teaching, especially where these relate to the 'transfer' by young people, from participation in physical activities in the school context, to participation in the community' (Sports Council/College of St Paul and St Mary, Cheltenham, 1989, p.ii). Their survey of all secondary PE ITE courses, carried out in 1987, showed all institutions included some kind of practical interview for students.
12. Again, I have not attempted to discuss the PGCE at Heydonfield since I was not able to gain much impression about this course.

#### Chapter Six

1. I am using the term classroom broadly to include classes in formal lecture situations, seminars, as well as practical sessions on the field, swimming pool or gymnasium.
2. See Diagram Six in Appendix Two.
3. Benyon (1989) uses the term 'body building' to describe the way in which boys in his study impressed peers through acts of cheeky bravado against staff.
4. One of the major incidents of 'body building' did come within a swimming environment, but at the end of the formal session, when students had been allowed a few minutes free swim. The three men remaining took it in turns to dare each other to perform more and more difficult dives off the high board, shouting loudly to try and attract the attention of two women who were chatting in the shallow end.
5. These were women-only classes on the specialist dance route within the PGCE, or the option groups in part two of the undergraduate degree. The students higher levels of competence, commitment and confidence in the activity were important factors contributing to the ethos of these sessions.

6. This study could do little to provide an insight into the specific experiences of the few black students at Brickhill. However, a number of comments made openly to me, or to students within formal lecture situations suggest that racism may well have been central to that experience. These incidents fit with the findings elsewhere which suggest that it is the racism and racial harassment experienced by black students at all levels of the education system which may be a major cause of the vastly under-representative numbers of black students opting for teacher education (eg. Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), 1988, 1989).
7. Halson (1989) uses the term 'sexualising' to describe how male teachers deliberately introduce 'jokes' and sexual innuendos into their every day classroom interaction.

### Chapter Seven

1. Connell (1990) uses the term 'dry sciences' to describe the character of scientific knowledge as abstract and life-less. One of the men in Connell's study, for example, characterises his biology course as 'dry', suggesting it has lost its 'vitality', and no longer 'relates to the living world'. He uses the example of his laboratory work which involved him in cutting up rats and dogfish, rather than studying aspects of living nature.
2. Although I was not able to get involved in any of the male-only informal culture at Heydonfield because of my gender, there were occasions when I got glimpses of aspects of it. On two occasions I was having something to eat in the Student Common Room when a group of male PE students belonging to one of the sports clubs gathered to have their 'selection' meeting. Their physical presence and general demeanor (sitting with their feet up on the tables, talking loudly, hitting one another etc) dominated the room.
3. As noted earlier, the particular ethos at Heydonfield made it more difficult to observe students in formal classes. Despite recognising the methodological limitations of spending time with particular members of staff (see Chapter Three), I found I was drawn into spending more time with Anne and Gill. In what I sometimes found an intimidating atmosphere, they were a support to me, and I suspect I was to them. I justified spending time with Anne to help her write the 'women's experience of Heydonfield' paper as a part of the consciousness raising/support I felt I would like to be able to offer as part my role in undertaking feminist research.
4. Evans (1989) suggests it is useful to distinguish between the terms 'mixed sex' and 'co-educational'. He suggests the former should be used to refer only to a form of organisation where children of both sexes are brought together in the same group for teaching purposes, whereas co-educational grouping should refer to situations where there is a sensitivity to the predispositions children bring to the lesson (abilities, physical strengths, cultural attitudes and expectations) which often serve to set boys and girls apart.

5. The fact that either Anne or Gill must have told their male colleagues about our evening suggests their willingness to 'collude' in their own oppression.
6. Interestingly, when I was presenting a paper on my research at a conference, a senior woman in the PE profession advised me afterwards that I should not become too involved in equal opportunity issues, because she had seen the credibility of other women who had taken an interest in this kind of work 'drop and drop'!

#### Chapter Eight

1. For example, the ankle socks worn by some women were totally unsuitable for the game of hockey.
2. As White, Mayglothling and Carr (1990) note too, the personal performance of women coaches is crucial to their acceptance as a credible coach. The connections between knowing, performing and coaching are rarely questioned.
3. Not surprisingly, I did not observe actual incidents of male violence but this does not mean that none existed. During the fieldwork, an Equal Opportunities policy was being developed at Heydonfield. The recently appointed Equal Opportunities Officer (an academic member of staff who worked part-time in this capacity) suggested that this had originated partly as a consequence of a recent incident of alleged rape of a woman student by a male lecturer.
4. Kelly's (1988) work is important because it highlights the need for more inclusive ways of defining and naming men's violence towards women, based on women's own experiences. We just do not have sufficient, accurate research on the extent of male violence towards women, including that perpetrated by male athletes.
5. There has been a rapidly increasing production of women's 'Keep-fit' videos stressing the benefits of the exercise routines mostly in terms of improved body shape.
6. As Appendix Two noted, there was a minority of black students on the undergraduate course at Brickhill (none at all at Heydonfield). Despite the stereotyping of blacks as being good at sport, my research found that they were similarly under-represented, even at other, more urban ITE institutions.
7. The less tightly 'framed' classroom might simply present more openings for disruptive behaviour by male students.
8. The Champion Coaching Project (National Coaching Foundation (NCF), 1992) demonstrates the often entrenched attitudes of PE teachers to change and new initiatives. A major problem for the initiative, which was aimed at the development and coordination of links between the different agencies involved in providing children's sport, was the negative attitudes to the project from some PE teachers.

9. This does not, of course, affect the hegemony of scientific research which gets done in such institutions.
10. Unfortunately, there seemed to be few, if any, lecturers working specifically from PE visible at this conference (Gender and Teacher Education Conference, Sheffield City Polytechnic, June, 1991).
11. Rogers (1988) has noted how many men-only clubs and institutions adopt a specific dress code, initiation ceremonies, or behaviour rituals to maintain their group cohesiveness. One of my early memories of being accepted into an early co-educational cohort at the Carnegie School of PE, Leeds Polytechnic, was the debate about whether women PE students should be 'allowed' to order the Carnegie blazer! I am now told that to become a 'Carnegie boy' male students have to acquire a 'tattoo' of the Carnegie emblem on their bottom - no doubt so that they can be 'displayed' during 'moonie' sessions or male strip-tease sessions, a major part of 'lads', or rugby club culture.
12. The proposals for the PE National Curriculum contained an extensive chapter on issues of equal opportunities (see DES, 1991). Unfortunately this is cut drastically in the final orders (DES, 1992b), although this particular point is left highlighted.
13. A first year woman student at Heydonfield was being counselled for the first stages of anorexia, and the PE staff confirmed that this was not the first such case.
14. John Evan's and Dawn Penny's ongoing research should be valuable in this respect (see Evans and Penny, 1991).
15. Interestingly, the recent National Curriculum Council (NCC) monitoring seminars focusing on the National Curriculum in PE and how it has been received, revealed teachers specifically wanted help with equal opportunities (NCC, 1992).

## **APPENDIX ONE**

### **Interview Guide**

#### **1. Move to Co-Education**

- a. When and how; issues which emerged
- b. Policy on recruitment (men/women; mature students; ethnic minority)
- c. Changes to the courses
- d. Changes to institutional ethos

#### **2. 'Equal Opportunities' in the Course Content**

- a. Awareness of EOC (1989) report and findings
- b. Where are issues addressed and who teaches
- c. How addressed within PE Studies
- d. Success/monitoring of work
- e. Difficulties/constraints

#### **3. PE Practical Curriculum**

- a. Nature of practical work for men and women
- b. Rationales behind this
- c. Nature and rationale of assessment in practical work
- d. Effect of moves to co-education on practical classes; changes to course content and rationale

4. 'Equal Opportunities' in the Institution

- a. Has the institution a policy
- b. What does it include (ie. racism, sexism, sexual harassment)
- c. Staff training in equal opportunities
- d. Full time member of staff responsible for equal opportunities and its implementation
- e. Your role in promoting equal opportunities within department/course

5. Staffing in Institution

- a. Current situation
- b. Views on current situation re. move to co-education
- c. Policy on future staff recruitment
- d. Positive action measures

## **Analysing the Data**

The analysis of the data was an ongoing process throughout the fieldwork, rather than beginning after the data collection had finished. During the fieldwork, I regularly reviewed my progress, working in a reflexive way - using what Stanley and Wise (1983, p.46) have called 'on-going attempts to understand, explain, re-explain what is going on', so that like Scraton there was a continual link between 'theory, empirical research and political response' (Scraton and Flintoff, 1992). This allowed for the focus to shift if necessary as the research unfolded.

As the fieldwork progressed, I began to categorize the material according to an emerging set of topic headings. I initially gave these a code and marked the appropriate sections of the fieldnotes using different colour highlighter pens. At a later stage, as the notes began to build up, I used the 'copy and paste' facility on my wordprocessor to pull out a copy of each illustrative example under the different headings. Eventually I was able to make comprehensive print outs of each category which listed chronologically, all of the examples (and exceptions) from the fieldnotes, and included page numbers enabling me to go back to check the original if necessary.

I was careful to note incidences which seem to contradict an otherwise developing pattern of behaviour, since these helped determine the cohesiveness of the category. Contradictory incidents need not necessarily lead to the abandonment of the category; sometimes they can help confirm and strengthen them. For example, I observed several male staff who

'sexualised' their lectures by deliberately introducing sexual innuendo into their teaching (see Chapters Six and Seven). This seemed to communicate to the group that such comments were acceptable, and invariably, similar comments would be made in response by some male students. The fact that I observed other male staff where this did not happen, even though the same kinds of 'body' issues were under discussion and opportunities for similar comments existed, confirmed the power of individual male lecturers to control the kind of atmosphere and ethos in their classes.

As mentioned earlier, I did not go into the fieldwork with either an 'empty head', nor with a well worked out theory to 'test'. Neither did I enter the research field with a view that I was going to be (or that it was even possible to be) 'objective', 'disinterested' and value-free. After reading the EOC's (1989) report, I guessed that I would be unlikely to find a coherent and extended attention to gender issues within the formal curriculum. This was one particular line of enquiry throughout the fieldwork, which was explored explicitly in the interviews with staff, through the document analysis and in informal discussions with students.

Before the fieldwork, I had been interested in accounts such as Askew and Ross (1988) which analyse the behaviour of boys in school settings, and the explain this in terms of the social construction of masculinity. I had read some accounts of similiar behaviour within PE settings (eg. Evans, 1989; Scraton, 1989) and had a lot of personal experience in ITE to draw on, so had a number of theoretical ideas in this general area of classroom interaction to 'test'. Despite this, I was surprised (and sometimes, in



the more extreme cases, upset or angry) by the dominance of some of the male students within classes, and in particular by the use of sexuality in their interactions both with other male students, and with female students and staff. Whilst I had read and found useful, radical feminist work on schooling (eg. Halson, 1991; Mahony, 1985) and sexual violence (eg. Kelly, 1988; Stanko, 1985) this did not really help me explore the nature of the differences in behaviour amongst male students. As a result, I was drawn towards texts which have been classified as the new 'Men's Studies'. Some of this work usefully extended the feminist material problematizing masculinity, by specifically focusing on the relations of power *within as well as between* gender categories, and by highlighting the centrality of heterosexuality within hegemonic masculinity (eg. Brittan, 1989; Carrigan, et al, 1985, 1987; Connell, 1987). This work helped to explain the actions of different groups of male students, and how this might differ depending upon the context or setting.

In this sense, the research, did not progress in a straightforward, logical or linear way, which as others have suggested, seems problematic and unrealistic anyway (eg. Burgess, 1984). I was involved in working at both analytically deductive, and inductive ways, and was concerned with providing rich description of the fieldwork settings, but nevertheless, description which was theoretically informed.

## **APPENDIX TWO**

Appendix Two provides a description of the general nature of the two case study institutions, including a brief history, a sketch of the institutions' settings, an overview of the PE ITE courses, and the makeup of the staff and student groups.

### **BRICKHILL**

#### *Introduction*

Brickhill had been one of the first women's Physical Training Colleges, dating back to the early twentieth century. Its merger with a general teacher training college, and the city's further education college in the 1970's, meant that at the time of the research, Brickhill was a multi-site institution. Much of the original function of the three sites, located in different parts of the city, had been retained. For example, what I have called the Moorhill site, had been the old Physical Training College, and this continued to be the base for most of the PE ITE, and Sports Studies degree teaching. The Lefton site had been the old further education college, and remained the centre for most of the further education work. The Eastgreen site, which had been the old teacher training college, continued to run the primary education courses and inservice work.

The Lefton site was distinct from the other two sites because of the type and level of its courses, the staff it employed, and the students it recruited. Few staff involved in the ITE courses at Moorhill either

visited or taught at the Lefton site, and it was clear that many did not identify themselves with the further education work. The Eastgreen site was situated in a modern residential area of the city. The buildings included student accommodation as well as teaching spaces, and were set in extensive grounds, with sportsfields, tennis and netball courts and a gymnasium. These were used by the secondary PE ITE courses, the primary ITE courses, and by the Students' Union in the evenings and at weekends. The primary students were seen as a separate group from the secondary PE students, even though many of the latter had their accommodation and attended lectures on the Eastgreen site.

The Moorhill site had been the site of the original women's Physical Training College. The majority of the sports facilities were based here; gymnasia, swimming pool, dance studio, as well as specialist science, art and craft labs, teaching blocks and a large lecture theatre. In many ways, the ethos of this site was still very much that of an old college; the site was relatively small and self-contained, and the buildings, although old, were brickbuilt, and had a 'well-kept' air about them. Permanent groundstaff were employed to tend to the garden areas, as well as to prepare the sports pitches on the nearby playing fields, and there were always large vases of freshly cut flowers dotted around the public rooms. Around the site were numerous reminders of the old college. For example, there were pictures of past Principals of the college hanging on the walls, display cases showing some of the 'relics' of the past, and some of the lecture rooms were still furnished with grand, old wooden furniture left from the college days. The refectory, for example, had retained its hugh,

polished staff table at the end of the room on a raised platform, and many of the older staff regularly sat there for lunch.

*PE students at Brickhill*

All but a very small number of the students recruited to the PE ITE courses were white. The absence of black students reflects the national picture of black under-representation within the teaching profession. For example, one of the most recent surveys of eight LEA's estimates that black teachers make up only 2% of the teaching force (Commission for Racial Equality, CRE, 1988). However, there was a big contrast between the very low numbers of black students enrolled on the teacher education courses, and the students on the further education courses at the Lefton site. The students here, were much more of a heterogeneous group, both in terms of age and cultural background, and there was a large percentage of black (mainly Asian) students.

Brickhill was making efforts to attract more black students, and students from other under-represented groups, such as mature students, through a series of Access courses. Successful students on the PE Access course, in its second year of operation, were offered a place on the undergraduate PE ITE course, and at the time of the research, two mature Access students were enrolled in the first year of the BEd. However, although the numbers of non-standard, mature entrants (ie. over twenty one) had been steadily increasing, the majority of the students on PE ITE courses were conventional entry students, coming straight from school with at least two 'A' levels. As Chapter Two noted, PE teaching continues to be seen as a

career for the young and physically able (eg. Evans and Williams, 1989; Sikes, 1988). At Brickhill (as well as at Heydonfield, see below), this tradition was reinforced by a strong emphasis on practical ability with the undergraduate course. Students were assessed on their practical abilities, both on their initial entry interview, and as an integral part of their course (see Chapter Five).

Although it was impossible to gather accurate information about the social class of the student cohorts, the head of PE, Angela, suggested that this was changing away from its former middle class historical roots:

*I would have thought about twenty years ago ..they would be nice young ladies from private schools, or very nice grammar schools...and they would go out, a lot of them, into private schools....but it is certainly different now - in fact they are turning down private schools and in relation to class we have all sorts of people (original emphasis) (taped interview, Angela, head of PE, Brickhill).*

This is contrast to the information I was able to find out at Heydonfield (see below) where a large number of the first year cohort had come from private schools. (It is interesting that the admissions tutor considered this, as well as the level of sport the students had achieved, to be included in a bulletin to all staff at the beginning of the year).

#### *The PE ITE courses at Brickhill*

Students wishing to become specialist teachers of PE at Brickhill could either join the one year Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course, or the four year Bachelor of Education (BEd) course. Many of the

students from the department's own BA in Sports Studies course chose to stay on at Brickhill, and take the PGCE, although their acceptance on the course was not automatic.

The BEd course was a new course, validated by the CNAA in 1986. The fourth year students in 1989/90 academic year were the first cohort to begin this degree. Staff were already evaluating the course and were in the process of making changes, largely in terms of reorganising the programme into a more flexible, modular structure which was being adopted elsewhere in the department. The structure and content of the course differed significantly from the Heydonfield BA (Ed). For example, in PE Studies, students had the option to specialise in both practical and theoretical aspects in part two of the course (third and fourth years). Dance and gymnastics formed a major part of the degree reflecting the female tradition in PE (Fletcher, 1984). The specific course structure is described in Chapter Five in more detail.

The numbers of students in each year had been steadily increasing, and at the time of the research, the incoming cohort number was ninety two, of which just over two thirds were women. That year had seen a significant increase in the number of male students enrolled on the course. Angela, the head of PE felt the history of Brickhill as a former women's PE college was still influential in their difficulty to 'recruit good quality men', whereas she considered this a problem which the men's colleges would not have had:

*I think that perhaps it would be the strong women that would go to a men's college, whereas it might be the*

*less macho...and I am not saying that you need to be macho to do PE, but I think that [we attract] some of the ..other ones...who don't see themselves as fitting into the Heydonfield, or Helmsley (another former men's PE college) type (taped interview, Angela, head of PE, Brickhill).*

This is in contrast to the BA Sports Studies course, which had recruited well balanced cohorts, in terms of sex, from its outset.

The PGCE course had been revalidated in February of 1989, and was made up of three major elements: teaching practice, Professional Studies, and PE Studies. Unlike the undergraduates, the PGCE students did not study a Second Subject alongside their PE, and the PE Studies element consisted of purely practical and pedagogical work. The numbers of students accepted onto the course had remained relatively constant over the last few years, and had been less skewed than the undergraduate degree in terms of male/female ratios. In the 1989/90 academic year, there were twenty six students, ten men and sixteen women.

The large numbers of students on the ITE courses meant many were required to travel for their teaching practices to schools outside the immediate area of the institution. The kinds of schools used for the students' teaching practice varied considerably in both type, and their pupil populations. For example, the local schools which were used included single and mixed sex private schools, co-educational comprehensive schools, and single sex grammar schools. Schools' populations varied with their location, and included all-white schools, as well as schools which had relatively high numbers of black children.

### *The staff at Brickhill*

The overall staff profile within the PE section at Brickhill was heavily skewed towards senior and principal lecturers, reflecting the established nature of many of the staff, and the relative lack of new posts in the department over the last few years. Not surprisingly, given the history of the institution as an all-female college, there were more women than men on the staff, and the senior posts - including the Head of Department - were filled by women (see Diagram 6 on page 22). Many of the older women staff had undergone their own training at Brickhill. Out of a total of thirty three staff involved in PE, nineteen were women, and fourteen were men.

This position was, however, changing, and out of seven staff appointed in the last decade, six had been men. One of the last women to enter Brickhill, had been appointed on a temporary, one year contract to work specifically on the practical aspects of the teacher education programmes. This contrasted with the recent appointments of men, all of which had been permanent posts, and had been largely for work on the BA Sports Studies, or to teach the disciplinary inputs on the BEd.

Achieving a better balance of staff was important to Mary, the head of department, who suggested that she would,

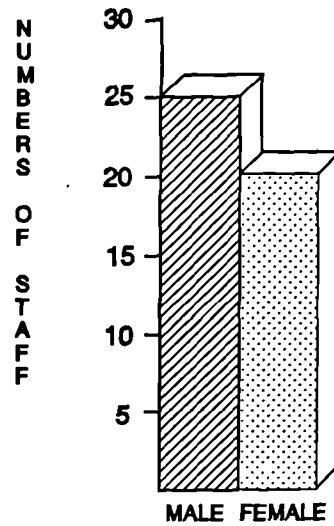
*always try and appoint men because of the balance of the department but that is not always possible. I would not exclude a woman if she was very good - of course I wouldn't - I need the best person for the job, but if that person happens to be a man, I would look seriously at that ..you know I go back to the student experience again...that is important..the teaching profession is not about all women or all men ...and so the environment in which the student learns has to be*



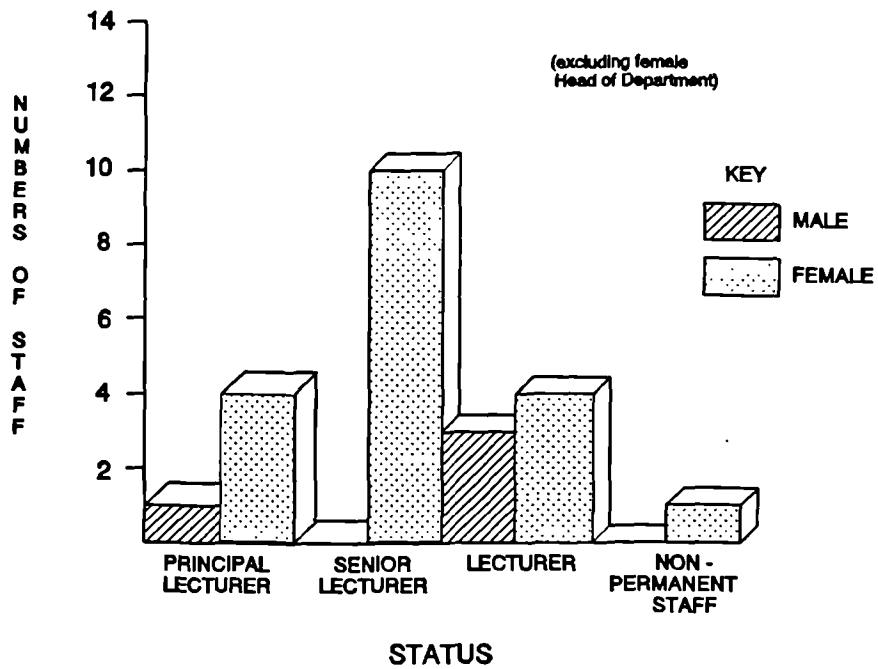
## Diagram 6

### Staff Profile - Brickhill Department of PE, Sport and Dance

TOTAL STAFF BY SEX



PE STAFF BY SEX AND STATUS



*mixed....since I have been here I have been very concerned about the student experience for the men (taped interview, Mary, head of department, Brickhill).*

As Chapter Two noted, the move to co-education at both school and higher education level (eg. Oxbridge university colleges) has led to the decline in the numbers of women occupying senior posts. There is no accurate data to suggest that this is happening in PE ITE, although circumstantial evidence suggests that this might be the case (see Note Two, Chapter Two). There is no reason to suggest that there is a shortage of women opting into PE and Sport-related degrees. Figures show that women make up at least half of the total numbers of students taking PE or Sports Studies degrees, and between 30-40% of all research posts in PE and Sport-related areas (Delforge, 1989, p.28-30). The changing balance of staff within PE ITE since co-education is an area worthy of further study, as is research which explores the experiences of women working in institutions with strong male cultures.

All the staff in the PE department were white, and the only black member of staff involved in the work at the Moorhill site was a woman who taught specifically on the Access courses. It is not surprising, given the under-representation of black teachers at school level, that this should be replicated in HEIs. Brickhill had taken no specific measures to try and attract black staff.

Although many of the PE staff taught across the different courses in the department (BEd, PGCE, Sports Studies), the teaching programme on the ITE

courses was very gender segregated. Much of the practical teaching and work with children was done by women staff (some of the older women staff taught only practical work, whereas the theoretical work (particularly the sciences such as Physiology and Biomechanics) was taught by men. As Fletcher (1984) has noted, the introduction of the BEd degree led to an influx of men into the former women's colleges in the 70's and early 80's, where, armed with higher degree qualifications, they had tended to take charge of the theoretical aspects of PE Studies. This seems to have been the case at Brickhill. The women who were involved in theoretical teaching tended to work in the social sciences areas, such Sociology or Psychology. Overall, a large percentage the women lecturer's teaching was in the more 'applied' areas of Professional or Curriculum Studies. Because it formed a large part of the work load of the department throughout the year, most staff contributed to teaching practice supervision - although not all did so willingly.

#### *Summary*

As the above discussion has shown, Brickhill's history as a former women's PE college continues to affect its contemporary practice. Although it merged with another two institutions in the 1970's, the old college site, Moorhill, has retained its specialist function of training secondary PE teachers. Although it has expanded to include new courses, including the BA Sports Studies which have been able to recruit mixed cohorts, the undergraduate PE ITE course continued to be seen as a 'women's' course, and struggled to attract male candidates. In comparison, the attraction of male staff into the institution has not been problematic, particularly

since the establishment of the BEd degree, and the newer BA Sports Studies degree. Male staff dominated the scientific theoretical teaching on the PE Studies elements of the ITE programmes, whereas most of the practical and pedagogical work was taught by female staff. The women who were involved in theoretical work tended to work within the social sciences, or Curriculum Studies areas.

## **HEYDONFIELD**

### *Introduction*

The merger of a former college of education with the original university in the late 1970's meant that Heydonfield, like Brickhill, was based on more than one site. What I have called the Horbury site, had been the former college, and the Treeton site, the university. The Horbury site had retained its teacher education function, and the university's large School of Education was accommodated here. The other five university faculties were based at the main Treeton site, which was situated on the outskirts of the city, about a mile from the Horbury site.

The Treeton site housed the main library, student accommodation blocks, Students' Union facilities, and the majority of the sports facilities. Although all of the ITE courses were based at the Horbury site, the PE students visited the Treeton site to use the sports facilities here for their practical lectures.

The Horbury site was situated in the middle of the city, and included

student accommodation blocks, teaching facilities, an Education library, and two lecture theatres. The site also included a swimming pool, gymnasium, and tennis courts, as well as specialist PE teaching spaces, such as Physiology laboratories. The Students' Union on this site included a shop, refectory, lounge and bar area and was a central meeting place for the students. It had a small, friendly atmosphere, and was well used by the PE students. Staff had their own eating and social area, in a separate building. This had its own garden area, a mail room with staff pigeon holes, a small bar and coffee area, and a staff refectory. This was well used at coffee breaks and lunchtimes, and small groups of staff would use the bar in the evenings.

Like the Moorhill site at Brickhill, Horbury had retained much of its old college ethos. The Students' Union was decorated with historical pictures of the old college, and many of PE students' still called themselves 'Horbury college' students rather than Heydonfield university students. The ITE courses had retained a 'Horbury' college PE kit which, like at Brickhill, was compulsory for all students to wear to lectures. These kit regulations were welcomed by the student body as a whole, and enforced in lectures by some of the staff, particularly the older members.

#### *PE students at Heydonfield*

Like the cohorts at Brickhill, PE students at Heydonfield were overwhelmingly, standard-entry students who had come straight from school. The numbers of students on the BA (Ed) had been steadily increasing over the last few years, from approximately thirty students in 1984, to an

intake in the academic year of 1989/90 of sixty seven. Of these, as the admissions tutor described, 'by remarkable coincidence', the male/female ratios were almost equal; thirty four were women, and thirty three men. This was in contrast to the previous year's graduates (intake year of 1985), which had had only eight women students out of a total of twenty eight. It had only been in the recent past that the numbers of female students had substantially increased, despite the fact that the PE ITE courses at Heydonfield had been 'co-educational' for some years. Steve, head of PE, like the head of PE at Brickhill, felt that the history of the institution as a men's college continued to influence the kinds of applications they received;

*.. we're listed right at the top of the men's colleges, now whether we get the very top girl (sic) performers, I don't really [know]....I mean what you get is ..is most ex-Heydonfield students will recommend the kids in their school to come to Heydonfield, to do their degree... (taped interview, Steve, head of PE, Heydonfield).*

All the PE students at Heydonfield were white - indeed, there were very few black students in the university at all, and no black members of staff. The city and area in which the university is situated is predominantly a white area, and Steve suggested that this resulted in very few applications from black students. He saw positive recruitment measures to recruit black students as unnecessary.

*...we don't actively recruit [black students] and we may be criticised for not - but when you have so many applications and recruitment is not a problem we don't recruit - we don't have to! I can't see us ever having a problem with recruitment (taped interview, Steve, head of PE, Heydonfield).*

This was not the case with the PGCE course, which had struggled that year to recruit sufficient numbers of students. In 1989/90 there were twenty five students, sixteen women and eleven men on the PGCE.

As well as being indifferent to the recruitment of black students, the head of PE also had a very negative view of efforts to recruit non-standard entry students;

*there has been great pressure put upon us to take access students...but we are swamped with applications and if we know that we have twenty applicants for each place, why should we deprive them of a place because ...to let someone else in without..you know..the argument works both ways! (taped interview, Steve, head of PE, Heydonfield).*

The detailed information sheet provided by the admissions tutor each year noted that the 80% of the new student cohort in 1989/90, 'as usual', were students straight from school, all with at least two, and more usually three 'A' levels. Two Access students had been accepted for the first time that year, both mature students with no formal qualifications.

Like Brickhill, Heydonfield placed a high priority on the practical performance of their students, which was assessed in their initial entry interview, and as a central part of their course (see Chapter Five). Significantly, the admissions information sheet noted that only four of the incoming students had not played for their county in at least one sport. The admissions tutor also admitted that he always 'looked very very carefully at applications from students over twenty five years of age, because by the time they had finished, they would be too old to teach'. Here again, is the strong view that PE teachers need to be both young, and

practically very able.

Although difficult to draw accurate conclusions about the social class of students from the schools they have attended, it is significant to note that 34% of the 1989/90 intake had come from independent or grammar schools. The head of PE confirmed that traditionally they had recruited a 'tremendous number' of students from public schools, and, although he disagreed with it, used a large number of public schools for teaching practice. He suggested that there was a real danger that they 'were simply training PE teachers to go back into private schools with a particular view of PE'.

#### *The PE ITE courses at Heydonfield*

Students wishing to train to become secondary, specialist teachers of PE at Heydonfield, could either join the BA (Ed) undergraduate degree, or if they were graduates, apply for a place on the PGCE. Unlike Brickhill, where the courses had to have detailed documentation to gain CNA A validation, the undergraduate course at Heydonfield was much more loosely coordinated. Staff with the PE Subject Studies area admitted that they knew very little about what students did in the rest of the course, and were more 'concerned to do a good job in their bit' to quote one member of staff. Developments and changes to courses have been far easier to implement in the universities than through CNA A validation, with only major changes to courses having to be formally documented and agreed at the university Senate. This ease meant that in 1989, students in three out of four of the years were following degree courses with a different PE Subject Studies



profile (see Chapter Five for more details of the nature of this and the PGCE course).

The undergraduate course had been changed recently to a BA(Ed) course from a BEd. It was heavily dominated by the performance sciences, and games, reflecting the nature and philosophy of men's PE (Fletcher, 1984; Kirk, 1990). There was little opportunity within the PE Subject Studies of this degree for students to specialise. There was no choice at all in the practical work (although there were some courses which were offered on a gender stereotyped basis, see Chapter Five). Students could opt into particular theoretical PE courses only in year four. Like the undergraduate course at Brickhill, all PE students followed a Second Subject Study.

In contrast to the PGCE students at Brickhill, the PGCE students at Heydonfield were taught alongside students from other disciplines and age groups (eg. primary course students) for their Professional Studies and their Subsidiary subject. There was a wide range of short modular options within the Subsidiary area.

Like Brickhill, the high numbers of PE students meant that schools outside the immediate city and locality had to be used for teaching practice. The types of schools varied from private, single sex schools to co-educational comprehensive. The school populations were largely white, reflecting the area in which Heydonfield is situated.

### *The staff at Heydonfield*

Like Brickhill, the staff profile within the PE section at Heydonfield reflected its history as a former men's PE College. There were just two women out of eleven full time members of staff, and one woman tutor. Two school teachers were selected as tutors by the PE section each year, who were offered the opportunity to study for a further degree, and take over some of the practical work with students. Like at Brickhill, many of the PE staff (five out of the eleven) had trained at the former Horbury men's PE College. As Chapter Two showed, women are vastly under-represented within universities, and the staff profile of the School of Education at Heydonfield reflected this. Out of a total of ninety two full time members of staff in the School of Education, only ten were women, and all of these were employed on the lowest salary scales (see Diagram 7 on page 32). There were also two part-time and two temporary women members of staff out of a total of eight additional, non-permanent staff.

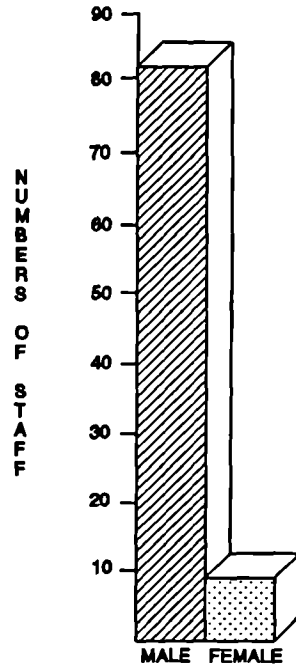
Discussing the gender balance of staff, Russell, the head of department explained how the lack of new staffing appointments had made it very difficult to do anything to change such an imbalance. On advice from the Equal Opportunities committee, the senior management team of the School (all male) had agreed a positive action strategy of including at least one woman on every interview panel. However, he stressed that,

*we have never tried deliberately to employ women ..but what we have tried to do is minimise the ....minimise the obstacles that can be there for women - wherever possible...and so....we have never appointed a woman as an act of charity (sic)...you know, to get a woman on the staff.. (taped interview, Russell, head of department, Heydonfield)*

# Diagram 7

## Staff Profile - Heydonfield School of Education

TOTAL STAFF BY SEX

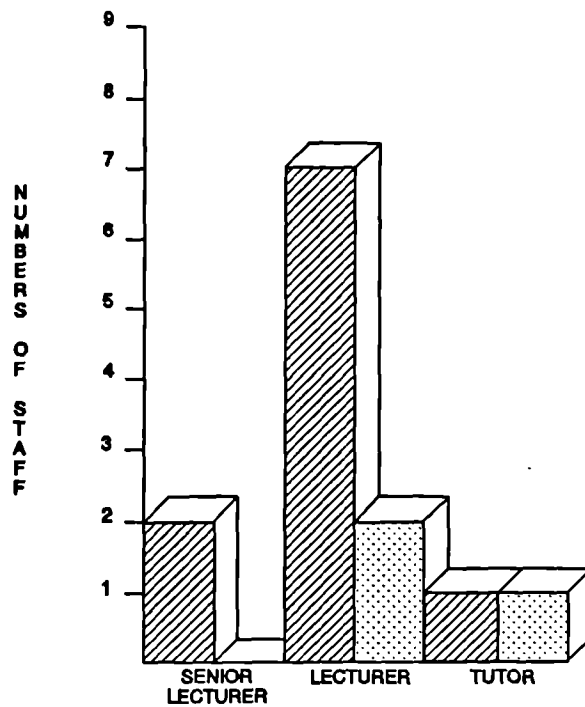


KEY

 MALE

 FEMALE

PE STAFF BY SEX AND STATUS



Whilst he felt that getting more women on the staff was important - particularly given the large numbers of female students on the campus (the primary ITE courses recruited mainly women), he again stressed that they 'had NOT ...appointed a second choice woman...which I think is important because all the women that we have appointed have got it on merit....' (taped interview). Interestingly, Steve, the head of PE, felt that whilst it was important to have women staff, 'even if is down to role models to offer our students', the strategy of including a woman on every interview panel was a 'disgrace':

*I actually think that it is morally wrong!...I mean I had to answer the question from colleagues as to why that person who has vastly less experience and standing...you know in terms of outside status..should get the opportunity and not me..you know we had this problem where individuals said OK, well I understand all the reasons for having a woman on the panel, but at the end of the day I am still being discriminated against and all I want is a fair crack....why is that person felt able to interview a person that is going to work with me as well as with her, and what is your basis...and the answer is - she's female! It becomes a difficult one from a personal point of view...(taped interview, Steve, head of PE, Heydonfield).*

Like at Brickhill, the women staff were involved in teaching in the social sciences areas (as well as one man) and the Curriculum Issues courses. The behavioural and performance sciences were taught by men. All but the head of PE taught at least some practical work (although several members tried to reduce this to the absolute minimum). The youngest male member of staff, Paul, who was also the last member to be appointed, taught only practical work. Whilst all PE staff were supposed to be involved in supervising students on teaching practice, some used monies earned through research or consultancies to 'buy in' practising teachers to do this aspect

of their work.

### *Summary*

Like Brickhill, the history of Heydonfield as a former men's college continued to be a significant influence on its current practice. The undergraduate course was heavily dominated by the performance sciences, and the practical work by games, reflecting the philosophy of men's PE. There was very little opportunity for students to specialise in any activity. The PE staff profile was heavily skewed towards men, who taught all of the performance and behavioural sciences. The two women taught social sciences and the Curriculum courses. Unlike Brickhill, the undergraduate course had managed to recruit a balance of male and female students quite easily, reflecting undoubtedly the differential status of male PE, but also its university status.



## Appendix 3    Diagram 9

### Year One Undergraduate Timetable Heydonfield 1989/90

Autumn Term

	9.00am	10.00	11.00	12.00	1.00 2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00pm
MON		SECOND	SUBJECTS			SWIMMING			
TUES		GYNASTICS				PRINCIPLES OF GAMES			
WED									
THURS			PROFESSIONAL STUDIES			EXERCISE SCIENCE		PSYCHOLOGY	
FRI								EXERCISE SCIENCE	

Spring Term

MON						FOUNDATIONS OF PE		GROWTH & DEV.	GYM
TUES		HOCKEY		TEACHING & LEARNING				PSYCHOLOGY SEMINARS	
WED									
THURS								PROFESSIONAL STUDIES	
FRI		SECOND	SUBJECTS						

Summer Term

MON						ATHLETICS		HEALTH RELATED FITNESS	
TUES		GAMES		ATHLETICS				SOCIOLOGY	
WED									
THURS		BASKETBALL		ANATOMY					
FRI								INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	

1. Weekly timetables remained the same throughout each term.
2. Students were on teaching practice for the last three weeks of the spring term.

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