UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

Women's Lives in the Outdoors: A Biographical Study

by Margaret Ruth Boniface

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the degree of
Doctor of Education

Faculty of Social Sciences

December 2001

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
RESEARCH AND GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Doctor of Education

WOMEN'S LIVES IN THE OUTDOORS: A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

by Margaret Ruth Boniface

Although increasing numbers of women are becoming involved in outdoor adventure, this environment is generally seen as a male domain where women continue to be in the minority. Decisions made by women to participate in adventurous activities take place within a system of opportunities and constraints, many of which arise out of gender role socialisation. This research examines the meanings of long-term participation in outdoor adventure for women working in education. A biographical method was employed to explore narratives generated through life story interviews that related to the nature, origins and impact of the women's adventure participation. Key themes focused on the creation of opportunities for the pursuit of adventure, initial and ongoing socialisation into adventure, the perceived worth of participation and the significance of gender.

The findings revealed that the women defined their identities largely in terms of their adventure participation. They assigned a high priority to their engagement in adventurous activities and resisted stereotypical gender roles in order to fulfil their own leisure needs. Childhood experiences of play and physical activity, in addition to the positive influences of significant others in the form of parents and coaches, were identified as important for subsequent adventure involvement. A key factor in the women's continuing involvement was a partner with at least a similar level of commitment to the outdoors. When describing their experiences in the outdoors the women reported unusually high levels of fear, and placed particular value on shared experiences which often overshadowed aspects such as physical challenge. Whilst gender had occasionally functioned to subtly undermine the women's confidence, generally they appeared to have internalised 'masculine' values and gained credibility within a male dominated adventure environment.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank all colleagues and friends who have given me encouragement and support throughout this research, and the women adventure participants who have allowed me to gain an insight into their lives. I appreciate the advice provided by Michael Erben and the auto/biographical studies group, and I am especially grateful to Gill Clarke for her guidance, professionalism and feedback throughout the research process.

My special thanks go to Ray for being there and for making this research possible.

DEFINITIONS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE ADVENTURE ENVIRONMENT

Competence - A combination of skill, knowledge, attitude, behaviour, confidence and experience that determine ability to meet an adventure challenge.

Edgework - Activities that involve a threat to one's mental or physical well-being. Participants 'take it to the limit' and skill needs to be exercised effectively to avoid serious injury or death (Lyng and Snow, 1986).

Flow – An optimal state of consciousness experienced by those engaging in autotelic activities providing enjoyment and no obvious extrinsic rewards (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). Flow can be characterised by a satisfying, often exhilarating feeling of creative accomplishment and heightened functioning.

Risk - The potential to lose something of value (Priest, 1990). 'Physical risk' refers to the appraised chances of being physically hurt or killed, and 'social risk' is the estimated likelihood of being shamed, humiliated or embarrassed (Zuckerman, 1979). Perceived risk is variable and will depend on such factors as previous experience and personality characteristics such as sensation seeking tendencies (McIntyre and Roggenbuck, 1998).

Self-Efficacy – The strength of an individual's belief that a task which tests their ability can be successfully accomplished (Klint, 1999).

Transcendence – Going beyond the known, a stretching of oneself towards new dimensions of skill and competence (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975).

ABBREVIATIONS

BCU	British Canoe Union
Cat 10	Category 10 (top training level in skydiving)
'D' Licence	More than 200 skydives
E3	Extreme 3 (British Climbing Grade)
ML	Mountain Leader
MLTB	Mountain Leadership Training Board
RAC	Royal Automobile Club
RYA	Royal Yachting Association
SPA	Single Pitch Award (British Mountaineering Council)
VS	Very Severe (British Climbing Grade)

CHAPTER 1

WOMEN IN ADVENTURE: BEGINNINGS

Introduction

The outdoor adventure environment is in the main seen as a male domain and although women's participation is increasing, they continue to be in the minority, a factor which can deter other women from becoming involved. Women who participate in adventurous activities are generally judged against male definitions of competence (Loeffler, 1997) which often leads to a lack of confidence and a lowering of self-esteem on their part arising out of a perceived need to prove their ability and equal worth (Carter, 2000). Additionally, research indicates that there are still men who actively discourage women's involvement in the outdoors (Graham, 1997). Constraints to women's participation in adventurous activities may exist not only in the adventure environment itself, but also in their everyday lives. Indeed, gender role socialisation has been identified as a major constraint to women's involvement in the outdoors (Warren, 1985), particularly in western society where women are often encouraged to 'put their family first'. Leaving family members in order to pursue their own interests is thus in direct conflict with values many women have been socialised to uphold (Henderson, 1991; Loeffler, 1997). Although women have become far more visible in physical activities over the past twenty years, opportunities for them to develop physical competence are limited, and the vast majority do not commit themselves to active forms of leisure (Deem, 1986).

This research examines the meanings of long-term participation in adventurous activities for women working in education. In exploring aspects of their lives, I am seeking to gain an insight into the nature of their adventure involvement, their reasons for maintaining a high level of commitment to outdoor adventure and an understanding of what they perceive the worth of their adventure participation to be. Although the value of taking part in adventurous activities has been well documented, it is also my intention to identify any ways in which participation is seen by the women to have a negative impact on their lives. Against the backdrop of gender expectations and leisure inequalities (see Blinde et al, 1994), attention is directed to

ways in which the women challenge gender roles, create opportunities for adventure, and construct new individual and social identities as adventure participants. In interpreting their stories, consideration is given to the social and cultural contexts out of which significant opportunities and constraints arise, and within which decisions concerning their participation are made. Although it is acknowledged that the roots of adult participation in sport and physical activity are often to be found in childhood (Vanreusel et al, 1997), this study seeks to move beyond others focusing on women's participation in outdoor adventure, by examining initial and continuing influences on their involvement. In doing so, consideration is given to significant others and key events perceived as important in their initial and on-going socialisation into adventure. Given that all the women in the study work in education, it is important to ascertain the effects of their adventure participation on their roles as teachers. Finally, the significance of gender for these women's experiences in the outdoors is examined.

Adventure participation: a biographical note

The Human Powered Outdoor Recreation State of the Industry Report (Widdekind, 1995) identified participation in outdoor recreation with the family as a child to be the most significant determinant of later adult interest and involvement. This study has its roots in the adventures that form some of the most memorable events of my childhood. The special trips with my father to climb Box Hill and the challenge of coming down the steep slippery chalk through the trees in the rain have had a lasting impact. I was a very active child – a 'tomboy'; within my family I was seen as the child who played with 'boy's toys' and like one of the students questioned by Henderson et al (1996:4) 'I climbed the trees, I mean I could climb a tree and go anywhere the guys could go'. I loved all types of movement and activity and at primary school I would often be out on the field practising high jump or gymnastic movements. I learnt to swim at an early age and chose to go to Downside secondary school because it had its own swimming pool. Although I played as a member of all the school teams, I preferred the focus on bodily movement inherent in activities such as gymnastics, trampolining and swimming. My father belonged to a rambling club and when I was fourteen he took me on one of their walking holidays to Norway. We stayed in a youth hostel and I remember the beauty of the mountains and the fjords

and the peacefulness of the surroundings. From the age of sixteen I chose to go on holidays on my own with the Christian Education Movement to work in the grounds of homes for the handicapped, a hostel for unmarried mothers and a rehabilitation centre in Holland. I welcomed the escape from my known surroundings and the pressures of everyday life, to situations that offered an opportunity to create a new identity and form new relationships.

Since that time I have enjoyed camping experiences, residential activity weeks and sailing courses with children at the schools in which I have taught, and with students at the college in which I now work. Although my enthusiasm for adventurous activities has its roots in my childhood experiences, the ideas for this research really began to form about eight years ago on the Old Man of Coniston. I had nearly climbed to the top when having stopped to allow my lung function to return to something near its normal level, I looked up and saw a hanglider. The wing was circling directly above me, and I remember thinking that life could not get much better than that. To be so free from everyday concerns with only the experience of flying to focus on seemed incredibly appealing. The memory of the hanglider stayed with me, and was the motivation for my decision to enrol on an introductory paragliding session, and subsequently train and qualify as a club pilot. Taking up this high-risk adventurous activity led me to more seriously question my own and other's motives for participating in potentially dangerous pursuits. I do not consider myself to be either brave or a high sensation seeker (Zuckerman, 1979); however, I have always enjoyed the kinaesthetic aspects of bodily movement, in addition to sharing meaningful adventurous experiences and forming strong bonds with others in group residential situations. In adventure settings the process of socialisation into a group is accelerated and over a period of time people are accepted for their contributions and strengths, and generally in spite of their weaknesses.

My recent work within higher education has afforded an insight into relevant theory and research within the field of adventure, enabling me to further understand the processes involved in adventure participation. Initially, I employed a psychological perspective, giving consideration to the motives of participants, and I read much of the work of Csikszentmihalyi on 'Flow' (Csikszentmihalyi 1975; 1990). I was particularly interested in the potential of this optimal experience for providing some explanation

for continued participation in activities considered by many to be highly dangerous and often life-threatening. Subsequently, I focused on the role played by other people in the lives of adventure participants, and like Henderson and Bialeschki (1994), I began to consider the significance of a social psychological approach enabling attitudes, perceptions and motivations to be explored in the light of significant interactions within particular contexts or settings. I also noted ways in which earlier, as well as more recent life experiences had influenced my own involvement in adventurous activities and identified the relevance of biographical method. In adopting a social psychological perspective to the study of 'women in the outdoors', this research differs from other related work in that it employed a biographical approach which afforded an insight into the meanings given by women adventure participants to aspects of their lived experience deemed significant in their ongoing quest for adventure. Focusing on the women's perspectives of the relationship between their 'life in outdoor adventure' and their 'whole life' enabled 'crucial tales' about motivations, commitments, opportunities, constraints and relationships to emerge (Goodson, 1992).

The research

Biographical research was used in order to explore the meanings of adventure participation for women committed to adventurous activities. In-depth interviews were conducted with eight women over a fifteen-month period and additional data was collected through several short questionnaires. A process of snowball sampling (see Blaxter et al, 1996) was employed, and the respondents were selected on the basis of four main criteria. The first was that they were all women. Research suggests that women are under-represented in all aspects of outdoor adventure (Humberstone, 1996), and I welcomed the opportunity to gain an insight into the lives of other women similarly involved. Whilst many aspects of the women's lives differed from my own, selecting women respondents meant that my own experiences of adventure defined me partly as an 'insider', which enabled me to more fully understand both the language and the meaning of their narratives. The second criterion for selection related to age. After the pilot interview I concluded that women in their late twenties and above were more likely to have established a pattern of continuing involvement in

adventurous activities in their lives than those who were younger. The third criterion was that due to the educational focus of the research, as well as my own involvement in education, all those interviewed were either teachers or educational facilitators. Finally, in order for the women's narrative accounts to contribute in a meaningful way to the 'collective story' of 'women in the outdoors', all were deeply committed to participation in adventurous activities.

The structure of the thesis

The following chapters explore the research questions and some of the issues raised in this introduction. Chapter 2 presents a review of literature that provides a theoretical framework from which to analyse the experiences of women committed to outdoor adventure. Initially, various terms used to describe adventurous activities are examined. Given that decisions concerning participation in adventurous activities are made within the context of material, cultural and ideological constraints, I then consider research focusing on women's experiences of leisure. Whilst some research on women in the outdoors now exists, there is a dearth of literature focusing on the meanings of past and present adventure participation for women, with even less being based on empirical exploration. In order to understand the significance of early, as well as ongoing recreational experiences, I turn to literature focusing on social aspects of sport to examine initial and continuing socialisation into physical activity and adventure, in addition to the construction of a sporting identity. A unique aspect of outdoor adventure is that it takes places within the natural environment, and ways in which this contributes to positive outcomes are subsequently considered. I then explain why inequalities exist within the field of adventure for women, and discuss ways in which these might be addressed. Much of the discussion within this chapter seeks to give an insight into reasons for regular engagement in adventurous activity. Finally, I explore the evolving motives for voluntary risk-taking within a sociocultural context, and conclude with a consideration of the significance of relationships developed in and through the outdoors.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology of the research undertaken and outlines the methods employed. The choice of biographical method is justified and I explain the significance of narratives in the form of life stories for affording an insight into the

meanings given by women to aspects of their lives as adventure participants. In seeking to employ a research method enabling lives to be studied from the view of the participants, whilst also giving some consideration to a 'research agenda', I describe my journey in search of an appropriate method of interviewing. The pilot study is outlined and the subsequent identification of an 'active' approach to interviewing is established. I then outline the procedures involved in selecting, accessing and interviewing the women adventure participants, seeking throughout to make explicit my own role in this research process. Issues such as 'establishing a relationship' arising out of the interviews are addressed, in addition to those relating to the overall research process. Finally, the use of a combination of grounded theory and hermeneutics in the analysis of the data is outlined, and I explain the application of the criteria of authenticity, persuasiveness and correspondence in judging the worth of the final written account of 'women in the outdoors'.

Chapter 4 presents a narrative account of the findings, which are discussed in the light of key aspects of the theory outlined and examined in chapter 2. Initially the form and context of the women's adventure experiences are detailed and I identify ways in which they challenge gender role expectations and create opportunities for their adventure participation. In doing so, the negative as well as the positive impact of their regular engagement in outdoor adventure is addressed. Further, I seek to identify early influences of key importance in encouraging an interest in adventurous activity in the outdoors, and in the subsequent establishment of an adult identity as an adventure participant. A claim is made for the significance of a partner with similar interests in adventure, as well as for the importance of freedom to pursue adventurous activities with other males. There follows an examination of the worth of involvement in outdoor adventure, which addresses the significance of fear and the meaning of time spent in the outdoors away from every day life in western society. The final sections consider the importance of relationships arising out of adventure participation, the meaning of the women's long-term involvement in adventure for their roles as teachers, and the significance of gender for their experiences in the outdoors.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the findings and considers the contribution of the research to our understanding of the lives of women committed to participation in

adventurous activities. Reference is made to the theoretical framework employed to analyse the women's experiences in the outdoors and I reflect on the limitations of language and the implications of this for the interpretation of the data. Finally, my own position within the research is briefly explored and recommendations are made for future research to increase understanding of the meanings of participation in outdoor adventure.

Chapter 2

THEORISING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES

Introduction

Adventurous activities are an example of 'deep play'[1] and as a form of leisure and recreation they are growing in popularity. Yet, many non-participants find it difficult to understand what motivates people to seek out situations in which there is an element of danger and risk. Adventurous activities, such as climbing, skydiving and mountaineering, differ from other recreation and leisure activities in that they involve elements of real or perceived physical danger within a context of outcome uncertainty (Ewert and Hollenhorst, 1989). However, rather than a loss of control, participants exert a substantial influence over outcomes, and risk-taking is not generally seen as central by individuals choosing to engage in what is often termed 'risk recreation' (Ewert, 1994). Skills and abilities are balanced against the identified requirements of self-initiated challenges and possible negative outcomes are accepted in the search for positive, exciting experiences (Bernard, 1968; Ewert, 1989). Due to the presence of uncertainty and potential physical harm, adventurous activities provide the opportunity for intense cognitive and affective involvement which can lead to enhanced self-esteem and personal growth (Robinson, 1992). Indeed, participants have reported being able to look upon themselves and the world with heightened perception which has influenced the way in which they experience their everyday lives.

Although various analytical frameworks attempt to explain the motives for voluntary risk recreation, the reasons for participation are not fully understood. Factors that influence involvement are varied and complex, and a personality predisposition in the form of sensation-seeking characteristics or the need for optimal arousal or flow, does not necessarily mean that an individual will seek out or maintain involvement in adventurous activities. At a macro level, Celsi et al (1993) emphasise the significance of influences resulting from cultural and societal complexities, technological change and media enculturation that create a context conducive to high-risk behaviour.

However, interpersonal influence and the social arrangements which surround an individual are likely to be important determining factors (Robinson, 1992). Further, motives are not necessarily going to remain the same across time, space or setting (Lyng, 1990) and are likely to evolve with increased involvement (Celsi et al, 1993).

The outdoors has been called a 'male world' (Loeffler, 1995), seen to be associated with 'male dominance' (Nolan and Priest, 1994). Indeed Ewert (1989:62) concluded that 'the outdoor risk taker is usually relatively young, middle class, and male'. Although women are participating in adventurous activities in ever-growing numbers, their development into leadership roles or positions of responsibility has not kept pace with this increase (Loeffler, 1995). Thus, women continue to be in the minority within the field of adventure, which can discourage other women from becoming involved. Gender (in addition to race, class, age, income, education, and sexuality) has been identified as limiting leisure opportunities (Scraton, 1994) and Warren (1985) sees gender-role socialisation as a major constraint to women's participation in adventurous activities. Women's behaviour is often constrained by the expectations of family members or by the women themselves in response to western society's norms about appropriate female behaviour. The costs involved in participating in adventurous activities, as well as the fact that they usually take place in remote areas, can also be limiting factors. Although claims have been made that gender is not significant within the adventure environment (Powch, 1994), the adventure environment is a social context, a site of shared cultural meanings and constant construction and reconstruction of feminine and masculine identities (Renold, 1997).

Before proceeding further it is important to consider what is meant by the terms 'adventurous activities', 'adventure recreation', 'risk recreation', 'high-risk sports/activities', 'adventure challenge' and 'outdoor adventure' which at times appear to be used interchangeably in literature within the field of adventure. Whilst discrete definitions have been identified (see Ewert and Hollenhorst, 1989; Priest, 1999) some disagreement and confusion remains. The term 'outdoor recreation' is often used synonymously with 'adventure recreation', although the former simply refers to any activity done outdoors (Priest, 1999). In this study, recreational pursuits in the form of adventurous activities are taken to be those involving challenge that

tests a person's competence against mental, social and/or physical risks (Priest, 1999). Risk is the potential to lose something of value (Priest, 1990) which could result in physical, social, mental or financial harm (Brown, 1999). For an activity to be adventurous, it must be voluntary, intrinsically motivating, and the outcome must be uncertain. 'Risk recreation', 'adventure recreation', 'adventure challenge' and 'outdoor adventure' are considered here to be synonymous with 'adventurous activities' which provide elements of real or perceived physical danger for the participant (Ewert and Hollenhorst, 1989). The level of risk inherent in a particular adventurous activity will vary, and high risk sports are taken to mean those involving a high potential for personal injury or death.

Understanding women's participation in adventurous activities, requires that this should be seen as part of their lives as a whole. Due to the limited research focusing on the lives of women seriously committed to adventurous activities, literature within a broader sporting context is considered. This chapter explores research on women's experiences of leisure in the form of sport, thereby enabling their lives to be examined within the broader context of material, cultural and ideological constraints. Subsequently, initial and continuing socialisation into adventure is addressed. The significance of early recreation experiences alongside the notion of optimal arousal is also considered, after which the discussion shifts to examine the nature and potential of the environmental setting within which adventure is experienced. The earlier focus on women and leisure is then developed into a more specific exploration of women's experiences in the field of adventure. As identified above, participation in risk recreation depends on a range of interrelating sociological, psychological and cultural factors. Consideration is thus given to the socio-cultural context of voluntary risk-taking in addition to the process of motive evolution for adventure participants. Finally, attention is directed to the key motive of significant relationships developed through adventure in the outdoors.

Women, leisure and empowerment[2]

According to Blinde et al (1994:51) women remain a disempowered group because they have been denied opportunities 'to develop skills and qualities that could assist in

challenging their disadvantaged position in society'. Henderson (1990) sees leisure[3] involvement for women as a possible means of liberation from restrictive gender roles, and consequently a means for empowerment. Through leisure, 'women can learn to value themselves as individuals and obtain the confidence to challenge society's gender role restrictions and stereotypes' (Henderson, 1990:229). Leisure has been identified as a matter of choice, but as highlighted by Mowl and Towner (1995) this choice is made within a system of opportunities and constraints that vary according to who we are and where we are. A number of researchers have identified gender as a constraint to behaviour and opportunity in leisure (Colley, 1984; Glyptis and Chambers, 1982; Henderson et al., 1989; Scraton, 1994). Research has suggested that many women do not believe they deserve or have the time to engage in leisure (see Wimbush and Talbot, 1988), particularly in the light of perceived role obligations and responsibilities to others. In defining leisure, women studied by Shank (1986) placed importance on being alone, which according to Leaman and Carrington (1985) is in direct conflict with a belief held by some that their life is in some way at the disposal of others. Many women have role expectations within the family which often include responsibility for domestic work and child care. Green and Hebron (1988) found that the social life of a woman who marries often becomes that of her husband's, and as identified by Grovaerts (1985), as a woman's roles within the family increase (for example, with the addition of motherhood), her leisure becomes bound by gender role obligations.

The problematic nature of regarding women as a homogeneous group is a focus of critiques of studies of gender and social exclusion in the field of leisure (Deem, 1999). Generalisations about leisure cannot be applied to all women, and at the beginning of the 1990s research on women's leisure was only just beginning to focus on women with different lifestyles and in different life situations (Henderson, 1990). Age, race, class, marital status, economic status and sexual identity may dramatically influence the leisure of individual women, and a greater variation in leisure behaviour is likely to exist among women than between males and females (Bernard, 1974; Deem, 1987). As highlighted by Scraton and Watson (1998:126), it is important to recognise that 'differences between women can and do lead to different levels of access and

experience'. In a study of the leisure implications of women's employment, Kay (1996:60) considers the extent to which paid employment can enhance leisure opportunities for women. Although employment encourages women to 'reconfirm their individuality and give greater priority to their own needs', Kay concludes that women able to integrate their work and family roles in ways that facilitate leisure participation produce a minority lifestyle strongly differentiating them from the rest of the female population.

Even though women's leisure may be more pronounced among those who are white, middle class, young, educated and in full-time employment (Henderson, 1990; Kay, 1996), the leisure of men and women in similar life situations has been found to vary considerably (Carrington et al, 1987). Women experience less time for leisure, and such time available is often fragmented (Deem, 1996). According to Allison and Duncan (1987) they are not generally able to compartmentalise their time as men do, so leisure activities are often followed when the opportunity presents itself. Differences between the leisure of men and women are also evident in the type of activities, venues and companions (Deem, 1987). Bialeschi and Henderson (1986) identified home as the most common place that leisure occurs for women[4], as activities can be done at short notice, many can be combined with household duties and few are costly (Deem, 1987). Women have been identified as major facilitators of the leisure of men and children, which according to Deem (1987:426) might involve 'accompanying them, watching them, encouraging them, or staying in with children or adult dependents whilst other household members go out'. A recent study conducted by Thompson (1999:119) identified that 'constructions of gender, ideologies of motherhood and wifehood, economic relations and the ascribed significance of sport' all mutually reinforce women's widespread facilitation of family members participation in sport. Thompson predicted that as the rewards for sport increase, these constructs will become even more strongly reinforcing. To summarise, factors such as child care and family responsibilities (Deem, 1986), cost, scheduling of activities (Alberta, 1988) and safety (Henderson et al, 1989) are all likely to be significant in determining whether leisure activities are followed by women away from the home.

Whilst many women's leisure interests are domestically-based, Deem (1987) highlights that a significant proportion of women (particularly those in their teens, twenties, forties, fifties and middle class) do follow leisure pursuits away from the home. Women's leisure outside of the family has tended to centre around social interaction, generally with other women (Green, 1998a; Henderson, 1990) whose company they appear to value (Wimbush, 1988). Deem (1986:149) suggests that the qualities displayed in women's leisure which are not often found in men's, are 'solidarity with their own sex in a spirit of friendship and companionship rather than competition or status' and 'an emphasis on caring and co-operation'. In a study by O'Neill (1993) of the experiences of women from diverse economic and social circumstances, leisure with other women was considered an empowering source of identity and personal growth. Green (1998b) identifies women's talk with other women as a key, satisfying aspect of leisure activities, and a powerful medium in the process of friendship, the construction of personal identity and the maintenance of gender divisions. She suggests that whilst women-only leisure contexts provide opportunities for resistance to gender stereotyping, much of the 'gender work' that sustains the identities of women and men may take place during leisure. A wide variety of out-of-home activities are available for women but attendance appears to be determined largely by age, class and race (see Deem, 1987). For example, according to Deem (1987) women attending evening classes are likely to be educated and middle class, with children entering their teens. An additional consideration likely to be significant for many women is the approval and/or support of a partner and/or family members.

A number of significant studies of women's leisure conducted in the UK in the 1980s (see Deem, 1986; Green et al, 1987; Wimbush, 1986) were consistent in supporting the importance of gender as a major division structuring experiences and perceptions of leisure. Subsequently, research has focused on leisure as a form of resistance to traditional gender stereotyping rather than simply as a site for oppression (Deem, 1999). According to Scraton and Watson (1998:123) universal explanations of leisure behaviours found in the structural analyses of the 1980s have been replaced by a 'concern to acknowledge differences, a plurality of voices and multiple leisure

choices'. Such discussion is set against the identification of a fragmented world in which the structures and certainties of class, gender and race 'become blurred and increasingly irrelevant to the changed postmodern condition' (Scraton, 1994:250). Postmodern sociology emphasises multiple realities and the social construction of identity, and refers to difference and diversity rather than inequality (Green, 1998b). Gender is seen as one category along with race and social class, and identity has become more fluid making individual choice about lifestyle more possible (Green,1998b).

> The stress in postmodernist sociology on identity, subjectivity and culture, facilitates a theorization of women as active agents in constructing their lives rather than as passive victims of overdetermined structures, which connects with the expanding interest in leisure as resistance and empowerment. (Green,1998b:174).

This is not to suggest that all or even most of women's leisure can be seen to function as resistance to traditional gender relations; leisure for many women continues to be constrained, not least by material conditions. However, as argued by Shaw (1994), leisure should not necessarily be seen as oppressed; it is the meanings and the context that determine whether it can be perceived as resistance. Green (1998b:172) emphasises that for women enmeshed in patriarchal cultures 'that continue to define them primarily as (heterosexual) wives and mothers', the importance of leisure in terms of its potential for resistance and renewal should not be underestimated.

Women, leisure and sport

British studies have identified sport as playing a relatively minor role in the leisure of most women (Green et al, 1985). Deem (1987) found the sports and physical activities popular with women to be those that were accessible, inexpensive and flexible in terms of time and place. Walking, swimming, keep fit and yoga are examples of activities that can fit these requirements, with keep-fit and yoga being mostly pursued in women-only groups.

> Where women do participate in sport as part of their leisure they tend to do so in sports which are female dominated; only a tiny minority are involved in male dominated sport...sport is seen as a male activity and as a children's activity; dislike of it begins at school and is reinforced by dominant images of women in the media and elsewhere as either sex objects...or as mothers and housewives; both categories are seen as physically weak. (Deem, 1987:428)

Research identifies leisure in the form of sport as one setting in which women can acquire qualities facilitating their empowerment and draw confidence from their capabilities (Cantor and Bernay, 1992; Wright and Dewar, 1997). In a study of college students Binde et al (1993) found that at a personal level, involvement in sport facilitated perceptions of a competent self and the adoption of a proactive approach to life. For the women questioned by Wright and Dewar (1997) about the transformative effects of movement activities, overcoming challenges and achieving personal goals provided opportunities for control and contributed to their sense of identity. However, for many women, participation in organised sport, or sport seen as male dominated (for example, football, mountaineering), requires great determination and support from a partner or family members (Deem, 1987).

Although fewer women than men participate in sporting activities, there can be no doubt that sport is of great personal importance to many women, contributing to a sense of identity and competence in addition to providing a source of enjoyment (Bryson, 1987). However, according to Bryson, (1987:350) sport has been 'so thoroughly masculinized that it seems unlikely that it can be reclaimed to serve women's interests'. Even in sporting activities where women predominate, the organisation is often in the hands of men (Deem, 1987). Women's opportunities in sport have increased, and more women are participating in varied forms of sport and exercise (Bennet et al, 1987), however Darlison's (1983:38) statement that 'if women want to play the game, they are going to have to play it by male rules' still holds significance. Through sport, maleness is linked with highly valued and visible skills, which has the effect of inferiorising femaleness and female activities (Bryson, 1987). Hargreaves (1986:112) notes that

> In sport, masculine identity incorporates images of activity, strength, aggression and muscularity and it implies at the same time, an opposite female subjectivity associated with passivity, relative weakness, gentleness and grace.

As emphasised by Bryson (1987) the effects of sport are potent, and attitudes about relative gender capabilities are not confined to the sporting arena. Miller (1976, cited in Bryson, 1987) discusses the way in which emphasis in western society on psychological characteristics regarded as masculine implies as inferior, skills in interpersonal relationships, nurturing and responsiveness considered feminine.

In a study by Coakley and White (1999), current forms of gender relations were found to constrain the decisions of girls and young women to participate in sport. However, even though the ways in which traditional gender definitions had been incorporated into their identities and their lives were clearly reflected in their decisions about participation, none of the young men, and very few of the young women demonstrated awareness of inequities related to gender. Coakley and White (1999) found overt resistance to traditional ideas about gender to be rare. In an American study by Blinde et al (1994:55) of women athletes from university sports teams, respondents believed that by being successful and working hard in 'a man's domain', as well as displaying emotional and physical strength, they countered negative images of women. By demonstrating 'what women can do', 'that women aren't wimps' and that 'women can do men's things', the athletes considered themselves as positive role models for girls and women. However, Blinde at al (1994) consider that,

> Despite their belief that sport participation challenges societal perceptions about women and their identification of the more visible forms of gender equality in sport, women athletes in this study generally lack a critical understanding of the underlying ideology that perpetuates their disadvantaged position. Further, most athletes disavow the feminist label, rarely display a feminist consciousness, and do not engage in activism associated with women's issues.

In seeking to explain the lack of awareness of women's issues found in these athletes, Blinde et al refer to the gender composition of leadership positions in women's intercollegiate sport, with slightly more than half of all head coaches, and more than four-fifths of programme administrators being male. They also identify what they term the 'overall conservative value climate of the sport environment' which promotes adherence to rules and authority, restricts displays of activism, and encourages athletes to seek individual rather than structural solutions to problems. Women's 'solutions' to inequality in sport clearly include attempting to succeed in an area traditionally viewed as male dominated, and judged on attributes and values considered masculine. Consequently, women are often competing on unequal terms and are unequally recognised for their achievements (Bryson, 1987). Indeed, some of the athletes in Blinde et al's study saw inequalities between men's and women's sport as justifiable because the men's programmes brought in more money and supporters.

Having presented some of the main issues concerning women's leisure, the following section considers significant influences on initial and continued participation in sport and adventurous activities. Research within the field of adventure has given little attention to the process of socialisation, and influences leading to adult involvement, thus I draw on literature focusing more generally on socialisation and sport in order to address this lacuna.

Socialisation into sport and adventurous activities

In considering the main topics examined within research focusing on socialisation and sport, of particular interest here is initial socialisation into sport along with continuation of sport participation. Stevenson (1990) suggests that young people are introduced to sport through important relationships in their lives which influence continued participation through specific forms of support and encouragement. As identified by Brim (1966:8) in the life of every person

> there are a number of people directly involved in socialisation who have great influence because of their frequency of contact, their primacy, and their control over rewards and punishment.

Significant others continue to influence values, behaviour, and dispositions throughout a person's life, although the salience of a particular individual will change as new significant others become prominent (Spreitzer and Snyder, 1976). In a study seeking to formulate a model of influences leading to adult involvement in sport, Spreitzer and Snyder (1976) concluded that parents (particularly the fathers) interest in sport tended to encourage the involvement of children of both sexes, and markedly increased the likelihood of this participation being continued into youth sport. Sport participation as a youth was found to be a relatively strong predictor of adult sport for men, but not for women. However, parental encouragement was found to be more important for women than for men. The strongest predictor of adult participation in sport, was a combination of perceived athletic ability (which was influenced by participation as a youth), and having a spouse involved in sport to reinforce earlier encouragement from parents. The conclusion that participation in sport roles is positively related to the amount of social support coming from significant others (particularly parents)

has been mirrored in several studies conducted in the 1970s and 1980s (see Greendorfer, 1977; Weiss and Knoppers, 1982). In particular, Snyder and Spreitzer (1978) found level of sport participation to be directly related to the degree of parental encouragement. They also identified level of sport involvement to be a good predictor of perceived athletic ability, with higher levels of participation contributing to the prominence of athletic ability as part of a person's identity.

Many of the studies on socialisation into sport, including those outlined above, have been based on the assumption that socialisation involves an 'internalization' of normative influences in a person's environment. Whilst these studies have led to some important conclusions concerning the significance of relationships in the learning of sport roles, according to Coakley (1993b:170) this 'socialisation-as-internalization' approach has been widely criticised 'for ignoring the contents and dynamics of the social relationships through which socialisation occurs'.

> Focusing on the products of socialisation leads researchers to overlook the processes that constitute the core of socialisation itself. Missed, therefore, are the tensions, negotiations, misunderstandings, and resistances that characterize the social relationships associated with a person's entry into and participation in a particular sphere of the social world. (Coakley, 1993b:170)

Whilst the findings of the earlier studies on socialisation into sport have been relatively consistent, there appears to be some confusion about the relative influence of different socializing agents during various stages of a person's life. This confusion has been attributed to methodological factors relating to samples that have been identified as limited and biased, and the inconsistent application of variables, such as 'significant other influence' across studies (Coakley, 1993a). More recently, many social scientists have moved to a 'socialisation-as-interaction' approach in which people are seen as self-reflective, active decision-makers, involved in the creation of social and cultural formations which serve as parameters for social relations, action and identity development (Coakley, 1993b). Studies employing this model (Coakley and White, 1999; Donnelly and Young, 1988; Stevenson, 1990) have to some extent avoided the earlier confusion. They have generally used qualitative data collection methods, and

rather than reflecting the assumption that people 'get socialised into sport', their work is based on the assumption that 'human beings become involved in sport through a series of shifting, back and forth decisions made within the structural, ideological, and cultural context of their social world' (Coakley, 1993a:575). In employing a socialisation-as-interaction approach, they have attempted to: '(a) uncover the meanings and dynamics underlying the process of sport involvement and the social relationships associated with involvement, and (b) understand sport participation as an integral part of the social and cultural context in which it occurs' (Coakley, 1993:171).

Construction and reconstruction of a sporting identity

When someone participates in a new sport, they often take on a new role which involves changes to their identity - to who they are and how they think of themselves (Donnelly and Young, 1999). According to Coakley and Donnelly (1999) the formation of a sporting identity involves demonstrating appropriate sports skills, as well as social and cultural skills that lead to acceptance by other participants. When individuals are young, the development of a sporting identity is difficult to distinguish from overall identity development, whereas it is much clearer when individuals participate in a specific sport during the teens and young adulthood (Donnelly and Young, 1999). Decisions about sport participation are ongoing, and are strongly influenced by social relationships and whether these continue to reaffirm sporting identities (Coakley and Donnelly, 1999). In addition, participants need to alter personal priorities, and develop commitments, grounded in assessments of success potential and the development of personal reputations and a sporting identity (Stevenson, 1990).

In a study focusing on young men and women's involvement in sport, Coakley and White (1999) found gender to be particularly significant in perceptions of the importance of sport. In considering transition to adulthood, none of the twenty-six women interviewed saw sport as important, whereas the thirty-three young men associated participation in sport with becoming a man. Sport was seen by the majority of the men as an opportunity to extend and display physical

competence. This was not seen as important by the women, although a few used their sports performance to gain respect from men. Young (1990:146) illustrates gender differences in bodily experience by claiming that many women approach sport hesitantly, and tend

> not to put their whole bodies into engagement in a physical task with the same ease and naturalness as men...The woman's motion tends not to reach, extend, lean, stretch, and follow through in the direction of her intention...We often experience our bodies as fragile encumbrances, rather that the media for the enactment of our aims.

Whilst this statement presents a rather narrow view of women's physicality, the encouragement of boys to participate more freely in sport than girls from an early age is likely to influence the way in which girls and boys express themselves physically. The men interviewed by Coakley and White (1999) seemed more inclined to describe themselves as 'athletes' even when they did not play as much sport as some of the women, and both groups generally saw sports activities as masculine. Scraton (1992) suggests that it is almost as if women have to make a choice between female identity and sport involvement. Decisions to participate in sport were also found by Coakley and White (1999:62) to be influenced by social class:

> Those from working-class families, where gender relations can be more traditional than in middle-class families, tended to follow the pattern of males continuing to participate into early adulthood while females ceased participation in their early teens.

A lack of money often tied to social class, constraints relating to safety, and the expectations of a partner have been identified as having a significant impact on the sport participation of young people (Coakley and White, 1999). Money can be related to facilities, transportation, equipment and entry or membership fees. For women money can also be important in overcoming constraints relating to safety. For example, Coakley and White (1999) found that in some instances, access to a car rather than having to rely on public transport, facilitated participation for women. Parental consideration of safety was also found to impinge on where daughters could go to play sport, when they had to return, and who they could go with; whereas the young men interviewed rarely mentioned

such parental constraints. This clearly effected the young women's commitment to sport which had to be carefully considered in the light of these constraints. Coakley and White also found that the decision by a young woman to participate in a particular sport was strongly influenced by the similar interests of a partner, whereas for the men this was not the case. Women appeared to give priority to their relationship, and sport that did not fit in with what their partner liked was dropped.

Socialisation into sport is an ongoing process that is never complete; thus according to Coakley (1986), the decision to stay involved is continually problematic. Donnelly and Young (1990) note that rather than being marked by a single decision or event, or the influence of a particular person or set of people, socialisation into sport involves an extended interactive process. Rather than being passive in the socialisation process, young people have been found to actively negotiate decisions concerning participation, in the light of how this is seen to fit with the rest of their lives, including their concepts of selves and their personal goals as they move into adulthood (Coakley, 1993b). Coakley and White (1999:85) consider sport participation to be an integral part of young people's lives, occurring

> when they decide it will help them extend control over their lives, present themselves to the rest of the world as a competent person, and reaffirm the way they think about themselves.

As young men are more likely to see sport participation having this effect on their lives than young women, they are more likely to take part (Coakley, 1993b). Consequently, although factors relating to money and social class are important in the process of sport participation, 'opportunities and constraints related to gender and gender relations are especially influential in decision-making processes' (Coakley and White, 1999:85). Coakley and White (1999) concluded that people choose to take part in sport at different points in their life for different reasons, accordingly sport participation patterns shift over time depending on constraints, opportunities, memories of the past, social relationships, and changes in the self-conceptions and lives of young women and men.

With continued participation in sport a person develops a degree of commitment which requires a willingness to invest time, energy and money in the endeavour. Sport is considered important enough to engage in even in the face of other activity spheres, or when a person is not required to do so. Snyder and Spreitzer (1978) suggest that certain rewards or gratifications serve to enhance and maintain a commitment to sport and physical activities. These they identify as: intrinsic satisfaction and pleasure received from physical movement (this approximates to the concept of "flow"); extrinsic rewards including health; sociability including companionship and mutual esteem; the avoidance of negative sanctions such as embarrassment due to non-participation and the maintenance of a sporting identity and the skills that sustain that identity. However, continued participation in sport is problematic, and there appears to be a well-documented, universal pattern of declining involvement in physical activity and sport between youth and adulthood, and with age (Curtis and White, 1984; Vanreusel et al, 1997). Whilst a definitive explanation is lacking, several possible explanations have been proposed for the pattern of declining involvement by age. These include factors such as: inadequate early socialisation into sport; a lack of adult role models; higher priority given to other leisure interests; a lack of encouragement by significant others such as a partner or friends; a perception that adults do not have the necessary skills to participate in sport; and limited time or commitment due to family or job responsibilities (McPherson, 1984). However, providing a deep commitment to an activity has been established earlier in the life cycle, Curtis and White (1984) found that although adults participate in fewer activities, they generally devote more time to each, thus demonstrating greater specialisation.

The roots of socialisation into leisure, sport and physical activity are found in children's play. Although leisure behaviour is likely to change during a person's lifespan, according to Iso-Ahola (1980) early recreation experiences provide the setting and direction for future individual changes in leisure patterns. The following two sections introduce the notion of an optimal level of arousal which, it is suggested, motivates children's early activity and can influence subsequent

leisure choices. Implications for participation in adventurous activities are then identified, with particular reference to the work of Zuckerman (1979) on sensation seeking characteristics. Key texts from the 1970s and 1980s, which continue to be referenced by more recent writers, have been considered due to their significance within the areas of and play and optimal arousal.

The significance of early recreation experiences for adult leisure

Children have a tendency to seek and conquer challenges, and all human beings have a need for optimal arousal or incongruity (Rudestam, 1997). This optimal level of arousal is different for each person, and is a key motivator of play and leisure both in childhood and adulthood (Ellis, 1973). As identified by Iso-Ahola (1980:102) an individual 'is in a continuous process of seeking and avoiding interactions with the environment, striving to sustain an optimal level of arousal'. Thus, the optimal level of arousal is maintained by adjusting the complexity and novelty of input from the environment (Witt and Ellis, 1985). If experience is similar to that previously encountered, a child is likely to become bored and seek more novelty, uncertainty and incongruity through play. Living in an environment where this is not possible can lead to stimulus deprivation which has been found to result in changes to biochemical and anatomical structures, retarded locomotor performance, impaired problem-solving ability and a sense of lack of control. Hence, an appropriate match between a child and the environment is important; it directly affects perceptions of mastery which underlie an adult's self-concept, and provide a foundation for effective and satisfying living (Iso-Ahola, 1980).

Behaviour termed play is often intrinsically motivated and engaged in for its own sake. When intrinsically motivated, it is frequently very satisfying and enjoyable (Weisler and McCall, 1976). Consequently, in order for children to play, external constraints need to be eliminated, enabling behaviour to be largely under the child's control. Expected extrinsic, task irrelevant rewards have been found to undermine intrinsic motivation and free play, turning recreation into work and impairing performance and creativity (Condry, 1977). Iso-Ahola (1980) suggests that optimal arousal or incongruity are likely to be experienced when children are allowed to select

their own play activities independently; when parents do not intervene by providing extrinsic rewards or surveillance. Children should be able to manipulate and explore in a stimulating environment that can be modified and over which they can exercise control (Ellis, 1973). Enriched play environments 'widen children's repertoire of responses, and also their motivation to utilize this range in a complex, innovative and varied way in old and new environments' (Iso-Ahola, 1980:103). According to Yoesting and Burkhead (1973) the level of arousal experienced during childhood play has been found to have implications for that sought through adult leisure. If the stimulation received through play is poor, a person may come to expect a low level of arousal and may regard this as optimal. This may then limit the tendency to seek incongruous, novel and complex experiences through leisure in later life (Iso-Ahola, 1980). As emphasised by Iso-Ahola (1980:129), limited opportunities for childhood play that is intrinsically motivated, stimulating and self-directed,

> tend to impair cognitive and behavioural flexibility in adult leisure pursuits, while this in turn may reduce one's capacity for psychological coping during the entire life span.

The implications of optimal arousal for sport participation

The notion of an optimal level of arousal, or an 'optimal stimulation level' that individuals seek to achieve has been proposed by several writers (Berlyne, 1960; Rudestan, 1997). As explained by Pargman (1993) individuals require a certain amount of excitement, and their pursuits, interests and preferences serve to provide ideal stimulation conditions. However, the need for stimulation varies from individual to individual (Donnelly, 1978) and some people prefer a calm environment, whereas 'others actively seek to increase their arousal by selecting novel, complex, or unpredictable situations' (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974:315). Consequently, optimal levels of stimulation are likely to be reflected in travel destinations, career preference and sport and leisure choices. Zuckerman (1979:277) considered the trait of seeking stimulation, and identified a personality dimension which he termed 'sensation seeking'; this he defined as

> The need for varied, novel, and complex sensations and experiences, and the willingness to take physical and social risks for the sake of experience.

Based on empirical evidence (see Stanton, 1976) Zuckerman (1979) concluded that high sensation seekers are likely to engage in behaviour that most people consider moderately risky, whereas low sensation seekers tend to avoid such situations. Both physical and social risks are available within the realm of sport, and Zuckerman's Sensation Seeking Scale (SSS) (originally constructed in 1964, and used to measure individual risk-taking tendencies) has been used to examine the relationship between sensation seeking, anxiety and participation in various sports and activities (Zuckerman, 1983). High sensation seekers have been found to engage in sports perceived as physically dangerous, such as skydiving, rock climbing and white water kayaking, and are inclined to avoid activities with little potential for risk taking (Pargman, 1993). Adventure sports involve some uncertainty of outcome, which according to Donnelly (1978) produces higher levels of stimulation than 'certain' sports if factors such as level of competition are similar. Stewart and Hemsley (1984) discovered that high sensation seekers have a tendency to underestimate risk when compared with low sensation seekers, and in situations of equally appraised risk, high sensation seekers experience less anxiety. They are also more likely to change locality and travel to exotic places even if it seems risky (Zuckermann, 1979). In addition, day-to-day stress has been found by Smith et al (1978) to impact more on low than high sensation seekers.

Evidence suggests that individuals tend to voluntarily select sport environments enabling them to satisfy their need for stimulation (Donnelly, 1978). However, the conclusion that high sensation seekers are attracted to risky sports has been questioned by Rowland et al (1986) who constructed the hypothesis that a prime determinant of the sports selection made by high sensation seekers is a need for new and varied experiences. Having administered Zuckerman's Sensation Seeking Scale and a life-span inventory of sports participation to 201 undergraduate students, Rowland et al (1986) concluded that over time, high sensation seekers tend to become involved in more sports than low sensation seekers, only some of which are considered risky. Therefore they suggested that although high sensation seekers appear to be more attracted to high-risk sports, engagement in such activities may result from a tendency to sample more activities, rather than their attraction to risk *per se*.

Of particular significance to those choosing to pursue adventurous activities that involve risk, is the fact that generally these take place within a natural outdoor environment. This dynamic environment presents challenges to be overcome, often in order to survive. The following section explores the nature of the outdoor environment, and the dynamics and reported impact of adventure experiences in the outdoors.

Adventure experiences in the outdoors

A growing body of research indicates that as humans our identity is rooted in the natural world and we have a need to affiliate with nature and the natural environment. Kellert (1997) suggests that this urge to connect with the natural world is as vital for human development today as it was in the past, although various forces in modern life have led to the diminishing role of wild nature as an integral part of our everyday lives. Nevertheless, modern western society has retained and even enhanced opportunities for experiencing nature through outdoor recreation, and a growing number of people, especially young adolescents and adults (Whelan, 1991), do seek regular recreational contact with the natural world (Scherl, 1989). Kellert (1997) cites four adaptive advantages to be gained from intimate contact with nature, namely, enhanced physical fitness and vitality; increased self-confidence and self-esteem; expanded curiosity and imagination; and greater calm and peace of mind. Ulrich (1999) reports that findings from over 100 studies have demonstrated that one of the key perceived benefits of recreation experiences in the wilderness[5] is emotional well-being and the reduction of immediate and long-term stress. Humans require arousal and activity as a condition of mental and physical health, and research suggests that experiences in 'artificial' environments rarely offer the benefits and pleasures of direct contact with an aesthetically pleasing, physically challenging landscape in the wild (Kellert, 1997). Indeed Kellert (1997:89) describes how,

> Beyond the physical fitness, a feeling of aliveness flows from the intimate experience of nature. Immersing oneself in natural settings produces a heightened vitality - a sense of becoming more attuned and receptive to the myriad details of time and place. The grey rocks assume a more vivid texture...even the air takes on a discernible quality. Our absorption produces a sharpened awareness and experience of the world: time seems to stretch out; a sensation emerges of *living* life rather than just passing through it.

A number of studies (see Fredrickson and Anderson, 1999; Young and Crandall, 1984) have suggested that meaningful change (particularly in terms of self-concept and self-perception) takes place within an individual when undertaking activities in natural, wilderness settings. In the case of an extended adventure programme this change may become evident after returning to everyday life. Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) found that the experience of living in the natural environment and coping with physical and mental challenges enhanced self-discovery, and led to feelings of competence and self-confidence. After returning from their outdoor experiences, when compared with a control group, participants were found to be more realistic about their strengths and weaknesses, have greater self-sufficiency in the use of their abilities and time, show a greater concern for others, and have a more positive view of themselves. They remembered the wilderness as awesome and compelling, recalled the tranquility of certain settings, and had an increased awareness of nature in the every-day environment (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989). Similarly, Ewert (1989) found that participants from several outdoor programmes reported an enhanced capacity for confronting challenge and problem-solving situations, often years after the experience. Whilst the acquisition of outdoor skills - such as those developed in climbing, kayaking, hiking - might no longer be seen as relevant in a world of modern technology and urbanisation, there are clearly many benefits to be derived from exercising competence in the natural world (Kellert, 1997). Kellert (1997:91) suggests that 'even today, critical thinking and risk taking remain attributes of an adaptive and successful life'.

Humans strive to overcome challenge and adversity, and according to Kellert (1997) the natural environment has always been unrivalled in presenting a context for the development of such traits. Although in modern society wilderness survival is no longer vital, Kellert suggests that a major reason why people continue to seek adventure - often involving considerable risk and danger - is the potential for personal development in the form of enhanced physical health and competence; mental ability; personal identity and autonomy; sense of adventure and perseverance; and courage. Natural environments consisting of mountains, crags, rivers, swamps and forests, often with wild landscapes in remote settings, offer visitors the challenge of testing

themselves with exacting but soluble problems. They are able to take full responsibility for their actions, and experience self-growth resulting from outcomes being attributable to their own efforts (McAvoy and Dustin, 1983). Such places allow immersion in the unknown and the unfamiliar with the anxiety that that produces, and fully engage emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual energies in responding intelligently to environmental challenge (Drengson, 1980).

To summarise, when those seeking adventure go into the wilderness, many come away changed (Miles, 1999). As suggested by McAvoy (1999), wilderness provides rare opportunities for self-growth. In an environment physically difficult to negotiate, there are opportunities for challenge, choice and the testing of oneself to personal limits (Schreyer et al, 1978). Instantaneous rewards are given for effort; there are opportunities for solitude, and danger can be assessed and managed. Fear and anxiety can be converted into mastery and achievement through skill, co-operation and hard work. Self-confidence and feelings of competence are increased, and 'boundaries defining what is possible for them in various areas of their lives are moved, extending their visions of their personal potential' (Miles, 1999:322). Many of the adults in the wilderness research conducted by Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) considered their outdoor adventure experiences so important and valuable that they led to the realisation that their everyday lives lacked these qualities. However, several of the women questioned about their wilderness experience by Fredrickson and Anderson (1999:31) indicated that periods of solitude 'had left them feeling rejuvenated and gave them a renewed sense of hope about the challenges that were waiting for them back home'. Having summarised 73 research reports focusing on Outward Bound programmes, Burton (1981, cited in Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989) concluded that the evidence supported positive gains (largely in self-concept) and a surprising lack of negative outcomes.

Having explored the environment as a context for adventure, the discussion now focuses on women's experiences of adventure 'in the outdoors'.

Women in the outdoors

Research and anecdotal evidence suggests that in general, there is neither equality of experience nor equality of access for women in the field of adventure (Humberstone,

1994). Interestingly, an examination of papers focusing on outdoor education and gender identifies a marked increase since 1982 in references to women, and reveals an increasing trend for women to be featured in research/evaluation and educational literature more than men (Neill, 1997). However, according to Humberstone (1996:200) women are significantly under-represented at all other levels in outdoor adventure, and rather than empowerment, many have experienced oppression in situations dominated by men (Richards, 1999). In addition to social and economic factors which limit women's participation in adventurous activities - as in other areas of leisure and recreation - (Warren, 1996), many men still discourage or even resent women's presence in the outdoors (Graham, 1997). Whilst the adventure environment may no longer be 'a man's world', it is still associated with male dominance[6] (Nolan and Priest, 1994) and generally judged against masculine definitions of competence (Loeffler, 1997). According to Humberstone (2000) the majority of providers and policy makers are still white males, and nearly all outdoor centres are still managed by men.

Although making generalisations can be misleading, the fact that differences tend to exist in the way in which men and women both function and lead in the outdoors has been clearly identified (Graham, 1997; Jordan, 1992; Warren, 1999). Jordan (1992:63) explains how from a very young age girls are socialised to 'focus on people, become skilled in inter-personal abilities and to care for and nurture others' whereas boys learn to be physically active, take risks, speak out, make firm decisions and cause actions to occur. These different types of behaviour have been found to manifest themselves in gender-specific approaches to leadership in outdoor adventure. Whilst both approaches provide examples of effective leadership, stereotypically outdoor leaders are seen as strong, assertive and task orientated (Eddy et al, 1998), which are traits commonly associated with men (Eagly, 1987; Gerber, 1988). Although some women when in 'followership' and leadership positions do prefer a directive approach, many prefer 'a more consensus-based style where decision making is shared among many and power lies with members of the group' (Jordan, 1992:63). In mixed-gender groups, this type of approach is often seen as a weaker style of leadership, particularly when compared with a traditional style, thus perpetuating the devaluation of women

in leadership roles (Eddy et al, 1998; Jordan, 1992). It is not just male participants who are likely to take a negative view of leader behaviour that does not match a traditional model. Even though they may not feel comfortable with directive leadership, many females hold the same traditional model expectations of leaders, which can undermine their confidence and result in them questioning their competence to lead in the outdoors (Richards, 1999).

Whilst the number of women participating in adventurous activities is increasing (Nolan and Priest, 1994) this is not mirrored in their development as outdoor leaders or in the number of female role models evident within the field of adventure. Traditionally leaders, or those taking up a career or profession in the outdoors, have predominantly been male (Neill, 1997). In a study by Loeffler (1995) of factors influencing women's career development in outdoor leadership, the greatest constraint was perceived to be the presence of powerful male networks which obviously influence the advancement of women. The women interviewed also referred to the constraining influences of gender-role socialisation, low self-esteem, a lack of female role models and mentors and a male-driven emphasis on technical competence. The latter explanation for male-dominated leader roles in the outdoors is supported by Friedrich and Priest (1993) who perceive an over-emphasis in outdoor-leadership training programmes on the teaching of technical skills and an under-emphasis on human relations or people skills. Whilst more recently it has been recognised that both technical and interpersonal skills are important for outdoor leaders, traditionally technical skills have been more highly valued (Jordan, 1996), which according to Warren (1996) has placed many women at a disadvantage. Ruderman et al (1996) found that many women seeking jobs within adventure organisations had previously had less exposure to technical skills and thus were passed over.

Studies also indicate that both women and men prefer at least one instructor of their own gender to act as a role model (Bolton, 1980). However, although evidence for increased representation of females as outdoor leaders is gradually appearing, according to Neill (1997), in organisations with less emphasis on interpersonal skills males continue to dominate positions of responsibility at all levels. Graham (1997:47) found the pool of women leaders in most outdoor organisations to be small, and

pointed out that 'too few women apply for leadership positions, and younger women have too few older women leaders as role models'. In considering gender in relation to leadership effectiveness, Neill (1997) refers to two unpublished studies by Jordan (1989) and Neill and Richards (1996) that evaluated leaders. Jordan (cited in Neill, 1997) found that participants enrolled on an Outward Bound course in Colorado expressed a preference for a male leader, although this was before the course took place. This finding is not supported by Neill and Richards (cited in Neill, 1997) or Powell and Butterfield (1982) who found that any differences in the ratings of male and female leaders tended to diminish as participants learned more about the leaders. There appears to be little evidence to support the notion that females in leadership roles are less effective than males. Graham (1997) suggests that the ideal leader is one who combines traits generally regarded as predominant strengths of either males or females. Whilst women taking on leadership roles face more societal and cultural obstacles than men, Henderson and Bialeschki (1987) suggest that as they gain confidence and strength in the outdoors they are able to experience confidence and strength in other areas of their lives.

It has been suggested that female outdoor adventure participants have been taught to be caretakers rather than risk-takers and have different objectives to males. According to Henderson (1992) women place importance on learning about themselves (and others) and developing their skill and confidence, whereas men are often motivated by competition and the 'quest' or outcome. Women can find the emphasis on technical competence and competition evident in many mixed-sex groups led by men to be intimidating. Consequently, a case has been made by several writers for women-only outdoor experiences (Hornibrook et al, 1997). Loeffler (1995) proposes single-gender groups as a way of attracting more women and girls to attend outdoor programmes. Many of the women in Loeffler's outdoor leadership career development study considered that single-gender training opportunities

> allow women to learn new skills in a safe and nurturing environment. When women feel more comfortable, they are often more willing to take risks of either a physical or emotional nature. Since many outdoor leadership skills require women to act outside traditional gender-roles, a single-gender group can provide support and opportunity to push beyond previously held limits.
>
> (Loeffler, 1997:122)

This is not to suggest that women are less competent than men. Mulqueen (1995) considers that some women are inhibited in mixed-gender groups because they are socialised not to outperform men. However, evidence supports the notion that women lack a *sense* of competence; they do not seem to see or accept their competence as many men do (Loeffler, 1997; Mulqueen, 1995; Steinem, 1992). Loeffler (1997) suggests that single-gender learning environments, along with unbiased mixed-gender learning environments, and supportive learning experiences should be provided to assist women to realise and feel their competence in the outdoors.

Henderson and Bialeschki (1987) conclude their evaluation of a Women's Week adventure experience by suggesting that many women strive for opportunities to relax, learn, participate and lead in the outdoors. The programme they were focusing on was single-gender, low-cost, supportive, had 'shared' leadership and considered participants' needs and preferences, The participants (many of whom had had little previous experience of adventure in the outdoors) valued the single-gender learning environment because they did not have to fulfil any type of role (such as mother or wife/partner). They appreciated the opportunity to 'escape from routine', 'be themselves', and 'show their skills' within a non-competitive environment. Henderson and Bialeschki (1987:28) consider that

> Women want to feel a sense of control over their lives and the roles they choose to fill from day to day. Outdoor experiences such as Women's Week can meet some of the needs for self-understanding, personal growth, and recreation. What better place than the outdoor setting for a woman to regain or to discover a sense of joy and self-confidence.

In a study conducted by Hornibrook et al (1997) a non-competitive atmosphere was considered one of the most important motivations for participating in an all-women adventure programme in Minnesota. The 274 female respondents (average age 42 years; eighty percent were employed as professionals; ninety-three percent held an undergraduate or post graduate degree) also placed importance on a non-judgemental atmosphere, a female facilitator, the opportunity to learn new skills and to recognise their strengths, and the chance to 'be themselves'. Those who had previously participated in a mixed-gender programme considered that their all-women experience: was more relaxed; fostered better communication; was less competitive

(with each other to establish a 'pecking order'); offered more support; and included an increased sense of a 'group experience'. There is evidence to suggest that when women take part in mixed-gender adventure experiences their confidence may be undermined (Allin, 2000) and their accomplishments may be minimised (Henderson, 1992). Women-only adventure programmes provide an alternative environment within which there is less emphasis on differences in physical attributes (Allin, 2000) and women can receive greater recognition for their achievements (Hornibrook et al, 1997).

Whilst evidence suggests that all-women adventure experiences can provide a positive learning environment for many women, it has been proposed that the exclusion of men may limit experiences, and increase dependency on these kinds of programmes (Nolan and Priest, 1994). A few of the women questioned by Hornibrook et al (1997) did identify the exclusion of a male perspective as a weakness of their single-gender adventure programme (although a much larger number saw the absence of males as a positive factor). Both Hornibrook et al (1997) and Yerkes and Miranda (1985) have found the majority of participants on all-women adventure programmes to be educated and successful, although greater beneficial outcomes have been reported by women with a high school education.

Having considered aspects of women's experiences within the field of adventure, it might be concluded that women should be given the same opportunities in outdoor activities and leadership as men. However, as explained by Henderson (1996a) this is often taken to mean equality on men's terms with women striving to become more like men, and get more of what men have always had. An underlying assumption that equality is all about women 'catching up with men' does not question where the values about participation and leadership originate, or whose interests they serve (Henderson, 1996a). Warren (1996) refers to a 'Catch 22' situation where a women attempts to advance within the outdoor field by acquiring exemplary competence in all outdoor skills (and becoming what Warren terms a 'superwomen'). However, this struggle to gain parity in a male-dominated profession, creates a conflict for participants (both men and women) between the stereotypical view of a woman's role, and the reality of the highly competent woman outdoor leader. As explained by Hall

(1996:60) women in the outdoors may be 'difficult to position' in terms of traditionally ascribed notions of the feminine. Warren (1996) suggests that this conflict is overcome by the 'superwoman' being seen as an exception, unrepresentative of ordinary women and therefore not a threat to participants' world view of women. Warren also proposes that while women participants may feel admiration for a 'strong' female leader, they may also feel intimidated by someone who shows no apparent fear, which means the 'superwoman' is unlikely to serve as a role model. Employing a consensual leadership approach, demystifying competence, revealing vulnerabilities, validating feelings, and establishing the individual nature of 'success' have been proposed by Annat (1995) and Warren (1996) as methods that may successfully challenge the myth of the superwoman.

The values that dominate male outdoor culture and male leadership have been internalised by many women wanting to be leaders, and many people trying to increase the participation of women in adventure experiences (Henderson, 1996a). However, the characteristics associated with male participation and leadership are not necessarily desirable in the outdoors (Henderson and Bialeschki, 1991). Alternative models of leadership that foster cooperation, consensus and nurturance may be more liberating for women than traditional masculine-based models that encourage competitiveness, authoritarianism and aggression. Referring to 'feminine-appropriate' and 'masculine-appropriate' participation and leadership assumes that males and females have distinctive biological natures that are culturally and historically universal (Henderson, 1996a). It also ignores different gender relations, and changing masculine and feminine identities (Hargreaves, 1990). As noted by Henderson (1996a) an approach considered to be women-centred may not be appropriate for all women, any more than the traditional male approach has been representative of the experience of all men. What is beginning to emerge within relevant literature, is reference to new modes of leadership designed to inspire participants, develop their ability and gain their commitment (Naisbitt and Aburdene, 1990). Although a transformative leadership model has been considered by Jordan (1992) as capable of meeting the leadership needs of women in a variety of settings, Henderson (1996a) sees such models as enabling both men and women to provide outdoor experiences

that empower participants. Jordan (1992) describes a transformational approach to leadership as being both people and task orientated. The aim is growth towards every individual's potential, with power to accomplish personal as well as group goals being disseminated to the participants (Hitt, 1990). In arguing for a change to gender-biased leadership styles, Henderson (1996a:115) does however refer to the difficulty of changing traditional perceptions of male and female gender roles when applied to leadership.

> These changes will not be as a result of legislative actions, but rather of a culture that allows women and men both instrumental and expressive characteristics, and does not value males more than females, or products more than processes.

Attempts to understand the experiences of women within the male dominated field of adventure have revealed both resistance and conformity to gender stereotypes. Whilst there are women who challenge traditional expectations of women's capabilities and masculine definitions of competence, male structures generally appear to be accepted and accommodated (Allin, 2000). This mirrors findings highlighted in the first section of this chapter, which introduced the issue of awareness of inequities related to gender within the context of young women's participation in sport. Focusing more specifically on the experiences of women following a career in outdoor education, Allin (2000) found that some of her respondents exhibited naivety concerning gender issues. Rather than perceiving direct opposition from men or an emphasis on 'masculine' values as discrimination (at times leading to tensions resolved by choosing alternative career pathways), some women altered their physical identities to fit in with a male culture. These women tended to have a strong sense of their own physical self, extensive experience within the outdoors, and a high level of technical skill and ability which enabled them to perform well and 'hold their own' within a male dominated environment (Allin, 2000:56). They did not necessarily see an emphasis on hard training as a barrier that could destroy the confidence of less experienced, less competent women. Allin's (2000) research revealed that whilst the presence of other women was generally welcomed, women fully integrated into the male outdoor culture did not necessarily identify with or support less confident women.

In considering issues of gender it is important to acknowledge that in the adventure environment, as in other areas of western society, there are men who exhibit behaviour and personality traits traditionally considered feminine, and women who take on roles more typically identified as masculine. As illustrated above, gender-related tensions do not necessarily arise out of differences *between* the sexes, the issue is more to do with images of masculinity and femininity than of sex *per se*. However, within the adventure environment, research suggests that performance at all levels continues to be judged against masculine definitions of competence (Carter, 2000) which discriminate against women by emphasising the importance of physical strength (Green, 1994, cited in Carter, 2000).

A sociocultural context for voluntary risk-taking

> Why would an individual purposefully seek physical and psychic risk? A paradox seems to exist when individuals who, for example, wear seatbelts, obtain the best personal and property insurances...and seek safety and security in the work-place spend their free time risking it all climbing granite escarpments, hang gliding, or falling earthward at 150 miles an hour in free-fall.
>
> (Celsi et al, 1993)

This is a question that many people not feeling the magnetic attraction of high-risk adventurous activities are likely to ask. In considering the contradiction between seeking danger in the form of environmental challenge, and minimising risk in other aspects of life, one answer is clear. The dangers presented by adventure challenge are anticipated, calculated and seen as controllable. For the experienced participant, there is the perception that risk can be accurately assessed in the light of known competence, enabling challenges of an appropriate level to be identified and undertaken. Whereas in activities such as fairground rides or car journeys such individuals are at least partly reliant on the judgement of others who are often unknown. This is supported by Lyng (1990:862) when he suggests that participants in adventurous activities

> are not typically interested in thrill seeking or gambling because they dislike placing themselves in threatening situations involving circumstances they cannot control. Since amusement-park rides or similar activities involve placing one's fate in the hands of a ride operator of unknown competence, these activities are usually avoided.

Lyng (1990) considers that whilst such risk-takers have confidence in their own competence to deal with danger, they have little regard for the competence of those outside their own activity circles. Neither do they feel comfortable leaving their well-being to the whims of 'fate'. As explained by Lyng (1990:863), 'What they seek is the chance to exercise skill in negotiating a challenge rather than turn their fate over to the roll of a dice'. However, even though risk to a large extent can be accurately assessed, a challenge will not always be overcome. In high-risk activities participants knowingly risk physical injury or death, although they often claim that for those who know what they are doing, there is no risk (Lyng, 1990). Before examining the motivations, behaviours and experiences of individuals who voluntarily participate in adventurous activities, it is useful to consider aspects of the broader sociocultural and socioeconomic contexts within which risk-taking occurs. The work of Elias and Dunning (1986) who suggest that adventure provides compensation for everyday routinization, and Celsi et al (1993) who refer to the evolution of a risk culture and the normalization of risk, holds particular relevance here.

Elias and Dunning (1986) have raised several issues of particular significance when attempting to understand the need of individuals in western society to take part in adventurous activities. They highlight the way in which people's control of excitement in public and even in private has increased, suggesting that in western society such control is expected, and has in part become automatic. However, they contend that

> unless the organism is intermittently flushed and stirred by some exciting experience with the help of strong feelings, overall routinization and restraint as conditions of orderliness and security are apt to engender a dryness of the emotions, a feeling of monotony of which the emotional monotony of work is only one example. (Elias and Dunning, 1986:73)

Elias and Dunning consider that pleasurable excitement in the form of activities they class as 'mimetic[7] or play activities' - these include mountaineering, hunting, fishing and gambling - represent the antithesis of the stale emotions experienced periodically as a result of the purposeful, task-directed routines of life. Exposing oneself to a degree of insecurity and 'playful' risk can temporarily remove the encrustation of routines and result in pleasure and satisfaction as the fears and anxieties inherent in

those activities are resolved.[8] It is a commonly held belief that play-activities provide a liberation from the tensions of work, however this is questioned by Elias and Dunning (1986:89) who suggest that such activities actually restore the measure of tension essential for mental health.

> The essential character of their cathartic effect is the restoration of normal mental 'tonus' through a temporary and transient upsurge of pleasurable excitement.

In contemporary western society as the propensity for excitement in the form of serious threat or danger has diminished, so the compensatory function of play-excitement has increased. Rather than being representative of an 'unreal' fantasy world, Elias and Dunning (1986) suggest that such activities form a distinct and integral part of social 'reality'. This is supported by Lyng (1990:861) who refers to a skydivers description of a jump after exiting the plane: 'Suddenly everything seems very real and very correct. Free-fall is much more real than everyday existence'. An advantage of play activities is that they are sought voluntarily and unlike that arising from unexpected danger, the excitement is usually pleasurable. It can be enjoyed with the social consent of others, and within the context of a mimetic, play activity can offer 'refreshment of the soul' (Elias and Dunning, 1986).

Beck (1992) argues that we live in a society that has become risk averse as a result of an increased awareness of risks that we feel powerless to control. Consequently society seeks to minimise risk, and yet in the past twenty years there has been a rapid increase in high risk leisure consumption. In addition to an increase in the number of participants in high-risk activities, in 1991, the United States Parachute Association indicated that the demographics of the participants had broadened to include an increasing number of active females, and a wider age range (Celsi et al, 1993). In considering specific sociocultural factors that combine to produce a context conducive to participation in risk-taking leisure activities, Celsi et al (1993) propose that such behaviour is fundamentally related to our inherent dramatic enculturation. They see high-risk activities as being dramatic in form, and use a dramatic model as a conceptual framework for exploring high-risk consumption. They believe that the interaction between three key environmental variables: the mass media; social specialisation; and technology, has led to a context conducive to high-risk leisure

pursuits in the twentieth century. The mass media influences dramatic behaviour both by reinforcing the western dramatic worldview through the content of cartoons, comics, music, novels, film and television, and through the dramatic structure of the media itself, and by providing tangible behavioural possibilities, including high-risk sports, that might never have otherwise been considered. (Celsi et al, 1993). Celsi et al consider that forced post-industrial specialisation has resulted in people losing their autonomy and a sense of their role in a cause-and-effect relationship; thus feeling no strong sense of self-efficacy as a result of their work. However, rather than accepting the tension of such alienating circumstances, many living in western society perceive their jobs as being instrumental in the pursuit of activities that provide self-definition and autonomy (Turner, 1976). Thus, in providing tension to be released, and the means with which to seek alternative means of self-fulfilment, the workplace itself can be seen as part of the dramatic model. Technology contributes to the increased consumption of high-risk leisure activities by making them safer and more accessible. The cost of clothing and equipment is lower, improvements in materials and construction have increased safety, and high-risk equipment has become more stylish (Celsi et al, 1993). Thus, as part of the western dramatic model, tension is created by specialised social forms, and outlets in the form of high-risk behavioural alternatives are presented through the mass media. These are supported by the instrumentality provided by technology, creating an overall context conducive to dramatic high-risk leisure behaviour (Celsi et al, 1993).

It has been suggested that certain socioeconomic groups within society are predisposed to risk taking, indeed Mitchel (1983) questioned 108 climbers and found a typical mountaineer at that time to be a male in his thirties, married with one child and in an established professional career. Such people generally enjoy financial security, interpersonal stability, and prestige, consequently their life experiences are characterised by predictability and certainty which according to Mitchell engenders an interest in control-orientated uncertain risk-taking sports and activities such as mountaineering and climbing. Whereas, it has previously been demonstrated that those who live without that security and with prevailing uncertainty, search for a fatalistic sort of advocational risk-taking, such as gambling (Ball, 1972). In spite of an

increase in the consumption of high-risk leisure pursuits (Celsi et al, 1993), activities such as mountain climbing are seen by many as inappropriate and foolish. In discussing the general process of responding to behaviour seen as socially problematic, Mitchell (1983) refers to 'accounts'. These are 'the linguistic devices called into play when taken-for-granted expectations about the ways people will act in a given situation are violated' (Mitchell, 1983:137). Mitchell suggests that a person who is well educated is more able to resist calls for accounts relating to their behaviour, than someone with less status.

Mitchell's assertion that mountain climbing participants are more likely to be in professional occupations is partly contradicted by Lyng (1990) who suggests that the people most likely to seek edgework ought to be those who work in jobs considered highly alienating - for example factory workers. However, the way in which different occupations are described as alienating appears to be at the route of this difference. Traditionally assembly-line workers and those in similar occupations seen to be 'non-skilled' have been seen to be estranged from skilled activity, bereft of opportunity for creative self-expression, and to have little control over the production process (Lyng, 1990). However, Mitchell (1983) suggests that relatively greater feelings of alienation can be experienced by skilled professionals because they do not experience the creative self-expression they expect. As explained by Kidder (1982) working patterns within some professional occupations are becoming more tightly and restrictively managed, with only the illusion of opportunities for creativity and control. Hence workers at many different levels may be forced to work under alienating conditions denying them an opportunity for creative, skilful, self-determining action (Lyng, 1990). According to Lyng (1990) regardless of a person's position in the labour force, a search for such action is the feature that most adventure participants have in common.

> The experience of self in edgework, then, is the direct antithesis of that under conditions of alienation and reification. If life under such circumstances leads to an oversocialized self in which numerous institutional "me's"[9] are present but ego is absent, edgework calls out an anarchic self in which ego is manifest but the personal, institutional self is completely suppressed. It is the suppression of reflective consciousness

> that ultimately produces...the feelings of self-determination and self-actualization reported by people involved in all types of edgework.
> (Lyng, 1990:878)

As observed by Lyng (1990) it is strange than in a society that increasingly offers material 'quality of life', and endeavours to reduce the risks of day-to-day living, people seek self-determination and authenticity through voluntary risk-taking.

The suggestion that feelings of alienation at work can be determined by particular types of occupation is oversimplified. However, an awareness of the ways in which such feelings can motivate participation in adventurous activities contributes to our overall understanding of this behaviour. Clearly there are other factors besides alienation that account for participation in specific types of risk-taking activity. Although equipment used in risk-taking leisure activities such as skydiving, climbing and kayaking is less costly and more readily available than it was twenty years ago, it is still relatively expensive to participate in high-risk sports. Consequently, the skydivers studied by Lyng (1990) tended to either be people with highly paid jobs, or those without family responsibilities, able to dedicate the majority of their earnings to their sport. Lyng suggests that risk-seekers with a lower income tend to select more financially accessible activities such as skateboarding: identifiable as high-risk subcultures. Alternatively, they may reject highly-alienating unskilled work in favour of high-risk occupations such as fire fighting (Lyng, 1990).

This section has considered specific societal, cultural and economic factors that influence the context within which risk-taking leisure behaviour occurs. In addition, it is apparent that internal variables such as predispositions, goals, and psychological states, in addition to interpersonal influences, contribute to determine who will actually become a participant (Celsi et al, 1993). The following section considers internal variables that may influence the motivation of those pursuing high-risk leisure activities.

Evolving motives for participation in high-risk adventurous activities

It has already been identified that a number of internal and external variables are likely to influence whether a person is motivated to participate in adventurous

activities. While these variables afford some insight into high-risk leisure behaviour, a number of writers have reported that motivations for participation evolve over time (Celsi et al, 1993; Ewert, 1985; Grant et al, 1996; Lipscombe, 1999; Robinson, 1992). Ewert and Hollenhorst (1989) describe levels of engagement in an activity as progressing through three stages: introduction, development and commitment. At the introductory stage, a participant is likely to be placed within a large group with a leader who makes the majority of the decisions. Further involvement through a developmental stage will often be as a member of a self-directed group, or an award-bearing course. With a high level of commitment, the activity requires more advanced levels of skill employed in a more hazardous environment. This may involve some teamwork, but the activity is more likely to consist of solo or small group challenges (Ewert and Hollenhorst, 1989). Responsiblity for personal safety ultimately lies with the individual (Ewert, 1994) who according to Lopez (1987) often believes that they have more control over the outcomes than they actually do. Robinson (1992) explains that a person begins to internalise and identify with a particular domain of activity when positive affect and positive self expression is achieved. As an intellectual and emotional commitment to the activity is developed, risk recreation involvement assumes a 'centrality to lifestyle' position, changing a person's attitudes and values (McIntyre, 1989). Robinson (1992:60) suggests that

> For some participants the risk experience may be generalised to whatever other situations the individual is forced into or chooses to enter, using the risk experience as a paradigm to which they refer situations from other realms of life for clarity and decision.

Whilst opinions and findings vary, there is a general agreement that in the initial stages of participation, individuals are influenced by significant others (Brannigan and McDougall, 1983), and motives relate to the pursuit of pleasurable sensations (Celsi et al, 1993; Lyng and Snow, 1986; Robinson, 1992). With continued involvement, a desire for achievement and the construction of a 'new' personal identity become motivating factors. Participants begin to more accurately assess risk and competence enabling them to exercise increased control and anticipate successful outcomes with the avoidance of failure consequences. As the individual learns to manage risk, fear recedes, and concern focuses on skill development and mastery (Lyng, 1990). The

participant begins to identify with the subculture and develops a high-risk identity (Brannigan and McDougall, 1983; Celsi et al, 1993; Robinson, 1992; Shreyer and White, 1979). Celsi et al (1993:11) note that with further increased involvement 'properties of high-risk motivation become increasingly abstract and transcend normal experience'. At this stage the activity has become what Stebbins (1982) terms 'serious leisure' requiring commitment, a sense of obligation and extensive effort. Tinsley and Tinsley (1986) consider this level of application a prerequisite for the intense involvement that can facilitate personal growth. Continued drive for achievement and mastery contributes to the construction of a new favoured identity based on the high-risk subculture. Accurately selected challenges creating a context of controlled uncertainty often lead to the attainment of the transcendent flow state. As previously mentioned, 'flow is spell-like and has addictive qualities that summon individuals back over and over again' (Celsi et al, 1993:12). Flow provides a sense of self-efficacy that is highly satisfying, and is intrinsically rewarding (Robertson, 1986). For the highly committed individual, this state is considered a key motive for participation in high-risk adventure activities (Celsi et al, 1993; Lipscombe, 1999; Robinson, 1992). Thus motives which initially are largely externally derived, evolve to those relating to self-efficacy, identity formation and transcendent experience (Celsi et al, 1993).

Lyng and Snow (1986:175) claim that rather than being attributable to some personality characteristic (such as sensation-seeking), or intrinsic motive force, the pursuit of high-risk activity can be attributed to a socialisation process 'wherein one learns, among other things, the correct vocabulary of motives'. They argue that a number of factors can sensitise a person towards a particular activity, creating impulses to act without determining whether involvement occurs.

> Whether action subsequently occurs and the direction it takes depends upon a number of factors, not the least of which are the attitudes of significant others within the individual's life space. These attitudes...come to function as a source of motivation themselves, shaping and directing so it follows that motive talk, or the accounts we give for our conduct, can become the source of motivation that impels particular individuals to pursue particular lines of action.
>
> (Lyng and Snow, 1986:175)

Consequently, what is of particular significance in determining participation are significant others who influence the behaviour of the individual, and the subculture within which the person operates. Lyng and Snow found that the skydivers in their five-year participant observation study seemed only able to articulate their motives for jumping after they had been socialised into the jumpers' subculture, and been exposed to its vocabulary of motives. These related to the pursuit of pleasurable experiences which was subsequently replaced by the desire for perfection in flight and a sense of fellowship. With greater experience the feeling of omnipotence associated with being able to marshal mental and physical skills to survive life-threatening experiences became the chief motivation for jumping.

Integration into a high-risk subculture: deviance neutralization and risk acculturation

In the process of becoming an accepted member of a high-risk sporting subculture[10], participants are likely to go through various stages of socialisation in the construction of a subcultural identity. They may experience contradictions between expected and actual values and behaviours; some individuals may be unable to adjust to a set of values opposed to the public image of the sport, and some may find their initial experiences of the activity too frightening to continue (Donnelly and Young, 1999). However, for the committed participant who becomes fully socialised into a high-risk subculture, their activity is likely to influence their leisure time, their work time, their choice of career and where they live (Wheaton, 2000). In a long-term ethnographic study of windsurfers, Wheaton (2000) found participation for the dedicated, often obsessed windsurfer to be a whole way of life in which they sought freedom, hedonism and self-expression. The words of a female windsurfer in her early 40s illustrate the way in which her sporting involvement influences other aspects of her life.

> Christmas is all round the weather forecast...I mean sitting around in the middle of the day eating a meal if it's windy is my idea of hell, you know. I won't do it...They'd be hurt, yeah absolutely, well I just tell people that I put windsurfing first, and that's it, and if you don't like it, stuff it. You know it's an addiction and it's a way of life. (Wheaton, 2000:268)

Such dedicated participants adopt a subcultural identity and define themselves through all aspects of their sporting behaviour, labelling themselves as 'a climber' or 'a windsurfer'. In adopting the values and behaviour of the subculture they become an accepted member of the high-risk sporting community. Lyng (1990) explains that the powerful solidarity felt by committed high-risk participants often transcends the boundaries of interpersonal networks so that those from different high-risk communities regard each other as members of the same select group. Both Wheaton (2000) and Donnelly and Young (1999) emphasise that as newcomers progress from an outsider to an insider, they cease trying to impress those outside the sport, and value instead the opinions of other members of the subculture. They also place less emphasis on style and fashion clothing which newcomers and novices use to associate themselves with the subculture. As identified by Wheaton (2000), 'looking the part' does not equate to attaining subcultural status; a subcultural identity such as that constructed by experienced windsurfers is based on ability and commitment.

In a participant observation study of hangliders, Brannigan and McDougall (1983:42) found that the families of those interviewed (with only minor exceptions) were opposed to their activities.

> One flyer reported that his parents were "deathly afraid" of his flying, while a female flyer stated "They've learned to accept it, but they pray I'll quit it before I get killed".

In considering why a person might demonstrate continued involvement in an activity discouraged by family members, Brannigan and McDougall (1983) suggest that some process of deviance neutralisation must occur in order for the participant to maintain a positive self-image. This is supported by Goode (1990) who explains that deviance neutralisation is required for the development of a high-risk identity. As this identity develops, the properties of the high-risk behaviour are placed clearly within the realm of the normal and the ideology of the subculture is gradually assumed (Brannigan and McDougall, 1983; Goode, 1978). The activity is supported by other sport enthusiasts and the participant permeates a subcultural barrier changing from an outsider to an insider.

As insider status is obtained and deviance neutralisation occurs, the participant learns to manage the high-risk context through what Celsi et al (1993) term a process of risk acculturation. To the non-participant, it would appear that the high-risk adventurer views risk as desirable, and becomes addicted to the thrill seen as directly proportional to the degree to which they frighten themselves. However, while a thrilling context may be desired, this does not explain participants' motivation to set goals and develop skill and mastery through a process of reasoned action. In a study of motivations for high-altitude mountaineering, Ewert (1994) found that a person engaged in such activities does not necessarily view them as risky or dangerous, seeing them instead as adventurous and challenging. Brannigan and McDougall (1983) suggest that the notion of risk be displaced by the concept of control, emphasising that the risk sought by participants in adventurous activities needs to be seen as controllable, enabling outcomes to be attributed to ability rather than random chance. Although many high-risk performers enjoy working at the edge of their abilities, most leave a margin between their risk-taking behaviour and the extreme edge of their ability to control the context and overcome a challenge (Celsi et al, 1993). As explained by Celsi et al (1993:17),

> Even those who operate on the extreme edge emphasise that they rarely go beyond the limits of their control, preferring to back down to jump or climb another day.

Whilst it has been suggested that as high-risk performers become more experienced they develop an illusion of control (Langer, 1975; Lyng, 1990), they also develop the ability to fairly accurately assess their own competence as well as the requirements of a particular challenge. They acknowledge injury or death as a possible consequence of calculated control, although 'accidents' are generally attributed to human error (Albert, 1999; Lyng, 1990). Celsi et al (1993) consider that risk acculturation begins with the first experience when novices are told that they will be safe if they do what they are supposed to do. In order to attain motive outcomes related to identity and efficacy, they need to avoid being paralysed by fear, maintain sustained calm, and learn to focus their attention on actions crucial for survival (Lyng,1990). Although careful planning is important, the perceived ability to control unplanned events is also part of the risk acculturation process. Thus, risk and outcomes associated with it

become normalised, fear is mastered, and a high-risk identity is established. The participant gains pleasure from taking responsibility for their life in a way that is never quite possible in the routine world (Alvarez, 1972). It is this experience that Tinsley and Tinsley (1986) consider offers the greatest potential for self-fulfilment and personal growth.

In summary, it has been suggested that as commitment to participation in adventurous activities develops, risk acculturation and deviance neutralisation occur alongside a process of motive evolution. Initially normative and externally derived, motives evolve to those of self efficacy, identity formation and transcendent experience (Celsi et al, 1993). Celsi et al suggest that the group experience as well as the transcendent flow state become ends in themselves. These are further explored in the final section which considers the nature and significance of 'communitas', 'phatic communion' and 'flow'.

Significant relationships developed in the outdoors

Opportunities for the formation of genuine friendships and meaningful interpersonal relationships can be a major motivating force for many adventure participants. In research into skateboarding carried out over two and a half years (Beal, 1999), one of the most important aspects identified by participants was the opportunity to socialise with like-minded peers. The social experiences of adventure participants often take place within the context of danger, a need to combine efforts in order to survive, and the thrill of a shared adventure. Celsi et al (1993) refer to the sense of camaraderie that occurs when people from different backgrounds share a common bond of experience considered special or 'sacred', as 'communitas'. This conception is supported by Belk et al (1989:7) who note that communitas arises out of 'shared ritual experience' that transcends the mundane of everyday life. Celsi et al (1993) consider that 'while flow is transcendent at the individual level of experience, common knowledge of the flow experience creates a bond between members', similarly communitas is described by Turner (1972) as 'shared flow'. According to Celsi et al, a key aspect of communitas within the high-risk community, (and within other contexts such as fraternal orders, religious pilgrimages or counterculture groups) is the recognition of

the irrelevance of everyday statuses and social roles. Regardless of occupation and financial status, close bonds develop between participants as a result of shared experience.

The findings of Fredrickson and Anderson (1999) report the development of a close group bond between members of an all women wilderness expedition group. Even though the women did not know each other prior to the trip, they continuously offered each other physical and emotional support. Most commented that the emotional support offered was greater than that received from family members and significant others at home. In fact, they commented that in everyday life they were more used to giving support and encouragement than receiving it from others. For many of these women, the positive relationships formed on the expedition appeared to overshadow other aspects of the experience, such as the physical challenge. Henderson (1996:197) identifies that concern for connections with others 'is a common description of female ways of being in the outdoors'.

Mitchell (1983:81) refers to the importance of others in influencing how a person feels about themselves.

> A sense of self requires more than direct perception, more than the sum of sensory stimulations, visceral churnings, and libidinal urges. It requires the perspectives of others.

As emphasised by Mead (1956, cited in Mitchell, 1983:81), an individual experiences themselves only indirectly, either 'from the standpoint of other individual members of the same social group or from the generalized standpoint of the social group as a whole'. Those who take part in any type of sport or activity are likely to assess their progress and accomplishments against the opinions of others. Webster and Sobieszek (1974) found that those whose judgement is valued need to have a common interest, and be seen to have task ability, to have achieved some relevant status, or to have access to objective standards upon which to judge a performance or accomplishment. In adventurous activities, positive feedback from other group members is often an important factor in successful task accomplishment, feelings of competence and the development of a positive self-image. As in the findings of Fredrickson and Anderson (1999), other group members may have had little previous experience, but they will be

perceived by the individual to possess an understanding of accomplishments, having experienced the efforts and difficulties involved themselves. According to Ewert (1985), length of involvement is significant in identifying whose opinion, and the extent to which that opinion, may influence a person's perception of themselves within an adventure setting.

Mitchell (1983) cites clubs and organisations as social settings in which significant others may be readily found. However, in some adventure sports, like-minded, respected participants form part of more informally structured 'communities'. As previously mentioned, in researching the subcultural identity of windsurfers, Wheaton (2000) found that a high level of commitment resulted in a person's friendships arising almost totally out of the windsurfing community. In explaining the way in which windsurfing dictated almost every aspect of her and her partner's life, Stephanie, a female in her early 40s, noted that

> Most of our best friends are windsurfers. It's like people who don't windsurf are from another planet really, or, you know, they have to tolerate you or you tolerate them. (Wheaton, 2000:268)

This may be explained in part by Celsi et al's (1993:13) reference to 'phatic communion' which describes 'a combination of shared experience and technical language that transcends translated meaning'. This provides a special language that not only describes the subculture and joins together its members, but is also likely to exclude non-members identifying them as outsiders. Although a high level of involvement in a sport could mean that there are few opportunities to develop friendships outside of that setting, it is my contention that meaningful, long-term relationships are likely to develop from within adventurous activities because of the close bonds arising out of the nature of the shared experience.

Concluding remarks

There is a dearth of literature focusing on the meanings of past and present adventure participation for women, thus this chapter draws on literature focusing on leisure, play, optimal arousal and socialisation into sport, in addition to research from within the field of adventure, to construct a theoretical framework to make sense of the lives of women committed to participation in outdoor adventure. Feminist research

literature provides alternative views for understanding the leisure decisions made by women in the light of family and gender role expectations. The significance of early and ongoing play and recreation experiences has been established, and some explanation is provided for the inequalities that I argue exist for women within the adventure environment. The nature of adventure experience within the outdoors has been addressed, and discussion has explored reasons for continuing engagement in adventure. Having examined key areas identified as relevant to our understanding of the lives of women adventure participants, the following chapter outlines the research process and addresses some of the methodological issues that arose as the study progressed.

NOTES

1. Rock climbing was classified by Jeremy Bentham, the eighteenth-century British philosopher, as 'deep-play': 'play in which the stakes are so high that it is...irrational for men [sic] to engage in it at all' (Geertz, 1973:432).
2. Gilroy (1997) regards empowerment as concerning the process by which women become more pro-active in terms of what they do with their lives, enabling them to challenge their positions in the world. They are able to make choices that allow them to reach their full potential as capable, integrated human beings (Ball, 1997). More specifically, Whitson (1994:354) sees empowerment as 'the confident sense of self that comes from being skilled in the use of one's body'.
3. Leisure is a personal construct, holding different meaning for different individuals; however, freedom of choice and intrinsic outcomes are generally considered to be the most important criteria (Priest, 1999).
4. The 2000 issue of Social Trends suggests that women are much more likely to be involved in home-based activities than men.
5. Murphy and Heimlich (1997) suggest that in addition to being represented as a large, isolated, desolate environment, wilderness may also be described as a state of mind. Miles (1999) suggests that a natural environment offering an individual the physical and emotional challenge of the unknown, is for them a wilderness. Thus, for the purposes of my study, insofar as it provides personal challenge within a natural environment, wilderness is interpreted as both a physical and conceptual place.
6. Allin (2000) identifies the gendered historical background of outdoor education and outdoor activities, referring to the ethos of Kurt Hahn, founder of the Outward Bound movement, which was concerned with elements (such as hard training, and physical and mental toughness) associated with masculine rather than feminine identity. She notes that the outdoor pursuits forming the core of most outdoor education programmes are generally conceptualised as 'masculine' pursuits.
7. The term mimetic here refers to the fact that such leisure activities arouse emotions related to those experienced in other spheres - for example, fear, compassion, joy - but in a manner that is not seriously dangerous or disturbing as is often the case in 'real' life. In mimetic activities these emotions 'lose their sting'; they are blended with a kind of delight and can have a cathartic effect (Elias and Dunning, 1986).
8. This is illustrated within the context of skydiving by Lyng (1990:860) who notes that after an initial nervous, fearful response, when a participant moves into the final phases of the experience, 'fear gives way to a sense of exhilaration and omnipotence'. Someone surviving the challenge, he argues, feels capable of dealing with any threatening situation.

9. The concepts of the "I" and the "me" are central to Mead's analysis of the formation and ongoing externalisation of the self. The "me" is the constrained dimension of the self (the "voice of society") which is carried within the individual at all times, potentially shaping every act. The "I" exists only in the immediacy of the present moment and is the 'continually emerging, spontaneous, impulsive and unpredictable part of the self' (Lyng, 1990:867). Lyng suggests that Mead's descriptions of the "I" could be used interchangeably with his description of edgework (see page v for a definition of edgework) as it reflects all the uniqueness and uncertainty of the moment.
10. Countercultural activities have their origins in the 1960s. Activities such as mountain biking, windsurfing and other high-risk sports have as their basis a rejection of the more overt norms, beliefs and values of mainstream sports, such as extreme competitiveness, a coach, training regimens and a serious approach rather than an emphasis on fun. Cooperative behaviours are highlighted and a hierarchy of authority and status is avoided. An emphasis on skill development is shared with the dominant sport culture, but participants resist equating the value of the sport experience or the value of the individual with the acquisition of differential skills (Coakley and Donnelly, 1999).

Chapter 3

THE RESEARCH PROCESS: ISSUES OF METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

In seeking to understand the meanings of long-term participation in adventurous activities, research located within an interpretive paradigm was conducted over a period of three years from 1998-2001. The overall research method employed could be termed biographical, although Denzin (1989a) identifies that there are many different biographical methods, or many ways of writing about a life. This chapter presents a methodology and addresses some of the methodological issues that arose as the study developed. A rationale for the choice of methodology, methods, techniques and procedures is included, the methods themselves are outlined and the implications of issues relating to relationships, power, interpretation, representation and legitimation are addressed.

Research into adventure education

In 1996 Humberstone identified that research into outdoor adventure was in its infancy and was largely underpinned by a logical positivistic epistemology. An examination of all copies of the Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Leadership published after 1990 supports this statement and reveals some truth in the suggestions by Keighley (1997) that assertions about adventure education have been based largely on spurious statements of belief, unsubstantiated assumptions, anecdotal evidence and limited empirical research data. Humberstone (1996) argues that a need to 'prove' the significance of outdoor adventure has resulted in research led by methodologies similar to those adopted in the natural sciences. Such research has generated data that enables us to begin to evaluate the outcomes and impact of outdoor adventure, but it is limited in its depth of inquiry and its ability to explore and understand the essence of an experience.

Research employing an interpretive approach is becoming more evident within the field of adventure education (see for example, Allison, 1998; Hayllar, 1997;

Richards, 1999), but where it *has* been reported, it has often lacked a methodology to support the findings (Allison, 1998; Cooper, 1996/7). Critical inquiry is vital to the academic development of outdoor adventure as a discipline. It appears contradictory that whilst the experience of the participant is central to outdoor education/adventure practice, locating research within the positivist paradigm, where the aim is to predict and control behaviour rather than understand it (Guba and Lincoln, 1994), does not generally seem to be considered problematic.

In reviewing some of the research to date investigating the process and effectiveness of Outdoor Management Development[1], Hayllar (1997) notes a focus on the measuring of psychological variables such as self-concept and self-esteem, the assessment using inventories of programme outcomes and design, and anecdotal or intuitive reports from programme participants. There is now strong support for the claim that psychological changes resulting from adventure experience lead to behavioural changes (Priest, 1992), but the processes involved remain largely unresearched. Hayllar (1997) identifies a need, in line with researchers attempting to understand the nature of lived experience from the perspective of the participants (see for example, Van Maanen, 1990), for research within an interpretive paradigm. This need is also acknowledged by Richards (1999) who suggests that as outdoor educators, we should extend our professional responsibility to becoming more self aware. Through her own research within the development of outdoor therapy programmes, Richards (1999:23) recognises the need for the researcher to 'work through their own personal issues and maintain self-awareness (Reason and Rowan, 1981:151)'. She believes that a reflexive approach to both research and practice will provide one strategy 'in maximising effective development of outdoor provision into the next millenium' (Richards, 1999:25).

In considering why there appears to be a lack of research into adventure education, in academic terms this field could be considered relatively new compared with, for example, physical education and sports science. Outdoor and adventurous activities are included as an activity area within the Physical

Education National Curriculum, but there are few single honours degrees that relate directly to adventure education. Although this field is gradually establishing its identity, at degree level much related work will be found within the areas of leisure and recreation or environmental science. Consequently, there has been relatively little funding within higher education for research within the field of adventure education.

In recent years qualitative research has become more evident within physical education and sport (Bain, 1989; Clarke and Humberstone, 1997; Evans, 1993; Evans et al, 1996), with the publication 'Research in Physical Education and Sport: Exploring Alternative Visions' edited by Sparkes (1992) providing insights into a variety of interpretive research traditions ranging from phenomenology and symbolic interactionism to critical theory, feminism and post-structuralism. This, in addition to Sparkes' later writing on qualitative inquiry, biographical research and life history (Sparkes 1999; 1995; 1994) provided a starting point for this study. Within the field of adventure education Humberstone is one of the few researchers who has challenged research underpinned by a positivistic epistemology and her work was also an early influence.

Biographical research

An important methodological consideration is that the research approach employed suits the purpose of the research, which in this case was to understand life as experienced by participants in adventurous activities. Having noted the general purpose of biobiographical research as being 'to provide greater insight than hitherto into the nature and meaning of individual lives or groups of lives' (Erben, 1998:4), I identified the biographical method, employed within an interpretive approach, as being the most appropriate. Denzin (1989a:7) defines the interpretive biographical method as

> The studied use and collection of personal-life documents, stories, accounts, and narratives which describe turning-point moments in individuals' lives...The subject matter of the biographical method is the life experiences of a person.

These 'life documents' may take many forms, and although there appears to be no concrete set of research methods for biographical research, I noted Erben's (1998:5) assertion that 'the collection of contemporary biographical data through interview is one that is especially useful to educational and other social science researchers'. I saw as positive, the opportunities afforded by interviewing for establishing a relationship with the respondent, for providing some focus and direction in the process of data 'collection', and for experiencing first-hand the recounting of aspects of 'a life'.

The emergence of biographical research can be traced back to the 1920s although after a peak in the early phases of modern social research it gradually lost ground, with more attention being given to 'scientific' approaches and issues of validity and reliability (Denzin, 1989a; Kohli, 1981). However, Denzin (1989a:10) notes that the last decade has seen a renewed interest in interpretive approaches to the study of biography, culture and human group life, with a central question being: 'How do men and women live and give meaning to their lives and capture these meanings in written, narrative and oral forms?' In identifying the biographical method as most appropriate for affording an insight into the inner life of a person, it is important to emphasise that the assumption that a life can be captured and represented in a text, 'as it really is and was' is open to question (Usher, 1998:19). Like Denzin (1989a:9) I acknowledge that 'a life is a social text, a fictional, narrative production'. As argued by Usher (1998:19), 'the central character of the life story is language and more particularly writing and the production of text'. Thus, it is not possible to capture the essence of a 'real' subject that exists independently of a constructed narrative, or of its textual inscription. A 'life' is also a reconstruction of the past with reference to a participant's understanding of the present (Kohli, 1981). As explained by Richardson (1990:23)

> The past can be retrieved and relived in the present. Narrative organizes the experience of time into personal historicity...Telling one's story gives meaning to the past from the point of view of the present and future, and "deeply gives meaning to the past in order to give meaning to the present life of the person" (Bertaux-Wiame, 1981).

However, the process of 'telling one's story' is not simply a case of remembering and recounting truthfully, aspects of a past life. When talking about their lives people are likely to forget, exaggerate and get things wrong. Thus, recollection of past events is selective, and the meaning and significance of an event in the present may differ from the effect of the original experience (Polkinghorne, 1995). However, for those telling the story the aspects being revealed are truths. These truths may not reveal the past 'as it actually was', and consequently they are not open to proof nor are they self-evident. They are only understood 'through interpretation, paying careful attention to the contexts that shape their creation and to the world views that inform them' (Personal Narratives Group, 1989:261). In addition, knowledge of the self and the world is embedded within traditions of understanding which influence what is said and the way it is verbalised (Scott, 1998). It is also important to remember the significance of the researcher's own biography and the influence this will have on any final account. As identified by Erben (1996:160) 'the consciousness of the interpreter is always necessarily implicated in the analysis of the text' which is why the biographical method is frequently referred to as auto/biographical method.

In making use of life stories, the researcher must consider the issues raised above, whilst also recognising that biography is the study of an individual within society. Biographical method regards the individual as a highly singular and highly complex articulation of the culture, and in exploring individual lives, we are examining the relationship between personal character and social forces (Erben, 1996). Whilst there is clearly value in studying 'a life' I am not suggesting that this approach is unproblematic. However, in considering the implications for this research, I acknowledged Erben's (1996:172) comments that whilst it is never possible to exactly replicate a life,

> The object of the biographical method is to provide more insight than hitherto available into the nature and meaning of individual lives; and given that individual lives are articulations of the culture, it will provide insight also into the nature and meaning of society itself.

Life stories

Plummer (1990:125) notes that during the past decade 'across academic disciplines and national boundaries scholars have increasingly found value in inspecting 'a life''. Narratives in the form of life stories used to describe human action are seen by Polkinghorne (1995) and others (Richardson, 1990) to hold significant promise for qualitative researchers, having the potential to make important contributions within the human sciences. If, as identified by Richardson (1990), narratives are the way people understand their own lives and the lives of others, the case for studying life story experiences is a strong one. In attempting to define the particular form that my biographical research was to take, I noted the distinction made by Goodson (1992:6) between a life story and a life history. Goodson considers that the former is the 'story we tell of our life' and the life history is 'a collaborative venture, reviewing a wider range of evidence' and locating the life story 'alongside a broader contextual analysis'. In examining their relative merits, he suggests that life stories (unlike many life histories) are problematic in that they do not provide a broader context for the location, understanding and grounding of the stories being told. He speaks not only for a 'narrative of action' but also for a 'history of context'. However, like Barone (1995), I believe that life stories, even when unaccompanied by critique or theory, can achieve a degree of critical significance, and can promote emancipatory moments. It is interesting to note Plummer's (1983:119) criticism of those who describe 'life documents' as 'no more than a few good stories' that neglect theory. In his opinion, life stories can speak for themselves and are of interest in themselves. Clearly though, in employing life stories as a research method capable of providing insights and understandings not previously afforded, it is important to consider

> ...the meaning of the individual and social dynamics which seem to have been most significant in shaping the life. The act of constructing a life narrative forces the author to move from accounts of discrete experiences to an account of why and how the life took the shape that it did.
>
> (Personal Narratives Group 1989:4)

Life story and life history are terms that at times appear to be used interchangeably (Bertaux 1981; Koleva, 1999), and therefore to distinguish between them is problematic. However, what holds significance for this research is the assertion made by Clandinin and Connelly (1994:416) that 'people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives...narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience'. People give meaning to their lives through the stories they tell and it is through these stories that we can 'begin to understand human experience as lived, interpreted and expressed' (Oliver, 1998:247). Indeed, Clandinin and Connelly (1994:415) suggest that 'stories are the closest we come to experience as we and others tell of our experience'. Thus this study employed narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994) to enable women involved in adventurous activities to tell their own stories, in their own words. Within biographical research, such an approach appeared particularly appropriate as according to Oliver (1998:250) it 'links past events, or stories, together to explain how a final outcome might come about, or how meaning is given to certain aspects of [people's] lives'. Life stories in the form of narrative 'can illuminate purposes, plans, and goals which are the forms by which our lives have some direction, motivation, and significance for us' (Johnson, 1993:170).

Interviews: exploring an approach

In investigating the lives of female teachers actively participating in adventurous activities, I wanted to employ a research method that was capable of 'giving an authentic insight into people's experiences' (Silverman, 1993:91) and their social worlds. I was interested in the way certain people experienced, interpreted and structured their lives and as a consequence sought a research method that would enable these individual lives to be studied from the participants' point of view. I was also guided by a commitment to personal interaction with respondents: to being involved 'first hand' in the research process and to experiencing personally the recounting of aspects of 'a life'. I noted Kvale's (1996:6) definition of a qualitative interview as an interview 'whose purpose is to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the

described phenomena'. Thus, in an attempt to understand *why* individuals act in the way they do, I identified in-depth interviews as being capable of affording an insight into the meaning and significance participants in adventurous activities give to their actions. Like Jones (1985:46), I believe that

> To understand other persons' constructions of reality we would do well to ask them (rather than assume we know merely by observing their overt behaviour) and ask them in such a way that they can tell us in their terms (rather than those imposed rigidly and *a priori* by ourselves) and in a depth which addresses the rich context that is the substance of their meanings.

Having identified the main research method to be employed, and noted Jones' (1985) assertion that the term 'depth interview' has been used to cover many different approaches, I attempted to determine the particular characteristics of the in-depth interviews most appropriate for use within this study. I considered a framework offered by Powney and Watts (1987:18) who characterise interviews as either 'respondent' or 'informant'. In the former, the interviewer retains control throughout the process and the interview is structured in some way; the interviewer directs the proceedings and has questions to be answered. In 'informant' interviews 'the goal is to gain some insight into the perceptions of a particular person (or persons) within a situation'. Here, it is primarily the interviewee who imposes the agenda and as far as the interviewer is concerned it is unstructured. Whilst this framework is a useful one, I felt that some structure was needed in order to ensure that certain aspects of the respondents' lives were addressed within the time constraints set for the interview. It would therefore have been inappropriate to locate the interviews conducted within this study entirely at the informant end of what could be seen as an informant-respondent continuum. I also considered points raised by Jones (1985) who argues against the notion of the unstructured interview. Jones points out that if interviewees are encouraged to ramble in any direction they choose there are problems of ambiguity, with the interviewees not knowing what questions are being asked, and the interviewer not knowing what questions are being answered. It is likely that the respondent will feel constrained by the need to put energy into guessing

what the intentions of the researcher are (Jones, 1985). In preparing for in-depth interviews, Jones (1985:47) considers that

> Researchers will have, and should have, some broad questions in mind, and the more interviews they do and the more patterns they see in the data, the more they are likely to use this grounded understanding to want to explore in certain directions rather than others. The process of interviewing is one in which researchers are continually making choices, based on their research interests and prior theories, about which data they want to pick up and explore further with respondents and those which they do not. The making of these choices is the imposition of some structure.

However, in addition to learning the answers to questions that are important to the interviewer, Tripp (1983, cited in Walker, 1985) emphasises the importance of learning what questions are important to the respondent. As such, he suggests that control should be equally shared between the interviewer and the interviewee, with the latter being allowed at least joint responsibility for structuring the interview.

Within interpretive approaches to research varying views on control in interview situations have been expressed (Kvale, 1996; Sparkes and Templin, 1992; Walker, 1985). In considering whether control within an interview *can* be at least equally shared, Kvale's (1996) reference to the fact that usually the interviewer defines the situation, introduces the topics of conversation, and generally steers the course of the interview, is an important one. Bertaux (1981:39) claims that 'a good interview, and even more so, a good life story is one in which the interviewee takes over the control of the interview situation and talks freely'. In emphasising that the true potential of a life story approach lies in its flexibility, Thompson (1981:294) suggests that much of the material in an interview should be narrated independently of direct questions. He considers that

> The life story method is based on a *combination* of exploration and questioning, within the context of a dialogue with the informant. It is a basic assumption of this *dialogue* that the researcher comes to learn the unexpected as well as the expected; and also that the overall framework within which information is given is determined not by the researcher, but by the informant's view of his or her own life.

Thus, in seeking to identify the type of interview most appropriate for use within this study, in addition to the interviewer providing some type of direction and structure, I considered it important for the respondent to have the opportunity to decide for themselves what they considered relevant in recounting aspects of their life. Like Thompson (1981), I acknowledged that any structure would need to be flexible, with the potential to respond to direction provided by the respondent, without this causing threat to the integrity of the research.

Initially, in spite of having acknowledged the importance of some interviewee control, I tended to view the respondent as 'epistemologically passive, not engaged in the production of knowledge' (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997:117). In such traditional approaches

> If the interview goes 'by the book' and is non-directional and unbiased, respondents will validly give out what subjects are presumed to merely retain within them - the unadulterated facts and details of experience. Contamination eminates from the interview setting, its participants and their interaction, not the subject, who, under ideal conditions, serves up authentic reports when beckoned to do so.
>
> (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997:117)

I was of the opinion, therefore, that I needed to provide some direction for the interview whilst ensuring that I did not become involved in a 'real' conversation which might include giving personal opinions on topics being discussed, or answering questions asked by the respondent (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). However, I had concerns about attempting to 'collect knowledge' in this way. In investigating life history and life stories, I was becoming more familiar with biographical literature (Erben, 1996; Plummer, 1995; Scott and Usher, 1996) and the importance placed by advocates of biographical methods on the role of the researcher who brings their own biography to the research act (Scott, 1998). Woods (1985:13) sees the ongoing dialogue between researcher and interviewee (narrator) as a 'mutual endeavor', and Corradi (1991:108) suggests that rather than there being 'one who understands and one who is understood, each of the participants is understood by the other and altered by the interaction with each other'. I began to acknowledge the 'life story' interview as a meaning-making occasion during which knowledge is jointly constructed (Holstein and Gubrium,

1997). I was intrigued by the notion that such interaction might lead the respondent and possibly the interviewer to interpret aspects of their life in a way not previously considered. I noted comments made by Denzin and Lincoln (1994) concerning what they identify as a 'current change' in interviewing relating to the 'self' and 'other' (the respondent).

> As we treat the other as a human being, we can no longer remain objective, faceless interviewers, but become human beings and must disclose ourselves, learning about ourselves as we learn about the other.
> (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:373)

Having explored aspects of the role of both the researcher and the interviewee within the context of the 'depth' interview, I found it useful to consider Ribbens (1989) point that as researchers we may be over-concerned to fit our interviews into certain categories (such as structured/unstructured or focussed/unfocussed) rather than considering carefully what sort of relations we can expect to develop within our own unique project. At this stage, having identified that the interviews within this study should be viewed as a mutual endeavour, with the life stories being a product of the 'intersubjective process of knowledge' (Corradi, 1991: 108), I considered it important to begin the interview process in order to establish an appropriate 'final' interview structure and approach. The following section outlines details of this pilot interview and the way in which data was recorded.

Pilot interview

I saw this first interview as an opportunity to test an initial interview schedule (see Appendix A), to consider the ways in which I would fulfil my own role as interviewer, and to address such practicalities as the effective use of an audio-tape recorder. I initially decided to conduct a pilot interview with one respondent. In order to do this I selected a mature student at the end of the second year of a teacher training course in physical education, at the college in which I was employed. It was evident from her level of participation in outdoor and adventurous activies courses and from her leisure time activities that she was highly motivated within the field of adventure. I had prevously mentioned to her that I was carrying out research related to adventurous activities and she had

expressed an interest in becoming involved. She appeared to fulfil all of the characteristics of a 'good' respondent as identified by Morse (1991), namely: having relevant knowledge and experience; being articulate; possessing an ability to reflect and being available. She was willing to take part in the study, and in the words of Patton (1990), she appeared to be 'information rich'.

I was aware that conducting an interview as a lecturer with a student, involved power differentials beyond those identified by Stanley and Wise (1993) as existing between any researcher and their respondents. As emphasised by Miller and Glassner (1997:101) 'the issue of how interviewees respond to us based on who we are - in their lives, ...- is a practical concern as well as an epistemological or theoretical one'. I considered it significant that the respondent was a mature student who appeared more confident and 'single-minded' than the majority of her peers. I was careful to choose a neutral venue for the interview in the form of a small communal room in the college, rather than my own office which I felt would emphasise a power division. In addition, the interview was conducted outside the college working semester, during a time when I would not be seen within a more typical lecturing role.

As suggested by Jones (1985) I had some broad questions in mind and I used these to construct a brief interview schedule or guide (see Appendix A). At this stage in my research the interview guide focused on four main areas for discussion all with reference to participation in adventurous activities, namely: a recent memorable experience; epiphanies; motivations and significant 'others'. I took note of Patton's (1990:121) recommendation that respondents 'become actively involved in providing descriptive information as soon as possible' and decided to obtain demographic information at a later date through the use of a short questionnaire (see Appendix F). It was my intention to explore the areas identified in some depth, but I did not want the interview to be unrealistic in terms of the time given up by the respondent, or the time needed to transcribe the data. The optimal length of time is likely to vary depending on an interview's particular characteristics, I decided to initially set an upper limit of one hour.

Although the use of an audio tape has disadvantages, I acknowledged that it would result in a more accurate record of the data than the use of field notes, and would enable subsequent analysis to be carried out over time. However, an interview contains an element of observation, and there are some behavioural aspects that an audio tape cannot record. Non verbal, observational data can be important in establishing a context for interpreting and making sense out of the interview, so as I considered note-taking at the time to be too intrusive, I decided to record observations immediately following the interview. These observations took the form of written field notes which included reference to the behaviour (relating to, for example, reactions and general demeanour) of the respondent as well as my own thoughts and behaviour as the interviewer. As suggested by Patton (1990:140), I saw the time after an interview as a 'critical time of reflection and elaboration' during which insights would be likely to occur and data analysis could begin while the situation was still fresh.

Interviews: establishing an approach

The pilot interview highlighted the importance of giving careful consideration to the interview venue. The room used for the interview was impersonal, and this, along with the seating arranged either side of a high table (according to Twist, 1992, the standard position used for confrontations) did not enhance the development of a rapport with the respondent. Although I did provide some direction within the interview, at this stage I was conscious that in verbalising aspects of their life story, the respondent should be able to construct the knowledge that they saw as significant. I was wary of 'putting ideas into the head of the respondent'; neither did I feel comfortable with the notion of 'opening up some of my own life' (Sparkes, 1994) to the respondent with the sole intention of gaining their trust and encouraging them to share their innermost thoughts and feelings (Douglas, 1985). This is not to say that I did not want to share aspects of my life with the interviewee, but I considered it important to more fully explore my motives for doing so and I took note of arguments put forward by feminist researchers 'for the significance of a genuine, rather than an instrumental rapport' between researcher and researched (Maynard, 1994:15).

Previously I had identified theory relating to participation in adventurous activities of particular interest in the light of the research focus (for example, the characteristics of 'flow' as reported by Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), but within the interview I found that without active intervention on my part, the respondent did not interpret their experiences in such terms. I was unsure how to encourage the interviewee to 'think along those lines' and to consider aspects of their life in ways appropriate to the research 'agenda'. Neither could I envisage the respondent uncovering previously taken-for-granted values or reflecting in a way that might lead to new ways of self-understanding, as suggested by Kvale (1996). As I discussed these tensions with fellow researchers, one colleague pointed out that it should not be considered 'wrong' for the interviewer to actively provoke responses, perhaps by suggesting alternative interpretations. As noted by Holstein and Gubrium (1997:123) within an interview setting, 'neither elaborate narratives nor one-word replies emerge without provocation'. I considered research I had carried out previously involving a group interview, and noted the way in which the responses of others had provoked the interviewees to consider their own experiences in ways they may not have done previously. As a result of discussions with colleagues I was directed towards the work on 'Active Interviewing' by Holstein and Gubrium (1995;1997) which appeared to address some of my concerns. Active interviewing seemed to coincide with Kvale's (1996:11) description of an approach emphasising the 'constructive nature of the knowledge created through the interaction of the partners in the interview conversation'. In addition, the notion of the interviewer adopting an 'active' role seemed to give consideration to a research agenda, in that this approach can provide 'an environment conducive to the production of the range and complexity of meanings' that address relevant issues relating to particular research concerns, within which the 'subject's interpretive capabilities must be activated, stimulated and cultivated' (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997:122).

> That is not to say that active interviewers merely coax their respondents into preferred answers to their questions. Rather they converse with respondents in such a way that alternate considerations are brought into play. They may suggest orientations to, and linkages between, diverse aspects of respondents' experience, adumbrating - even inviting -

> interpretations that make use of particular resources, connections and outlooks...In the broadest sense, the interviewer attempts to activate the respondent's stock of knowledge (Schutz, 1967) and bring it to bear on the discussion at hand in ways that are appropriate to the research agenda. (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997:123)

Although this approach to interviewing advocates giving consideration to the research agenda, within interpretive research it is not the intention that this should take precedence over the construction of knowledge seen to be relevant to the respondent. Holstein and Gubrium (1997:125) stress that 'the pertinence of what is discussed is partly defined by the research topic and partly by the substantive horizons of ongoing response'.

Conducting this study provided opportunities for self-reflection and the examination of previously taken-for-granted knowledge, values and assumptions. My view of individuals mirrors the description given by Jones (1985:46) who sees human beings as persons who 'construct the meaning and significance of their realities' by

> Bringing to bear upon events a complex personal framework of beliefs and values, which they have developed over their lives to categorise, characterise, explain and predict the events in their worlds. It is a framework which, in a social world, is shared in some parts with some others but one in which points of commonality cannot be assumed as self-evidently, non-problematically, 'given'.

In summarising the interview approach employed within this research, although it would be wrong to suggest that any one approach is ideal, 'active interviewing' as outlined by Holstein and Gubrium (1995;1997) appeared to provide more comprehensive answers to uncertainties relating to the notion of 'collecting' knowledge and the 'traditional' view of the role of the interviewer. Whilst it bears similarities to approaches to depth interviewing suggested by other writers (see Jones, 1985; Kvale 1996; Miller and Glassner, 1997; Patton, 1990), underpinning active interviewing is the view that all knowledge is created from the action taken to create it, and the interviewer is deeply implicated in the creation of meanings within the interview setting (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997). I also began to turn increasingly to feminist research texts (Letherby and Ramsay, 1999; Oakley, 1981; Reinharz, 1992; Ribbens, 1989; Richardson, 1992) which

held relevance for the way in which issues relating to relationships, power and the place of the researcher within the research process were addressed.

The respondents

During the pilot interview Amanda (the respondent) appeared to find it difficult to explore aspects of her participation in adventurous activities in any depth. I subsequently considered possible reasons for this, as it did not appear to relate to her ability to express herself generally, or to power differentials arising out of the interview situation itself. Neither did it appear to be as a direct result of the questioning; although at that time I was wary of interviewer bias, and so hesitant to ask direct questions. I wondered whether her age and/or her situation were significant in the light of the research focus. Although a mature student of twenty-four, Amanda had had little time in her life, prior to taking the college course, to establish a pattern of sustained, active involvement in adventurous activities. Once on the college course, in an environment with no history of high-profile student involvement in such activities, her participation was spasmodic. I also questioned at that time whether an individual is able to develop a closer bond with the environment as they grow older, and as their experience of adventure increases[2]. Whilst these suppositions could not be substantiated, the final one did hold 'true' for my own experiences of activity within the environment, and I felt they were worthy of consideration when establishing the characteristics of the main interview sample.

For some time I had been giving thought to the most 'appropriate' type of respondent in the light of the research question. As previously mentioned, I had made the decision early on in the research to conduct in-depth interviews with a small sample, and after carrying out the pilot interview I decided to interview women. As noted by Clarke and Humberstone (1997:xiii) 'much of the literature and related research ha[s] failed to address women's experience(s) of sport, physical activity and PE'. Women are at present under-represented in all aspects of outdoor adventure education, and Humberstone (1996:47) calls for 'more substantial in depth interpretive research around women's informal and formal

experiences, perceptions and involvement in outdoor adventure'. As the research progressed, I found myself reflecting increasingly on my own involvement in adventurous activities, and I welcomed the opportunity to gain an insight into the lives of other women similarly involved. Having already considered whether age was significant, by chance the first subject I contacted was a teacher in her early forties. I subsequently decided to focus the study on female teachers in their late twenties or above, as I felt it was more likely that women of this age would have established a pattern of continuing involvement in adventurous activities within their lives.

Initially I identified one female teacher committed to skydiving and living in the local area, who agreed to take part in the research. As I did not personally know of any other women fulfilling the required criteria, I subsequently employed a strategy termed snowball sampling (Blaxter et al, 1996), where each informant put me in touch with one other woman deeply involved in adventurous activities. Undoubtedly, my own biographical details influenced the kinds of women that I was able to gain access to, consequently the sample could not be seen as a representative cross-section of women. All respondents were relatively privileged, white, middle-class teachers, with the majority being in their late thirties or early forties, and the youngest being twenty-seven. They taught a variety of subjects including geography and science, in several different types of establishments located in urban and rural areas: a primary school, mixed comprehensive schools and an educational outdoor centre. Most of the eight women were in fairly long-term relationships with male partners; three were married, and (not all the same) three had children (for brief biographical profiles see Appendix B).

Each woman was initially telephoned and the purpose of the research was explained. A handwritten letter along with a more formal information sheet containing a short list of areas to be addressed during the interview, and additional points for clarification (see Appendix C), was sent at least five days before the interview was to take place. This gave the women the opportunity to consider aspects of their life to be addressed, and to establish in advance whether

they would give their permission for the interview to be recorded on audio-tape (all agreed to this request). All were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and when the interviews were subsequently transcribed, the names of places and people were removed and each woman was given a pseudonym. Although they were given the opportunity to choose their own pseudonym, they all preferred this to be done for them. Consequently, I gave the woman interviewed first a name beginning with A, the next a name beginning with B and so on. I wondered how the women would react on seeing the name that I had selected for them in the interview transcript, but the first respondent to return the transcript (the interview transcript was sent to each respondent for comment) wrote that she was reassured to see the pseudonym as it made her feel anonymous which she liked.

Life story interviews

All interviews took place in the women's own homes, and I was aware of a sense of responsibility concerning these interviews not felt during the pilot interview. In visiting the homes of people I had not previously met, I was conscious of the effect the first few minutes of the encounter were likely to have on the relationship established with the respondent, and the outcome of the interview to follow. I was careful to approach aspects such as the use of the audio-tape recorder in a very professional manner, and I made sure the equipment was prepared so that it did not need to be tested once set up. I did not want to appear disorganised, or to draw undue attention to the fact that the interview was being recorded.

Some changes had been made to the interview schedule after the pilot interview. The first question in that interview asked the respondent to describe a recent memorable adventurous experience in detail. In the light of the biographical nature of the research, I identified that questions concerning the place of adventurous activities within the life of the respondent, and significant events and/or people influencing participation, were of more significance and so, where possible, should be considered near the beginning of the interview.

Consequently, the revised interview guide (see Appendix D) included the following additional areas for discussion:

- The importance of adventurous activities in the life of the interviewee - could life be imagined without this type of activity; how easy/difficult is it to take part.
- Significant events/people and influences leading to participation in adventurous activities - reference to life history drawing out 'turning points'.
- The negative aspects (if any) of participating in adventurous activities - what are the difficulties and how are these overcome.
- Ways in which participation in adventurous activities have influenced the interviewee as a person/woman/teacher etc. - what do these experiences bring to the rest of their life.
- The significance of adventurous activities taking place in the outdoor environment - what does it feel like to be out in the environment.
- The significance of gender for the interviewee's experiences of outdoor adventure – is being a woman in the outdoors significant in any way

As previously identified, although this guide provided the main areas for discussion in the light of the research focus and concerns, and assisted in the gathering of data on similar topics from several respondents, it was seen as flexible. Questions were used to introduce topics as naturally as possible within the conversation, with the intention of allowing the women to tell aspects of their life story in ways that were meaningful to them. As in the pilot interview, I identified an hour as being a realistic average length of time for each interview. This enabled aspects of the women's lives to be explored in some depth, but gave consideration to the length of time given up by the respondent. Inevitably my time in each woman's home lengthened to nearer two hours when including the time before and after the interview. In all of the interviews, during a natural break in the conversation (after about 45 minutes) I temporarily stopped the tape recorder to enable us to consult the interview guide to identify any relevant areas not yet considered. The majority of the women had made some notes prior to my arrival, and these proved useful as an aid memoir at this point, ensuring that experiences previously considered important by the respondent were not forgotten.

At the end of each interview I gave the respondent a detailed copy of the interview schedule, headed by a 'directive' (see Sheridan, 1993) requesting that further thoughts and feelings concerning their participation in adventurous activities be recorded over a period of time (see Appendix E). Whilst opportunities had been provided for aspects of the respondents' lives to be considered in some depth within the interviews themselves, I thought it likely that given further time, additional significant reflections might occur. However, this method of collecting additional data met with little success due to the busy lives lead by the respondents, and only one was returned.

In addition to tape-recording each interview and subsequently transcribing it in full, as soon as possible after each interview I made fieldnotes concerning the attitude and manner of the respondent before and during the interview. Whilst transcribing each interview, I also added comments concerning the manner in which the respondent replied (for example, hesitantly or quietly). There is no doubt that whilst transcripts can provide an accurate account of conversation, they do not capture an interview in its totality. At the very least they are likely to miss non-verbal communication, and like Clarke (1998a) I recognise that transforming conversations into texts results in some of the life blood of the interview being lost forever. Consequently, although time-consuming I considered it important to transcribe all interview tapes myself, making additional notes during this process in an attempt to begin to make sense of the stories told.

Establishing a relationship

The issue of establishing a relationship with those interviewed is a complicated one that has implications for the quality of the data obtained. Like Oakley (1981), I considered it important that the relationship was seen by the interviewee to be non-exploitative and non-hierarchical, and from the outset I sought to establish a genuine rapport. All of the women were immediately friendly offering me a cup of tea when I first arrived at their homes. They all appeared very positive about their involvement in the research project, and were interested to find out about the work that I was doing. Ribbens (1989) has considered in some depth the

implications of differing levels of personal involvement by the researcher, and Oakley (1981:58) suggests that personal involvement is the 'condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives'. As I was asking the women questions about their lives, I felt it was important, in developing a relationship of mutual trust, to respond honestly to any questions they might ask me. In addition, possibly out of a genuine interest in, or enthusiasm for the 'stories' being told, in places I responded to what had been said, or volunteered information (less often) concerning my own experiences. The latter I did sensitively, as I was aware that given the opportunity to talk about themselves, an interviewee may not be interested in hearing information volunteered by the interviewer (Ribbens, 1989). In line with an 'active' approach to interviewing (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997), where appropriate I did also suggest alternative ways of interpreting aspects of the women's experience, often when, having started to talk about a topic, they found it difficult to 'put things into words' themselves. Whilst the validity of any subsequent response could be questioned, in such cases the interviewee appeared very quick to reject any suggestion that did not 'hold true' for them, or emphatic in their agreement (for example, by interrupting part way through to say "yes", and by subsequently using words like "definitely"). This supports the experiences of Miller and Glassner (1997), who found that interviewees would tell them whether their topics or formulations were seen as relevant or as misinterpretations. Interestingly, Charmaz (1995:64) points out that 'creating these observations at all assumes that we share enough experience with our subjects [sic]...to define things similarly'.

The insider-outsider

In selecting to interview female teachers likely to be white and middle-class, I considered my own age and social categories (mid-forties, relatively privileged, white, female, heterosexual researcher), and took note of writing outlining the perceived advantages or otherwise of similarities occurring between the researcher and the researched. The decision to interview women had led me to examine unfamiliar literature in the form of feminist research texts, and I noted

with interest Reinharz's (1992:65) assertion that 'feminist researchers are sometimes forthright in questioning the degree to which a female researcher can understand women of a class different from her own'. Alternatively, Sparkes (1994:170) suggests that 'being interviewed by someone from the same social category can lead to a glossing over of issues, since similar experiences and assumptions are taken for granted'. In discussing the desirability of being socially close to the people being interviewed, Ribbens (1989:581) suggests that

> All researchers are of course participants in social life and Weber argued long ago for the value of verstehen (understanding). What we need, perhaps, is a sensitivity to the ways in which particular social characteristics will effect our research relations. How this effects the balance of power in the interview may be very significant for the talk that ensues.

As advocated by Richardson (1992), it is important that the researcher engages in a reflexive analysis of their own social characteristics as these are likely to impact on 'what we come to know and how we come to know it' (Sparkes, 1994:166). Consequently, I realised the importance of considering any similarities or differences between the social/cultural characteristics of myself and the interviewees during the research process, and making them explicit within the final research report.

I considered my own experiences of adventurous activities an advantage in enabling me to more fully understand the stories told by the interviewees. Collins (1990:232) argues that in order to understand the life experiences of the people studied, researchers should have 'lived or experienced their material in some fashion'. However, it is interesting to note Miller and Glassner's (1997:104) assertion that 'an interviewer who presents him- or her- self as either too deeply committed to those interests and that order, or as clearly outside of them, restricts which cultural stories interviewees may tell and how these will be be told'. In these terms I would see myself as 'treading the middle ground': being interested and involved without being too committed. I therefore considered that I had some of the advantages of being an insider, as well as an ability to adopt an outsider's view of a life story recounting involvement in adventurous activities well in excess of my own.

The knowledgeable stranger

The women appeared to speak freely during the interviews and although the topic was not a particularly sensitive one, I did find this surprising. Perhaps their response can be partly explained by Reinharz's (1992) reference to a 'knowledgeable stranger', someone who has given an assurance that the interview will be confidential; has personal experience allowing them to understand what is being said, and is a stranger who is unlikely to be seen again. Within her own study of abortion, Zimmerman (1977, cited in Reinharz, 1992) found that women being interviewed by a stranger, appeared to feel they could talk relatively freely about their most private feelings and lives. I also found the points raised by Ribbens (1989:587) concering listening and empathy to hold significance for my own interview experiences.

> In a depth interview we seek to empathise in order to enter another's world in a way that increases our understanding of it, and yet normally this sort of listening occurs in the context of long term caring relationships.

Like Measor (1985) I acknowledge that it is 'unnatural' for a stranger to sit down and listen with empathy to someone and then get up and disappear. However, listening implies caring, and my own evident interest and empathy in listening to the women I interviewed, is likely to have contributed to them talking quite openly and intimately about themselves. Finch (1984) suggests that shared gender status creates the possibility of a particular kind of identification (although it does not ensure it) and in these interviews, educational and professional status were also shared between myself and the interviewees. Reinharz (1992) actually considers that a prerequisite of understanding a woman in social research, may be for her to be interviewed by another woman.

Not knowing all but the first woman interviewed (and she was not a personal friend) had advantages, in that obligations to friends can limit our ability to report things (Stacey, 1988). However, being a stranger did create its own difficulties, particularly at the beginning and end of the interviews. On seeking to quickly establish a rapport with the interviewee, I found it difficult to know when to start the interview (which I usually did fairly soon after my arrival at their

home) because I felt that much of the information offered during any initial conversation would be important as part of the overall life story of the informant. However, undoubtedly the most difficult time of my overall visit was the end. Although the level of rapport developed with each of the women differed, after the hour-long interview I felt a close bond with all of the interviewees, and I felt very guilty about just walking away after they had recounted their stories to me. Ribbens (1989) explains that

> It is precisely because women researchers are particularly sensitive to the possibility that the interviewee has been asked to expose themselves in a manner that normally only occurs within long term relationships, that make them uneasy about leaving interviewees.

Reinharz (1994) also refers to a closeness that can be felt by a biographer for her respondent, arising out of points of commonality in their views of the world. Where I considered a particularly good rapport had been established, the women reacted in a way that led me to believe they also found my sudden departure 'difficult' or 'unusual'. One took me to see her motorbike which was clearly a prized possession, and another offered to accompany me to the local shopping precinct. I was also lent an old book which had been identified in the interview as being of particular significance to the respondent. One woman said that she would really like to take me canoeing and another asked me to visit the outdoor centre in which she worked; offers that I did subsequently consider. However, although I was aware that Oakley (1981) had developed long-term friendships with her interviewees, I was concerned about the ethics of developing a friendship with one or more of my respondents, and the implications that this might have for the research. The stage at which a research association might become a real friendship is questionable, however, Wise (1987) suggests that a real friendship is not possible until after the research relationship has stopped. What seemed important for me, was that any emerging friendship was not manipulated in order to gain what might appear to be valuable information for the research (Clarke, 1998b).

Interviewer joy

In considering my own response to the stories told by the women in this study, I noted the reports of others (see Reinharz, 1992) who have found listening to the life stories of respondents to be unsettling, and often upsetting. Reinharz (1992) suggests that interviewer stress can arise out of an ethic of commitment, with the interview process giving an intimate view of a respondent's pain. Whilst in one sense I did find listening to the experiences of the women unsettling due to their nature, this is not because they were painful, but more because they were the opposite. Many of the stories told were joyful and so, unlike the negative emotions resulting from painful memories, these evoked in myself a positive response. Like Becky Thompson (cited in Reinharz, 1992) I found transcribing the interviews also evoked emotions experienced during the interview itself, although whereas for her these were painful, for myself they were pleasurable. I found these women's stories of adventure and travel exhilarating and motivating and they led me to consider my own level of involvement which is minimal compared to theirs. I have a great love of adventure and the outdoors, and so I questioned why I do not pursue such activities as often as I would like[3]. I was interested to read Reinharz's (1994) consideration of relationships between researcher and researched, where she gives an example of the respondent as a role model. Like Lane (cited in Reinharz, 1994) these women provided me with role models in a world where I have met very few other women heavily involved in adventurous activities. They showed me that it is possible to be a full-time teacher, and still regularly pursue other activities that require a high level of energy, motivation and commitment.

Additional methods of data collection

A source of data collection I had not anticipated came in the form of personal correspondence (see Letherby and Zdrodowski, 1995). When writing to the respondents I sent personal, hand-written letters accompanying the interview schedule, as an acknowledgement for contributions received, and with interview transcripts returned for feedback. In many cases I received letters in return,

providing further insight into the life stories of the respondents. I was interested to note Sheridan's (1993:35) findings with reference to mass-observation directive replies. Men tended to choose the official letter or report, making 'clearly-defined points often without direct reference to their own feelings', whereas women were more likely to respond via a personal letter. Whilst the context is different, and my own research included no men for comparison, the letters received from the women in this study tended to be of a personal nature, including direct reference to thoughts and feelings. For example, in a letter returned with her interview transcript, Faye wrote

> I found the interview a really positive experience - quite a profound and thought provoking one too. I have found on many occasions much of what we were discussing is hard to put into words. It was fine with you because you have a love of the outdoors too so understand through experiences you've had. But to the non-outdoor person it is really difficult to put into words. In some ways, I don't know if you can - or if I'd want to anyway.

After conducting the first few interviews, I realised that whilst I had recorded stories relating to significant aspects of each respondent's life, there were gaps that in some respects differed for each interviewee. Therefore, in an attempt to increase the coherence of the data, to verify aspects of the life stories and to provide contextual, demographic information, I constructed three short personal profile questionnaires (see Appendix F). I also sought to obtain some feedback concerning the interview process itself, by including a short question asking respondents to reflect on how they felt before, during and after the interview. Although all respondents had approached my interview request positively, I was conscious that they led very busy lives, and therefore I considered whether sending the questionnaires separately or together would increase the rate of return. I decided that receiving one overall request was likely to be met more positively than receiving two or more, so all questionnaires were sent at the same time. I set a deadline for their return in an attempt to ensure that they were not put aside and forgotten, but as a strategy this was only partially successful. In order to obtain returns from all respondents, several telephone calls were made, and questionnaires were sent to replace one set that had been lost.

As noted by Burgess (1984), in carrying out interpretive research I was the main instrument in the investigation. I therefore identified a need to record my own responses throughout the research process. Spradley (1979) suggests that in addition to field notes arising directly from interviews, the researcher should keep a journal recording thoughts and ideas that arise during the fieldwork. Throughout the period of research I kept a diary in which I noted: thoughts and ideas concerning the research questions; reactions to informants after each interview; comments concerning aspects of the relationship established with each informant, and observations relating to my immediate and continuing role as the interviewer. In addition, I recorded feelings concerning my own involvement in adventurous activities, arising out of responses made during the interviews; thoughts relating to the interview process, and points to consider when conducting future interviews. Like Spradley (1979) I saw the need for notes that would initiate a link between the data and the final written report. Consequently, I began to 'think on paper' about the culture under consideration, and record interpretations, insights, patterns and possible themes.

Collective stories

Biographical accounts of women teachers with a high level of involvement in adventurous activities, afford an insight into the stories of those not generally considered within literature (Loeffler, 1995). In addition to women being under-represented in all aspects of outdoor adventure education (Humberstone, 1996), in my experience, teachers able to maintain a high level of involvement in activities outside of their teaching responsibilities are very much in the minority. Such involvement challenges established beliefs of what it is 'like' to be a woman (possibly a mother) and a teacher. Narratives in the form of a collective story offer transformational possibilities both for those within the study 'who have been denied a place to speak from' (Clarke, 1998b:67), and for the readers. As identified by Clarke (1998b), women who are oppressed, such as the lesbian teachers in her study, are often isolated from others in a similar situation which can result in feelings of loneliness and insecurity. According to Richardson (1990), the collective story can overcome some of the alienation of contemporary

life, linking individuals into a shared consciousness and providing the posibility of societal transformation. Whilst the women in this research could not be described as oppressed, within the field of adventure they remain largely invisible, which was a reason given by some of the respondents for becoming involved in this project. There are many issues surrounding women's participation in adventurous activities, including those relating to perceptions of the world of adventure as being male dominated (see Loeffler, 1995). Whilst women's participation is increasing, and according to Absolon, (cited in Loeffler, 1995) they are receiving much more recognition for their adventurous accomplishments, there are still few female role models and mentors. New 'collective' narratives can provide 'possible behaviours' (Celsi et al, 1993) for other women. As contended by Richardson (1990:26)

> At the individual level, people make sense of their lives through the stories that are available to them, and they attempt to fit their lives into the available stories. If the available narrative is limiting, destructive, or at odds with the actual life, peoples' lives end up being limited and textually disenfranchised. Collective stories that deviate from standard cultural plots provide new narratives; hearing them legitimates replotting one's own life. New narratives offer the patterns for new lives.

Within adventurous activities, like Oliver (1998), I saw a need for narrative accounts of the lives of women, not only to empower or better understand, but also to create multiple stories and alternative 'ways of being' for the reader.

Issues of representation

It is important to consider that writing a narrative of people's lived experience involves speaking for others, which according to Roth (cited in Richardson, 1990) cannot be avoided. Like Richardson (1990) I accept that to quieten the writer's voice would both reject the value of sociological insight, and also imply that facts exist without interpretation. I would argue that it is unrealistic to suggest that a research narrative can be written so that only the respondent's voices are heard, and I support Scott's (1985) criticism of qualitative research that denies the presence of the researcher in the research. It would be deceptive to suggest that a research text can

speak purely from the point of view of the participant and their field texts (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994).

Stanley and Wise (1993) refer to the vulnerability of 'the researched' who are unlikely to be powerful enough to influence any final publication; thus their lives, feelings, understanding could appear in any form at the end of the research process. As identified by Scott (1985:80) 'the researcher is placed in the powerful position of translator or presenter of other women's lives'. Ribbens (1989) considers that defining other peoples realities for them, and for others, is the greatest power sociologists can have. One way in which I attempted to address such power differentials, was to send the interview transcripts back to the interviewees (a process that Janesick, 1994:216 sees as 'member checks'). This enabled them to check the accuracy of the transcription, and to make any alterations, deletions or additions that they considered appropriate. Whilst this represented one small step towards an intention that the voices of the respondents should be 'truly' represented, there is always the difficulty of how to react if this is met with a negative response, as encountered by Hilary Burgess (1985). However, although I experienced mixed responses from the participants in this study, and few comments or alterations were made, all of the women seemed to appreciate being given the opportunity to read the interview transcript. Comments made in letters sent with the returns included: 'I found it fascinating to read, 'It was amazingly real', 'I actually quite enjoyed reading it', 'I've giggled my way through it, reliving bits', and I did feel that regardless of whether the credibility of the accounts had been increased, this went a small way towards giving something back to the respondents in return for their involvement. However, as identified by Clarke (1998a) it would be simplistic to consider that a partially collaborative action such as this could solve problems of power or exploitation.

Whilst this research could be said to reflect a 'participatory model' allowing the respondents to effect and inform the research process, like Letherby and Ramsay (1999:37) I acknowledged that 'the project design and execution (was) still largely under the control of the researcher'. It is the researcher who decides 'how

the voices of subjects are integrated, and the author positioned, in the final text; that is, how people get written in and out of the account' (Sparkes, 1995:160). Richardson (1990:38) sees the intentional behaviour of writing as a site of moral responsibility, and whilst there appears to be no easy solution to the problem of speaking for others, she suggests that 'we can choose to write so that the voice we choose to write about is respected, strong and true'. In considering ways in which this could be achieved, I noted Oliver's (1998) reminder of a moral obligation to 'give back' to participants, as well as to allow for their agendas. One of the ways of giving back to participants is by helping them develop their own voices which can be assisted, according to Oliver (1998:256) by continuing to 'ask participants to think about and articulate the meanings of their experiences'. Sending the respondents a schedule prior to the interviews, ensuring that there was time within the interview itself for participants to consider their experiences in some depth, providing opportunities for subsequent reflection and communication by the respondents and the additional use of questionnaires all assisted in this process. In trying to overcome the difficulties of writing I was conscious of my intention that this research should be 'on, for and with' participants rather than 'about' them, although I noted Ribbens (1989:590) assertion that the project is the researcher's and 'there are limits to the extent to which our research can be regarded as being on behalf of the people we are researching'. It is important to recognise that the researcher's stories will contribute to the way in which the respondent's stories are interpreted (Oliver, 1998). Like Alvermann et al (1996:117) I was aware that

> The interpreting I do as a writer tells as much about me as it does about others' whose stories are being told...I can never separate my own experiences from the experiences of those I write about.

Consequently, as a positioned author implicated in the construction of the text (Sparkes, 1995) I recognised the importance of adopting a reflexive approach and making explicit my own role, to enable the reader to understand the relationship between myself and the participants. Janesick (1994:214) considers this to be a 'critical component in the writing of the research report', and one which contributes to the credibility with which the researcher confronts the major

assertions in the study. Adopting a reflexive approach requires the researcher to analyse and display publicly the inter-relationship with their participants as well as their social identity, experience, values and assumptions (Reay, 1996). Whilst this is not a straightforward process, like King (1996) I recognised that reflexivity goes some way towards redressing the power inequalitites between the researcher and the participants, in order to construct meaning. Rather than being restricting, King (1996:176) considers that examining the way in which we as researchers are an integral part of the data, and making explicit the operations and structures that underlie our research will *amplify* the voices of the participants 'even when this openness is impeded by the researcher's unrecognized biases and discriminations'.

In entering the worlds of the respondents in order to 'tell their stories', I was aware of my power as interpreter (see Reay, 1996) and of a need to make the process of data analysis and interpretation transparent for the reader. The following sections address issues of interpretation and analysis as well as giving consideration to the credibility of the final account.

Data analysis

As previously identified, rather than forming a distinct stage in the research process, the analysis and interpretation of data were simultaneous and took place over the entire period of study (see Burgess, 1984). As outlined by Janesick (1994), rather than imposing categories or themes prior to the data collection, these emerged from the interviews, personal correspondence and questionnaires through a process of inductive analysis. Thus, although I did not fully utilise the methods of data analysis advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967), I employed the underlying principles of their grounded theory approach in an attempt to make sense of the data in a meaningful way, and to build a comparative picture across the life story accounts. In making use of grounded theory, as advocated by Pidgeon (1996:76) I gave attention to 'participants' own accounts of social and psychological events and of their associated local phenomenal and social worlds'. I also followed up any recurrent themes or issues found in the data which as explained by Charmaz (1990) can lead grounded theorists in unanticipated

direction. Having said that a process of inductive analysis was employed, it would be wrong to suggest that theory emerged totally from the data. Like Scraton and Flintoff (1992) I did not begin with an 'empty head' devoid of theoretical thinking. Having read extensively within the field of adventure education, and been involved in endless theoretical debates with interested colleagues, I had already formulated my own understandings about aspects of participation in adventurous activities. I found it useful to consider Scraton and Flintoff's view of theory as not being static or neatly compartmentalised, and to identify with their own research experience

> As our research developed, grounded both in the experience of the researcher and researched and our theoretical understanding, so theory emerged and developed within and out of the research process.

In establishing key issues to pursue, I initially used the main areas of discussion from the life story interviews as a guide, but as the research progressed I began to identify patterns relating to behaviour and to seek explanation. Throughout the research, I recorded interpretations, insights, patterns and emerging themes which influenced data collection in subsequent interviews, and which were developed through constant comparative analysis. Similarities and diversities were considered in examining indicators within the data of a potentially significant theme. Although grounded theory offers a flexible approach (Pidgeon and Henwood, 1996), I found the guidelines outlined by Pidgeon and Henwood to be particularly useful in labelling and coding the data, and in giving consideration to 'researcher categories' as well as 'member categories'[4]. For example, the concept 'challenging the traditional roles of women' is a theoretical idea not directly raised by the respondents. Like Pidgeon and Henwood (1996) I accepted that giving consideration solely to member categories might constrain subsequent theorising and consequently the final interpretation. This is supported by Connelly and Clandinin (1990) who consider that the final narrative must both fit the data and provide meaning that is not represented in the data alone.

Whilst emerging 'theory' was grounded in the data, I also employed a hermeneutical approach in an attempt to interpret what events and experiences meant for the participants (Glucksmann, 1994). Hermeneutics is defined as the theory or science of interpretation, and is employed in biographical research in order to understand the

narratives of lives (Erben, 1996). In explaining modern hermeneutics, Rowan and Reason (1981) emphasise the starting point as an acceptance of our existence in time and history, and of the prejudgements we bring to our understanding which are largely determined by culture. I found significance for my own research in the notion of the hermeneutic circle which sees understanding as consisting of circular and spiral relationships 'between whole and parts, between what is known and what is unknown, between the phenomenon itself and its wider context, between the knower and what is known'. As explained by Rowan and Reason (1981:135)

> As a researcher approaches a phenomenon for study, he or she will have some provisional conceptions of its meaning as a whole; as the parts are examined, the meaning of some of them will come partially clear, and this clarity can be enhanced by relating them to each other and to the whole. But this process of comparison will usually lead to a re-evaluation of the meaning of the whole, which in turn can lead to a new understanding of the components. So there is a perpetual oscillation of interpretation.

Through interpretation I constantly reassessed and refined emerging themes which led to data reduction. I was conscious that throughout this process I made decisions about which data to use and how these data were interpreted. I was careful to consider aspects of the life stories that did not 'fit' into emerging patterns, and noted the advice of Janesick (1994) to purposely seek negative examples in aiming to represent the lives of the participants in a way that was 'democratic' (see Evans, 1992). In considering my own proximity to the subject matter I took account of the note of caution issued by Du Bois (1983:105)

> The closer our subject matter to our own life and experience, the more we can probably expect our own beliefs about the world to enter into and shape our work - to influence...the interpretations of our findings.

However, hermeneutic understanding cannot be applied from the outside, as noted by Rowan and Reason (1981:133) 'it is assumed that the interpreter "knows" to some degree the phenomena [she] seeks to understand'.

In an attempt to reflect what events and experiences meant for participants, data was presented in narrative form supported by evidence in the form of direct quotations from interview data, and framed by interpretive commentary drawing on relevant theory. Sections within the final written narrative correspond to themes identified through a continuous process of interpretation and analysis. I accept Lincoln's (1996,

cited in Oliver, 1998:254) assertion that, 'texts are always only partial representations; any claim made that texts represent whole or complete truths are specious, inauthentic and misleading'. Further, I recognise that there can be no one authoritative account (Clarke, 1998a), but as identified by Oliver (1998) narrative analysis can give access to peoples' stories and voices, and create multiple ways of knowing and sharing knowledge and understanding.

Having outlined ways in which the data were analysed and interpreted, the following section considers how we might judge the quality of the research process and the final narrative account.

Legitimation

Just as there are many ways of telling and retelling life stories, there are various ways of describing and interpreting reality in the final written narrative. These different ways of telling raise issues of judgement, and lead to questions concerning the relevance of traditional views of validity, reliability and generalisability. Like Riessman (1993:64) I acknowledged that procedures for establishing validity, and prevailing concepts of verification

> rely on realist assumptions and consequently are largely irrelevant to narrative studies. A personal narrative is not meant to be read as an exact record of what happened nor is it a mirror of the world 'out there'.

There is no single 'correct' interpretation, and as identified by Janesick (1994), validity in narrative inquiry has more to do with whether a given explanation is credible; whether it holds meaning for the reader and the participants.

In seeking to address the credibility of these interpretations, the identification of appropriate, specific criteria was problematic. Like Scott (1996) and Sparkes (1998) I largely rejected criteria that paralleled those of traditional forms of inquiry, on the basis that they were too closely associated with positivist perspectives, and too concerned with method rather than giving consideration to outcome, product and negotiation. I took note of the argument posited by Reason and Rowan (1981:244) that

> Validity in new paradigm research lies in the skills and sensitivities of the researcher, in how he or she uses herself as knower, and as inquirer. Validity is

more personal and interpersonal than methodological.

Like Reason and Rowan (1981) I acknowledged that whilst traditional notions of validity are all about method, human inquiry is about people. This is not to say that practices such as 'member checks', have no place in narrative inquiry; in fact I support Riessman's (1993) assertion that it is desirable to take work back to the individuals who participated in the study. However, like Reason and Rowan (1981:241) I rejected the notion that employing certain procedures guarantees the 'truth' of an account, and recognised that any notion of validity must concern itself both with the knower and with what is to be known.

What appeared to hold more relevance for judging the quality of my own research was the notion of 'authenticity', which according to Manning (1997) involves a set of evolving criteria with no parallel in the positivist paradigm. The intention is that authenticity criteria should be used only when and where appropriate to guide the researcher in considering the purposeful and plausible nature of a study, and 'to pose questions about and raise considerations of the data to further data analysis and guide ethical decisions' (Manning, 1997:94). The concept of authenticity was developed by Guba and Lincoln (1989) and I saw relevance for my own research in their intention that the text produced should be faithful to the story lines of the respondents (Lincoln, 1993), with the reader coming away with a 'heightened sensitivity to the lives being depicted and with some flavour of the kinds of events, characters, and social circumstances that circumscribed those lives' (Sparkes, 1998:379). The authenticity criteria of: fairness, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity and tactical authenticity, refer respectively to: ensuring a balance of perspectives; enhancing the knowledge and understanding of the researcher and respondents; stimulating activity and decision making and encouraging and empowering social action (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Scott, 1996). In seeking to apply relevant aspects of these criteria, I gave consideration to the need for the final written account to be meaningful, useful, faithful and fair, and I sought to give equal consideration to various, alternative perspectives of the participants. In employing an 'active' approach to interviewing, alternative 'ways of knowing' were presented to the respondents as well as to myself during the interview process. When considering catalytic authenticity, I cannot

necessarily make claims for the empowering nature of this research although I noted Krane's (1994) suggestion that research can be empowering for women surrounded by male interpretations of sport and exercise. However, whilst the research process might not energise participants towards a transformed reality (Lather, 1986), the final interpretation presents a narrative account in the form of collective stories of the lives of women involved in adventure, and as such, offers new possible 'behaviours' for the reader.

In addition to finding relevance in the notion of authenticity, I also took note of two ways of approaching validation in narrative work as identified by Riessman (1993): namely persuasiveness (also termed plausibility; see Hammersley, 1992) and correspondence. The first refers to whether the interpretation is reasonable and convincing; somehow 'obvious' without necessarily being immediately recognisable[5]. In trying to present an holistic picture of the women in this research, I supported theoretical claims with evidence from their accounts as well as considering alternative interpretations of the data. Correspondence refers to member checks, which have been seen to increase the credibility of an account (Guba and Lincoln, 1985). Like Riessman (1993) I considered it important to find out respondents' opinions of any interpretations, consequently as explained earlier, I returned interview transcripts to each participant for comment. I took note of Denzin's (1989b) assertion that if interpretations developed about a respondent's life are not understandable to them they are unacceptable, however, I also recognised that it might be difficult for individual narrators to evaluate theorising across a number of narratives as might be the case in the final written account. As highlighted by Riessman (1993:67) it is important to realise that 'in the final analysis, the work is ours. We have to take responsibility for its truths'.

Unlike traditional views which see one set of validation criteria as appropriate for all forms of research, like Sparkes (1995) I acknowledge that there can be no canonical approach in qualitative inquiry. As argued by Smith (1993) the traits or values seen as characteristic of good interpretive research are subject to interpretation and reinterpretation as conditions and times change. In recognising that in narrative inquiry criteria upon which to judge the quality of the research should be selected and

applied only when and where appropriate, I have identified those considered particularly applicable to my own research. This section has outlined some ways in which the notion of authenticity, persuasiveness and correspondence have been addressed; although the application of any criteria remains problematic in the face of what Marcus and Fisher (1986) describe as uncertainty about what constitutes an adequate depiction of social reality.

This chapter has sought to explore methodological issues, as well as some of the practical and theoretical problems encountered during this research into the lives of women involved in adventurous activities. Like Gilroy (1997) I found the research to be a living thing, changing as I did myself, during the research process. Having theoretically considered the quality of this research, in the words of Laws (1998) it remains for the 'practical validity' and the extent to which the interpretations hold meaning, to be assessed by the reader. Riessman (1993) cites individual action and biography as the starting point of analysis for learning about the general from the particular, although it is difficult to generalise on the basis of close observations with a few individuals. Stake (1995) refers to two types of generalisation which hold some relevance for this research: petite and naturalistic. Petite generalisations are made from like case to like case which means that it might be possible to make some generalisations from these women to other women of a similar age, background and occupation heavily involved in adventurous activities. Naturalistic generalisation refers to those made by the reader as they interpret the findings and relate these to their own experiences. It is through such generalisations that this research might impact on the lives of others with an interest in the field of adventure (Allison, 2000).

The following chapter explores aspects of the lives of women teachers who view regular involvement in adventurous activities as a highly significant part of their experience.

NOTES

1. Outdoor Management Development is a form of experiential learning that utilises challenging outdoor experiences, initiative games and problem solving tasks to teach management skills, develop leadership potential and build teams. It has its roots in outdoors based personal development programmes such as Outward Bound (Hayllar, 1997).

2. Bonnington (1981) describes a close bond with the adventure environment resulting in a heightened awareness and perception of beauty, and great joy.
3. Regardless of any other contributory factors that might enable an individual to maintain a high level of commitment to the pursuit of adventurous activities, after conducting the interviews within this study it became evident that a significant factor for these women was the similar involvement of a partner. I subsequently considered this in examining my own level of participation.
4. 'Member categories' or '*in vivo* codes' (see Strauss and Corbin, 1990) are derived directly from the interviewees discourse, whereas 'researcher categories' refer to more theoretical ideas that have not been directly raised by the participants (Pidgeon and Henwood, 1996).
5. This criterion of persuasiveness, or plausibility is similar to what Kirk and Miller (1986) term *apparent validity.*

Chapter 4

EXPLORING THE LIVES OF WOMEN ADVENTURE PARTICIPANTS

Introduction

In this chapter I explore the meanings for women teachers of their long-term participation in adventurous activities. A theoretical framework drawn from literature discussed in previous chapters was employed in the analysis of the findings. Whilst being partially determined by the initial research questions, this framework developed and emerged as the research progressed. Its structure acknowledges the importance of a variety of contexts such as the family, work, outdoors and life span, and takes account of key issues and themes arising out of the women's stories of the relationships between their 'life in the outdoors' and aspects of their 'whole life'. An exploration of these relationships enabled 'crucial tales' (see Goodson, 1992) about motivations, commitments, opportunities, constraints and interactions to emerge.
I focus initially on the context and form of the women's adventure involvement, and provide a summary of their participation. In considering the ways in which the women created and negotiated opportunities for their own leisure interests in the form of outdoor adventure, the significance of traditional perceptions of gender role expectations and responsibilities is revealed. The assumption that adventure participation has a positive impact on the lives of participants is subsequently challenged when I consider some of the negative effects of the women's involvement. I then move beyond previous research on 'women in the outdoors' (Culp, 1998; Henderson et al, 1996; Humberstone, 2000; Loeffler, 1997; Warren, 1996) to explore aspects of childhood experience identified by the women as holding meaning for their adult participation, and to consider the significance of a partner with at least a similar level of commitment to the outdoors. This then leads me to examine some of the reasons for the high priority given by the women to their adventure participation, particularly in the light of their experiences of generally unreported high levels of fear. Relationships formed in the outdoors was a significant theme that emerged from all the women's life stories, and I move on to focus on the meaning and importance of these friendships. I subsequently identify several ways in which the women considered their involvement in adventure had positively influenced the execution of

their role as a teacher or educator. Finally, against the backdrop of the male-dominated adventure environment, I examine the gendered meanings of the outdoors for these experienced women adventure participants.

The form and context of adventure experiences

In order to understand some of the meanings of adventurous activities, I focus initially on the context and form of the women's involvement and provide a summary of their participation. All were committed to participating regularly in adventurous activities, and spent a great deal of time organising their lives and planning for this participation. Cathy described adventurous activities as 'the main part of my life really' and Debbie explained that

> ...everything revolves around the activities I want to do and the places I want to go. I mean, the only thing that has probably changed things a little bit is having children, but they still have to fit into the activity schedule.

All of the women engaged regularly in more than one adventurous pursuit, and had experienced several different adventurous activities since initially becoming seriously involved during their teenage years or early twenties (see Appendix G Activity Profiles). The activities currently followed were white water canoeing, open canoeing, climbing, mountaineering, winter climbing, trekking, caving, white water rafting, skydiving, scuba diving, surfing and skiing with most of the women taking part in canoeing in the winter and climbing, mountaineering or surfing in the summer. Although generally individual, all such activities require the presence of other people because of the safety implications, and so are not usually done alone. Taking part with others was consistently identified as a positive aspect, but Helen described the frustration experienced when the importance of working with others acted as a limitation. She commented

> I think the worst thing is if you suddenly get a weekend and there's nobody to go and play with, and some of the things that you might want to do depend on you having somebody with you.

When engaging in these activities, unless in a teaching capacity the women were generally accompanied by one or more male friends or a male partner. Like others, Cathy said that she was usually the only woman at the weir where she

canoed, and although Gill enjoyed male company she expressed her frustration at not being able to find other women to paddle with. She explained that she was

> ...really fed-up that there weren't any other women [paddling]...Then I persuaded some of my friend's wives to have a go but they didn't really enjoy it...they'd been shoved down something which was too difficult for them and got scared and just wouldn't do it any more.

These women's stories support previous claims that women are significantly under-represented in the adventure environment (Nolan and Priest, 1994; Graham, 1997; Humberstone, 2000).

As adventurous activities are generally pursued in a natural environment involving water, rocks, countryside or mountains, the need for travelling time meant that participation for most of the women centred around the weekends. Gill revealed that occasionally during the week she went to a local climbing wall, but most of her involvement was at weekends when she would travel to either climb or canoe. The majority worked as full-time teachers or lecturers and heavy workloads also limited the time available in the week for adventure participation. This was illustrated by Emma when she explained that in order to have the weekends to paddle she had '...to work really hard during the week...I worked until twenty past one one night this week marking'. Some of the women were able to canoe or climb one or two evenings a week but these sessions did not always focus on their own participation. Jenny described a weekly club that she ran for thirteen to seventeen year olds and pointed out that

> Ever since I was about seventeen, eighteen and was doing a lot of outdoor stuff myself, one of my main ideas was to actually provide opportunities for youngsters to get into outdoor activities...So about six years ago I started a club...It's really for the purpose of providing them with opportunities to do outdoor activities and through that to gain the benefits of relationships, communication, personal development and those sorts of things.

Gill and Emma regularly took pupils from their school canoeing and Helen had taught on canoeing and mountain leadership training courses two or three evenings a week for a number of years.

Several of the women emphasised the importance to them of regular exercise, and in addition to her involvement in adventure Belinda engaged in physical

activity everyday. She stated that after getting up 'the first thing I do is exercise...then I will mostly in the evening either swim or go to aerobics'. She explained that this slightly raised her adrenaline to a level that 'kicked her body into action' and made her feel 'a bit more in control'. Apart from Helen who regularly played club hockey the other women preferred to take part solely in activities of an adventurous nature. When this was not possible they substituted individual physical recreation activities for their adventure sports, although for Cathy this appeared to be a poor substitute as she admitted that

> If I don't do some kind of canoeing I get all unbalanced mentally so nothing else is going to work...Occasionally if the water levels are wrong I can't go...I go for bike rides instead, but it takes more bike rides to make up the time I've missed [canoeing].

Although difficult to schedule, all the women had managed to maintain their involvement in adventurous activities alongside work and family commitments. However, Jenny had a five month old baby and had been unable to take part in any type of activity for eight months due to ligament problems during pregnancy. She had found this devastating and talked at length about the plans for her baby daughter that would enable her to resume her adventure participation. In particular she had arranged for her mother and a friend to each baby-sit for one day a month and she had been exploring the availability of equipment to enable her baby to travel safely in a canoe. She had also purchased a backpack to put her daughter in when going walking and a carriage that attached to a bike for holidays.

Holiday periods were significant times for travel that enabled all the women to pursue a range of adventurous activities in Scotland or abroad. The women travelled at Christmas, Easter and in the Summer and reported trips to: the Alps for kayaking, white water rafting and climbing; India and Nepal for kayaking and trekking; Africa for mountaineering and white water rafting; Spain, Italy and Slovakia for scrambling and walking; France and Bhutan for kayaking and France and Austria for skiing. Emma had taken one years unpaid leave to trek and work in India and was planning to ask her headteacher for another year off in the near future, and Debbie had arranged for a months unpaid leave in November of the previous year to pursue adventurous activities abroad. Like several of the

women, Emma viewed holidays as significant opportunities to distance herself from the 'worries of work and school' and go where 'nobody could get at me...I couldn't be contacted'. Cathy described the rejuvenating effect of an adventure holiday abroad when she explained that

> you forget about everything else...so I go away quite often for Easter two weeks abroad, but I come back and I'm just gobsmacked by Britain...and life is just really fresh.

The women made their activities a high priority by organising their time during the week in order to keep their weekends free to fulfil their need for adventure. The way in which they pursued their activities contrasted sharply with women in other studies (Allison and Duncan, 1987; Deem, 1987; Henderson and Bialeschki, 1994) who chose physical activities easily incorporated into their daily schedules which often revolved around the needs and desires of significant others. As in the study by Henderson and Bialeschki (1994) of women committed to physical recreation, the women in this research did follow 'individual' (often within a group), non-competitive activities rather than team sports, but through choice rather than because they were easier to programme. The women in Henderson and Bialeschki's study chose, albeit at times reluctantly, individual activities because they could easily be incorporated into daily schedules that took account of traditional conceptualisations of their roles and responsibilities. However, rather than being passive recipients of gender-related constraints, the stories of the women in this research portray them as active agents in the construction of their leisure experiences (see Green 1998b).

In attempting to explain the way in which the women structured their leisure time and the activities that they chose to follow, I took note of Colley's (1984) emphasis on the significance of constraints imposed on the individual effecting the availability of, and access to different leisure activities. In the following section I consider how these women created and negotiated opportunities for adventure participation in the light of constraints relating to traditional notions of role expectations and responsibilities to others.

Challenging gender roles and creating opportunities for adventurous activities

Adventurous activities were seen as an important and necessary part of all the women's lives. Rather than their identities being centred on their domestic and work roles and relationships, they were defined largely by their participation in adventure. Hence, they generally gave this a higher priority than the needs of their job or their family. Green (1998b) refers to the way in which prioritising time for oneself can be conceptualised as a way of maintaining a sense of self or personal identity through leisure. This was illustrated by Gill who said that it would be awful if she did not participate in adventurous activities because

> I would spend all my time here [at home] and have nothing of my own. That sounds awful...but there's nothing I would do for myself. With work I would do, but I need to work. With the children you are always looking after someone else. I'd have nothing that was mine.

By adding 'that sounds awful' Gill seemed to be suggesting that her attitude may be considered selfish, probably because it did not conform to the stereotypical view of what it means to be a mother. However, like the other women with children, she did not express any real concern about the choices she had made regarding her children that had enabled her to pursue her interests in adventure. These choices could be seen as a form of resistance to socialised gender roles related to motherhood. As explained by Bialishcki (1994:59)

> Women who are engaged in leisure experiences as a means for increased sense of autonomy and self-value are perceived as involved in acts of resistance because they are resisting the roles imposed on and expected of women in patriarchal societies.

Both Debbie and Gill actively participated in adventurous activities close to the birth of their children. Gill canoed five miles in a single open canoe on the day she gave birth to her daughter, and Debbie began a five day canoe instructor's assessment two days after giving birth to her son. In order to continue their involvement in adventure the three women with children either arranged to leave them with family, friends or their husband/partner at weekends and during holidays, or took them with them climbing, canoeing, white water rafting, skiing or mountaineering. As Debbie explained

> [My daughter] comes with us almost every time; she didn't come to Nepal, I basically left her with my family. But [my son] is obviously new so he'll have to fit into the schedule soon. But she comes skiing with us, and we go rock climbing and take it in turns. When we go to the Alps for the summer, we have a base of people at the campsite who take it in turns to look after the children.

Debbie went on to say that when her daughter was a baby she had been left at the bottom of a climbing crag in her carrycot while she and her partner climbed.

> You could hear when she was waking up so you could get down...We used to take a car seat up with her asleep to the climbing wall, and put her up on the shelf. No one would drop on her (*joint laughter*).

This statement illustrates the high priority given by Debbie to her activity and provides an example of behaviour that challenges western society's traditional views of a mother's child care responsibilities and concerns (see Culp, 1998). Such behaviour contradicts that of the women in Henderson and Bialeschki's (1994) research, many of whom held the belief that they should be 'on call' to other members of their family twenty-four hours a day. Similarly, mothers questioned during a study conducted by Bialeschki (1994) into the relationship between leisure and motherhood had considered family and/or work responsibilities more important than their own leisure participation whilst there were dependent children in the family.

Jenny, who had recently had her first baby, described a long-term conflict between her own behaviour and traditional views of what is acceptable behaviour for a woman and a mother.

> I've always had a little bit of conflict in my life in that the traditional thing, particularly I'm coming across it now with children, you know the woman goes to the coffee mornings and the playgroups and stuff like that and does the shopping *smiling* and is very happy. And the man goes out to work and yes of course the men want to go off and go canoeing or walking and I thought "Hold on a minute (*joint laughter*) that doesn't fit with me" because I don't want to sit around, I mean I don't mind having a cup of coffee with someone but, you know that isn't what I want to do with my time particularly. I have actually felt tension in that the message is, or perhaps I've <u>felt</u> the message has been, "You know you've got children now and these are the activities you do. Why are you trying to pursue this, that and the other".

Jenny explained how traditional views of a mother's role had been implicit in comments made when she had recently returned to work that was shared with her husband, after having their baby

> So, both of us do this day with the gap year and sometimes it's been awkward for us both to do it and I've been the one that's looked after Hannah [*daughter*] and the last couple of weeks I've said to Mark [*husband*] "I don't want it to be like that" so I've been taking them [the gap year students] on my own a couple of times while he looks after Hannah. And there's almost been a kind of "Where's Mark?". It's almost been a sort of "I hope you're not making him", you know. It's a sense of, it's not normal, you know...He should be the one that carries on as normal.

In addition to the impact on Jenny's adventure participation of organisational difficulties resulting from responsibility for a baby, she had evidently experienced some partly unexpected opposition to her continued involvement in activity from acquaintances and older family members such as her husband's parents. Although not deterred, she did find this frustrating. She said

> I wish that it was more accepted that females had an interest in [adventure]...I have met some really good female leaders that have even got children so that has given me a little bit of confidence. I could get very depressed thinking about having a child and then looking around at the majority of women's lives, so when you see one you think "She's doing it" you know "It's OK". It gives me some hope and confidence really, that I know life has to change but you don't have to give everything up.

Creating time for participation in adventurous activities meant that some of the women had to negotiate opportunities to do so with their partner/husband. Where there were children involved, if they were not left in the care of friends or other family members, the women took it in turns with their partner/husband either to go away, or to pursue activity once arriving at a particular venue. Unlike the significant others of the women in Bialischki's (1994) research, those of the women in this study, particularly where there were children involved, consistently took responsibility for household chores or child care. The women's narratives suggest an assumption of equality, with their partner's involvement in the household being taken for granted. Gill's husband often took sole responsibility for the children during the week because of the demanding nature

of her job as acting headteacher in a primary school. She described how she would

> ...sometimes go out at seven and I'm not back until seven. And the children will be in bed when I go and in bed when I come back.

Gill had been asked by the local education authority to take on the headship in a 'struggling' school, but she said that

> Because of the amount of extra work it does mean that I'm having to do some of it at weekends, which I'm not prepared to do. I said I would do this secondment for a term and I refuse to stay any longer.

When asked whether she would be more inclined to stay in the job if it were not for her participation in adventure, Gill said

> Yes, I think I would, because I think I could juggle the hours a bit more with the children...But yes, I would because I don't think I can fit all three in [family, job and adventure]...(I: No, and the adventurous activities aren't going to go). No (*joint laughter*). No, the headship can go. It's not worth it; it's about £5000 a year more and I would be working for the first year to get the school straight, twelve to fourteen hour days which I'm not prepared to do.

The impact of continued involvement in adventurous activities

Giving priority to adventure participation over career development was a common theme among the women, as evidenced by Debbie who said that she was 'not that worried about pursuing my career particularly, I'd much rather do activities'. Emma, placed importance on not 'fitting the mould' of a 'typical' teacher and said that she 'took as a compliment' the surprise expressed by her headteacher when she did not apply for a head of department's job. Faye explained that even though she did not have a job to go to, she was going to leave her present employment to live near the mountains again. She remarked

> I've got to leave my job and I <u>love</u> my job, I love my work, it's just the situation is wrong, you know, it's just in the Midlands and it's just no good [for adventure].

Living where she did meant that Faye had a long drive at the weekends if she wanted to climb making her 'tired for the next week at work'. Several of the women did find that trips at weekends or activity in the evenings resulted in them being tired for their teaching the next day. This was explained by Cathy who admitted

> Sometimes if I've been out paddling for an hour and a half on a night I'll be very tired the next day so I wouldn't do my job so well...I got quite tired this weekend so it was harder to teach how I wanted to really because I was much stricter with the kids and less relaxed.

Whilst the women did place a high priority on their adventure participation, and were willing to allow this to have some negative impact on the way they fulfilled their role as a teacher, like Helen, they also accepted that at 'certain times of the year [work] things have to be done so they are top of the list'. Helen took a philosophical view of the fact that at times work commitments might stop her participating in adventurous activities, although she went on to say that 'things that can be left might be left if somebody asked me to go caving'.

Maintaining a commitment to adventurous activity at the level indicated by the women in this study required a high level of organisation and planning, particularly as their involvement had to be balanced alongside their job in teaching or education and domestic and/or family responsibilities. Whilst all noted the sense of satisfaction and well-being derived from their adventure participation, some did identify a negative side or something that had 'suffered' as a result of some aspect of their commitment. For example, Debbie and her partner had recently been thinking of buying a new house

> Because we need a bit more space and we've suddenly realised it's going to take up money...do I really want to spend money on a house, which is just somewhere to live when we want all the holidays that we want...Every time that I've got free I like to go away, but equally...we need space.

When asked what she thought the outcome would be, Debbie said that she thought the house would win in the short term,

> But we might just have to make it less holidays with the children...leave them behind a few more times and just go ourselves. A bit selfish, but...

As with Gill's comment at the beginning of the previous section, Debbie was aware that to leave the children behind might be considered selfish behaviour, but she did not express any real concern about making such a choice herself.

Due to the time taken up by her adventurous activities, Emma had given up playing the cornet two years before. She had played since the age of nine and in more recent years had held the solo position in a brass band, however she saw

this as something that could be resumed when she became too old or injured to paddle. Jenny explained that because of her interests and the fact that it was very rare to find a woman who wanted to go and do the same type of activities 'it means that I don't have friendships with women as much as I'd like'. There is much evidence to support the importance of female friendship for women's well-being (Morley and Walsh, 1995; O'Neill, 1993). Women-only contexts can provide specific opportunities for resistance to gender stereotyped roles and images (Green, 1998b), however they can also reinforce traditional roles such as that of wife and mother (Green et al, 1990). Jenny's story illustrates that whilst she did try to make contact with other women, albeit on her own terms, she resisted engaging in what might be considered socially acceptable 'womanly' (and possibly 'motherly') behaviour.

> I've had a couple of women phone me up and say "Do you want to come round there's a few of us meeting up?" and it's been a real dilemma in thinking it would be really nice to get to know some people but I just don't want to be in that context where I'm just sitting, so on one of them I said "Look I don't want to come round for a coffee, how about going for a walk, I'll meet you". It was actually chucking it down with rain but just outside of ------ [*town*] I met her in this car park and we just went for about an hour and a half. I think she liked it as well and we could still chat when we were walking, but we were doing something and so I think people think I'm a bit funny sometimes because I don't go to any of these other things that people go to.

Activities that entail a level of physical risk are often perceived by those not involved as dangerous and unsafe. This had caused difficulties for several of the women who, like Faye, identified 'the negative side of it, really, the effect on my family'. Faye had experienced a serious life threatening accident two years before whilst canoeing in Scotland, which had resulted in several shoulder operations, and had increased the concern of her parents. She admitted that

> I actually feel quite guilty a lot of the time with respect to...I'm very close to my parents and I think it's very hard sometimes to think what I've put them through in terms of my shoulder and the accident. Because I know a lot of the time when I go away I know that there's people at home thinking "I hope she's alright" or "What's she doing now". I think that's worse since I had my accident...Before...I sort of lied quite a bit about what I was doing or where I was going just to make it alright. Then I hurt myself so now I say "Oh it's just a flat river", and she'll say "Oh how flat is it"...That's quite hard I think.

As in the case of the hangliders questioned by Brannigan and McDougall (1983) the parents of some of these women had learned to accept their activities but would prefer it if they gave them up. Like Faye, Gill said that she had never told her mother everything about her adventure participation - 'the things like launching the boat off the side of a cliff' – and hadn't shown her the photographs of their summer holiday which involved white water rafting with the children. Helen's parents had actively encouraged her not to tell them about her activity – 'my mother was once heard to say "Tell me about it afterwards dear"' – and Jenny similarly explained that her husband's mother adopts the policy of '"Look, anything you know that I'll be shocked at, that you are doing, it's probably best not to tell me"'. The women's parents had expressed particular concern about the safety of any children when they were included in activities, which Gill had found especially difficult, particularly since two of her children had become old enough to tell her mother about their adventure experiences themselves!

Although these vignettes from the women's stories show ways in which they had overcome perceived role obligations in order to continue their participation in adventure, it would be erroneous to suggest that having children had led to no self-imposed changes in behaviour. Indeed, both Debbie and Gill identified how becoming a mother had led to modifications in their own level of risk-taking. Debbie reported times in the past when she had been 'way out of control' in terms of taking on canoe challenges that she had not necessarily been capable of achieving. However, now she acknowledged that

> I don't ever push myself completely...over the limits...I always more or less work within my control, or just on the edge of it really... within a safe limit. It's since the children really...I want to come home.

Gill also 'used to be quite reckless', but due to an increased awareness of the potential risk to her own safety, she too had become much more careful since having childcare responsibilities. However, whilst these women took their role as a mother seriously in terms of ensuring for the sake of their children that they did not place themselves in unreasonable danger, there were limits to the compromises they were prepared to make. They valued freedom from obligations and freedom to focus on themselves, and unlike the women with

children in Bialeschki's (1994) research, becoming mothers had not led to the suppression or abandonment of their leisure experiences.

As noted by Henderson (1998:16) 'the understanding of physical activity involvement is highly dependent on social context'. The women in this study were all well educated and in paid employment in the form of professional occupations which placed them in positions of power. Their socio-economic status and educational level contributed to the way in which they experienced their lives and were able to give priority to their own leisure needs. However, as illustrated above this does not mean that they did not need to overcome or negotiate constraints to their adventure participation. These constraints existed in the form of role responsibilities and cultural pressures to conform to traditional definitions of femininity (Shaw, 1994). What is particularly significant though, is the way in which these women constructed their identities and the degree to which these were connected to the roles of partner, wife, mother, or teacher. Green's (1998b) work is helpful here in so far as it refers to the way in which gender identities are constituted in relation to particular places. She proposes that

> women confined to the home and local neighbourhoods by domestic and caring responsibilities are more likely to construct their identities around traditional 'womanly' roles.

In contrast to the women in Le Feuvre's (1994) research, the leisure of those in this study took precedence over home-based domestic or family obligations and responsibilities. The pursuit of adventurous activities regularly took the women some distance from their homes and contributed to the construction of their identities as adventure participants. Like those of the women teachers researched by Weiler (1992), these women's stories call into question essentialist views of what it means to be a mother and a female teacher. Contradictions exist between the mothers in this study who leave their children with other members of the family in order to pursue their own interests, and the traditional western view of a mother who is nurturing and self-sacrificing. However, as in Weiler's study, the contradictions exist at the level of hegemonic definitions of motherhood, but not in the internal discourse of the women themselves. Their stories suggest that

they do not define a mother as a woman who should consider the needs of children or a partner before her own.

Colley (1984) proposed that women's leisure choices are based on a combination of the opportunities available and constraints to participation. Previous research has concluded that a woman with fewer constraints is likely to have greater leisure opportunities (Harrington et al, 1992) and I have suggested above that paid employment and a certain level of education can facilitate access to leisure (Kay, 1996). However, many women do not take advantage of the opportunities that are available (Henderson, 1998) and it could be argued that constraints are often self-imposed. Gilroy (1999) refers to the contradictions that exist between the frustration that some women report at their own lack of access to leisure, and the guilt they would feel about taking time for themselves away from family or work obligations. Such contradictions were not evident in this study where a common theme was the priority given by the women to their own leisure rights and needs, and the amount of time and energy that they were willing to expend to satisfy these. Debbie gave an insight into the determination needed as a working mother to maintain her level of involvement, when she explained that in

> winter I have to kick myself up the backside because...you drive into work, it's dark, you're coming home, it's dark. It's hard then to get out of the house and go up the road to the [climbing] wall, particularly if you have to pick two children up on the way, and feed them.

However, she remained motivated because 'once you've done these activities you feel so much more alive...I'm so much better when I get back'.

Socialisation into adventurous activities

Much research suggests that the roots of adult participation in sport and physical activity are to be found in childhood (see Vanreusel et al, 1997; White and Curtis, 1990), with the family continuing to prevail as the primary socializing agent (Varpalotai, 1987). As found by Spreitzer and Snyder (1976), the influence of parents, particularly fathers, was also mentioned by the women in this study as being significant in initially encouraging an interest in sport and the outdoors. Emma explained that her

> Dad sailed, made boats and had been a parachutist... When I was about eight they [*parents*] went on holiday to Switzerland and sent me a picture of the Matterhorn in winter. Now I've always kept that postcard and I climbed it in '81.

Like Helen and Faye, my own walks with my father when young were first experiences of trips to the countryside and country 'adventures'. Helen's father also took her and her brother sailing, and she felt that doing things with 'my dad was significant because you actually know you like them'. Ever since she was young Debbie used to go for long walks with her father in the countryside on Sundays, and when choosing a University she decided that she wanted to be near the mountains. She felt that this was because when they were walking

> we used to talk a lot about his climbing days, because he used to rock climb, so that sounded quite inspirational and photographs looked very exciting...then he used to take us swimming for half a day and I got to be a strong swimmer and that's always helped me with my watersports.

Belinda spoke about the influence of her grandfather whose attitude was

> "Yes, go for it, try it, yes do it do it", 'cause...he'd been in the navy and he was kind of really into risk taking in his own way, you know, he thought it was really appropriate, a good thing to do.

It would be simplistic to assume that adult sports behaviour can be determined by the influence of one particular person or the passive internalisation of normative influences in a child's environment. As noted by Coakley (1993a:575) individuals become involved in sport 'through a series of shifting, back and forth decisions made within the structural, ideological and cultural context of their social world'. However, these women's childhood experiences were clearly significant in influencing their subsequent decisions about adventure participation, and Debbie's description of rock climbing as her 'greatest love and lifelong passion'.

These women's narratives reveal varied forms of parental influence perceived as significant for their subsequent adventure involvement. Like Emma's and Debbie's fathers, some acted as role models as a result of their own earlier or present participation. Others, like Helen's parents 'were very open to paying the money, transporting you and things like that, making sure that you could do [active] things'; although Belinda did note that for her as a child 'the biggest restriction was just financial, so anything that involved money we wouldn't have been able to do'. Gill

explained that her father 'didn't swim or do any of these [adventure] things and he was very keen that I did them' so 'he got another evening job so that I could go skiing'. Several of the women's parents took them out to walk or to participate in adventurous activities and Jenny considered the family trips when she was a child 'to be one of the most significant reasons why I've always had this longing to do adventurous activities'. She recounted that

> Both my parents, and I've got two brothers, every single holiday, half term because they were both teachers, and summer and everything, we'd go youth hostelling...we left our car somewhere and then we had our own rucksacks so we had to carry all our own stuff and we would do these circuits...like we did a tour of the Lakes and stayed in hostels or we'd do Dartmoor or something. We always had lots of adventures during the days, because we would walk maybe ten, twelve miles a day and we always every night wrote up our adventures in this scrapbook. My Dad, my Mum's not alive now, he's got kind of these rows of scrap books of all our holiday activities and I think, you know, it's infectious isn't it if your parents enjoyed doing it and you get into it and we did actually love those holidays. When I wasn't on holiday and perhaps at school and I needed cheering up I'd think about some of the adventures we used to have. All sorts of things like getting lost and ending up in bogs and, you know, absolute thunderstorms and getting soaked and picnics under the trees and all sorts of things like that.

Jenny was the only woman who identified her mother rather than her father as being a role model for her own participation. She considered her mother to be 'more enthusiastic about the outdoors in a very obvious way that my father wasn't'.

> If you're into outdoor stuff and maybe you've got kids you've got to be very well organised and that's got to be your motivation and I think that's what she was like. She would make the sandwiches the night before so you could get out first thing in the morning, you know stuff like that, and that made a big difference really. We didn't have a television at home, so that's what our social hobby type stuff was as a family, and that's how I want it with whatever children we have as well.

From the stories of her more recent life, it was evident that decisions made by Jenny's mother and both her parents had influenced the construction of her own identity, and personal goals for herself and her family as she had moved into and through adulthood. Unlike the people 'stuck in their homes watching telly', as a child Jenny had associated her adventure experiences in the outdoors with being 'hardy', a 'sense of isolation', having 'great fun' and 'beating the system'; things that she considered most people didn't do or experience. She felt that these perceptions had contributed to her continued involvement in adventurous activities in the outdoors.

In addition to the instrumental role taken by one or both parents in encouraging an interest in sport, Varpalotai (1987) found, in her research into girls' sport subculture, that the parents themselves often became involved in their daughter's sporting activities. Similarly, Faye described how her own participation in adventurous activities had led to her becoming a role model for her parents. Although her father had not experienced adventurous activities prior to her own involvement, she felt that he had always had an interest and said

> I think dad sees in me what he could have been really...and mum and dad do a lot more in the outdoors now because of me which is really good.

Whereas her parents used to walk quite often on forest tracks, she explained that 'now they'll do big mountains in the Lake District'.

Several of the women described as significant the freedom that they were given by their parents to make choices and to follow their own play activities. Emma and Helen lived by the sea and were 'always outside' playing (Emma with her sister and Helen with her brother) on the beach or the cliffs. Emma felt that this freedom had influenced her life since, because 'there was never any suggestion that because I was female I couldn't do things'. Belinda also experienced freedom from a very young age to play and climb trees with her brother (who was two years older) and his friends. Her family lived on a large caravan site with woods and ponds and she explained that

> You just went out and played and it was up to you to maintain your own safety...not that my parents didn't care, but just that they gave over the responsibility quite early on.

She perceived herself to be 'a tomboy...already into adventure...and quite wild things' such as speed riding a bicycle down steep slopes. She explained that when her family moved from a caravan in the country to the town

> we used to do the sort of danger things that you hear of kids doing and you think "why should they do that". We used to walk along the electric, you know, live rails, jump on and off them, and cross the railway in front of a train...and chicken in the road was normal.

The stories of these women's childhood play activities afford some insight into their pursuit of adventurous activities as adults. Their play experiences generally had few external constraints enabling their behaviour to be largely self-determined and under their own control. Research evidence suggests that such self-determined play opportunities in a stimulating environment facilitate the experience of optimal arousal

(Iso-Ahola, 1980), which has implications for the type of activities pursued through adult leisure (Yoesting and Burkhead, 1973). The high-risk activities described in particular by Belinda are characteristic of a high sensation seeker or someone who seeks 'to increase their arousal by selecting novel, complex or unpredictable situations' (Mehrabian and Russell, 1973:315). Such a person is motivated to utilise their widening repertoire of responses 'in a complex, innovative and varied way' (Iso-Ahola, 1980:103) as is demanded in an adventure environment.

In addition to providing evidence of early sensation-seeking behaviour, an examination of these stories of childhood experiences reveals the roots of adventure in the form of the activities undertaken. This supports the conclusions of Henderson et al (1996) who found childhood exposure to adventurous activities to be a prerequisite for female adult involvement. Like Emma, who became a qualified beach lifeguard at the age of fourteen, most of the women swam, Emma and Helen sailed, the majority walked in the countryside or the mountains and several climbed trees or cliffs. The Girl Guide and Scouting organisations had also provided camping and adventure opportunities for some. Perhaps more notably, all apart from Belinda (who had cited a key event as the present of her first motor bike from her father and the excitement of speed) had had a residential or an extended adventure experience between the ages of fourteen and seventeen which had been identified as particularly significant in influencing subsequent adventure participation (see Appendix H). Many viewed these events as turning points that had altered the meaning structures in their lives and produced changes in the way they saw themselves. Faye described the profound effect of her residential activity week in Wales which resulted in her thinking '"This is it, this is what I've been waiting for"'. Before that she had taken part in a lot of sport, and she explained

> Although I loved my sport I knew it just wasn't...something wasn't there. And when I went to the outdoors I found out that's what it was really, it was that adventure, challenge type thing that you don't necessarily get in a game of hockey.

Debbie remembered crying when returning home from her adventure holiday at the age of fourteen because she 'really enjoyed it'. She explained that she was

> put in a canoe and told to do a capsize drill in freezing cold water, but I thought it was brilliant. We got dumped somewhere and told to walk back to the youth hostel and I loved it.

Similarly Jenny 'absolutely loved' her activity week which involved sailing, climbing and canoeing, and described herself as subsequently having 'got the bug'. In the words of Helen, after their residential or extended adventure experiences the women's interest, enthusiasm, motivation and participation 'just took off from there'.

Establishing an identity as an adventure participant

These women's teenage experiences of adventure had been key in the ongoing process of establishing their identity as an adventure participant. As suggested by Coakley and Donnelly (1999) their decision to continue involvement in adventure sports as they moved into adulthood was influenced by their previous experiences of physical activity, as well as by the positive reinforcement of significant others. Many females cease participation in sport during their teenage years (Coakley and Donnelly, 1999; Vanreusel et al, 1997), and none of those questioned by Coakley and White (1999) saw sports participation as important in their transition to adulthood. Their respondents placed more relevance on 'activities and relationships through which their "femininity" could be reaffirmed' (Coakley and White, 1999:80). However, the experiences of the women in this study did not suggest any conflict between their identity as a female and involvement in sports activities generally perceived as masculine. In constructing their adult identity they began to develop a sense of self partly grounded in the role of an adventure participant. Their stories suggest that the roots of their adult sporting identities and patterns of behaviour were acquired during childhood, through positive reinforcement in social interaction with their parents and significant others (Nixon and Frey, 1996; Wankel, 1997). According to Curtis et al (1999:350) 'identities acquired in this way are believed to be rather persistent and resistant to change'.

Coakley and White (1999) suggest that sports participation is continued by young people when they consider it will help them to present themselves to others as a competent person and increase the control they are able to extend over their lives. In considering the significance of these suggestions, Cathy's account of her teenage

canoeing experiences is particularly interesting because it suggests that initially she was not very competent. She explained that after a weeks canoe expedition in Scotland she

> was hooked really...except that I wasn't very good. I kept swimming. In fact I swam virtually every river in Britain.

This initial lack of competence did not deter Cathy from joining the canoe club at university where she 'spent three years doing more canoeing than academic work really'. Her initial enthusiasm for adventurous activity seemed to be partly explained by the influence of her first canoe instructor who 'became a bit of an idol'. Cathy commented

> He was an important canoeist, he'd done some big expeditions and I thought it was amazing that he had done them...I couldn't believe I could ever do anything like that, and as I gradually got better and better it was very satisfying.

Cathy described herself as a very quiet child who realised when she was about sixteen that she 'wanted to change things and...little by little...it worked out'. She explained that at university she did parachuting 'because it sounded good and I wanted to see if I could do it and it was wonderful'. Such experiences made her realise that 'you get a lot more out of challenging yourself', and in overcoming those challenges she began to establish her identity as a competent adventure participant.

Feelings of competence were significant in motivating Debbie to develop her initial adventure experiences. When explaining why she pursued rock climbing, Debbie revealed that she had

> never felt particularly good at sport at school, and suddenly finding something I was good at and that gave me some sort of recognition, was really quite motivational, really quite inspiring.

At the time Debbie started to develop competence as a climber, she perceived that 'there weren't a lot of women that were climbing at that sort of standard' which she found 'quite thrilling'. She began to climb with a group of men who she described as 'super heroes in the climbing world' and found that to be

> quite a hit for me at the time. But then getting good at climbing and getting some recognition for it as a female was nice.

Coakley (1993a) suggests that continued involvement in particular sports activities is based on the potential for success and the people associated with the sports in

question. Like Cathy and Debbie, several of the women were inspired to develop competence as outdoor participants by significant others in the form of instructors or experienced peers seen as role models. Faye was motivated by a female leader on a residential activities week who she placed 'on a pedestal'. She explained that

> I was just like "Wow"...it's like a whole new world opened up to me. So looking back she was a really influential character, although she'd never sort of know.

Faye was also inspired to develop her own ability by a college lecturer who was 'just like a wise old mountain man...like a fountain of knowledge and very strong, very stable'. He had done many different things including a three year trip to the Antarctic, which had clearly made an impact on Faye. She said that there had been 'a long time when I read lots of Antarctic books' and it was a place that she would really like to visit.

Whilst sporting experiences like those described above by Cathy and Debbie are rewarding in that they contribute to a sense of competence and reaffirm sporting identity, decisions to maintain participation in particular sporting activities through adulthood are problematic (see White and Coakley, 1986), and according to Stevenson (1990:250) are driven by an individual's 'conscious self-reflexive work in developing desirable role-identities and in ensuring their confirmation'. Important in this confirmation of identity is social support that can never be taken for granted (see Coakley, 1993a). This social support is likely to be provided by parents, and then subsequently by coaches, peers and partners. Having considered the initial stages of establishing an adult identity as an adventure participant, the following section focuses on the significance within this process of a partner committed to participation in adventurous activities.

The significance of a partner for continued participation in adventurous activities

As previously identified, decisions about sport participation are ongoing (see Coakley and Donnelly, 1999) and the women in this research were influenced by a variety of experiences in their late teens and early twenties that were seen as significant in reinforcing their commitment to the pursuit of adventurous activities. Most had become a member of climbing, canoeing and/or mountaineering clubs during their

years at college or university and several had become involved with residential outdoor centres, usually in a teaching capacity, on a full or part-time basis. Sustained participation in sport is strongly influenced by social relationships and whether these continue to reaffirm sporting identity (Coakley and Donnelly, 1999) and a common theme that revealed itself within this research was the significance of a partner committed to participation in adventurous activities. This was found to be a key factor in adult participation in sport by Spreitzer and Snyder (1976), but whereas the involvement of the women in their study was determined more by their spouse's interest in sport than by their own, the women in this study seemed determined to continue their involvement in adventurous activities regardless of the interests of those around them.

Establishing an interest in adventurous activities prior to attending college or university, meant that all the women in this research had met long-term partners or husbands through their participation in adventure. The majority of these male partners/husbands had initially had more previous experience, or had taken part in adventure sports at a higher level. Consequently, as found by Coakley and White (1999), the women's participation in adventurous activities was to a degree influenced by their partner's interests, but only in the development of those they already had; for example, when they were introduced by their partner to a new type of adventurous activity, or a new venue. Jenny's husband had introduced her to open canoeing and Belinda's husband had arranged for her to take an introductory course in skydiving, both of which are now considered by the women to be their main activities. The women had all identified their long-term partner or husband as a 'significant other' in their own ongoing socialisation into adventure. However, unlike the women in Coakley and White's study (1999), the women in this research did not appear to have given priority to their relationships with a partner or husband over their adventure participation. In addition, having established an interest in adventure, no consideration had been given to dropping this type of activity if it did not fit in with what their partner liked.

Spreitzer and Snyder (1976) were unable to determine from their research into adult participation in sport, whether sports involvement was an important factor in 'mate'

[sic] selection. Their findings did however suggest that involvement in sport as a youth was not a significant consideration when selecting a partner. A few of the women in Henderson and Bialeschki's (1994) research identified the importance of any men they dated being supportive of their physical recreation, although this support generally took the form of secondary (non-active) involvement. In contrast, the stories of the women in this research suggest that the actual commitment of a partner to adventure participation was an important factor for them in the establishment of a long-term relationship. Helen said that her partners had always been people involved in adventurous activities and she 'couldn't really imagine it otherwise'. Jenny had actively sought a husband with experience and an interest in adventure participation. She explained that

> one of the things that has made quite a big difference to the amount of adventurous or outdoor stuff is because I got married to Mark as opposed to somebody who wasn't into the outdoors, but I remember thinking, you know before I got married, "Right this is my ideal husband, number one on the list at least senior instructor level at canoeing, must like camping, walking" (*joint laughter*). So I think that's made a difference to how much I've been able to do, because you've got a ready made partner to do the outdoor stuff with.

Faye felt that she would have to have a partner who was 'into the outdoors', not because of their company when taking part in adventurous activities, but because

> Anyone who isn't involved in the outdoors wouldn't understand what makes me tick. I think that's what it's all about really at the end of the day, what makes you tick.

However, having an interest in adventure sports did not in itself provide the basis for a successful relationship. Most of the women spent time in the outdoors with male friends other than their partner or husband, and Faye spoke of the difficulties of having a partner who did not accept this or who was too protective. She said that any man she developed a close relationship with 'would have to be a very understanding person who would understand going to sleep in a tent with [another] man for five days'. She spoke of one partner who had shared her interest in adventurous activities but who had wanted

> To know where I was, and where I'd gone for a run and what time I was expected back, and part of that is that I don't want people to know, although that's not really safe in terms of risk, but that is all part of it for me. So that caused quite a lot of friction, you know [*spoken quietly*], and

> he was sort of like "you need to put a bit of gear in there"; "yes, thank you, I know...", so that didn't last very long.

Although Gill enjoyed doing things with her husband, her regular climbing partner was another male who had taken a significant role in her climbing development. She saw as positive the fact that her and her husband often took part in adventure sports separately, particularly where one of them was more proficient in an activity than the other. Her husband was a better canoeist which often made Gill feel that she was just 'tagging along behind'. She said that with the canoeing he 'used to push really hard...and it wasn't that pleasurable really being yelled at because you're not doing something right'. Gill's husband appeared to have lost some of his enthusiasm for climbing since

> He got stuck and I lowered him down and I went and did the climb afterwards, which perhaps I shouldn't have done really... I'm sure that's what's done the climbing.

As identified by Coakley and Donnelly (1999:15), Gill's behaviour challenged the traditional notion that

> girls are not supposed to be big, strong, powerful or physical; such attributes are ...a source of offence to others, particularly boys.

Gill explained that having 'lost his nerve a bit' her husband did not mind if she went off climbing for the day while he went cycling, or sometimes they would take it in turns to go climbing or canoeing for the weekend with someone else.

These women's stories enabled me to consider the significance of being married to someone not interested in adventure, for my own involvement in paragliding. Whilst not wishing to pursue sport of any kind, my husband has always encouraged my own participation as long as it does not involve too many residential experiences away from home. At my request, he arranged an introductory paragliding session for my fortieth birthday, after which I became 'hooked' and took lessons until I had completed the necessary qualifications to fly without supervision. Having purchased the required equipment I became a member of a small group of recently qualified fliers who attached themselves to a willing, experienced 'mentor', and began to travel at weekends to suitable venues, generally in South Wales. Initially I became caught up in the excitement of pursuing an activity that defied gravity (something I had often dreamt of when standing on the top of mountains) and that resulted in such an

adrenaline rush, but gradually I began to wonder whether the feeling of 'getting away from it all' was taking over from the reality of my everyday life. Going flying requires a great deal of organisation in terms of mapping the weather, contacting other fliers, selecting suitable venues and making arrangements for weekend trips. I did not feel comfortable with the fact that these activities began to take precedence over my job and my relationship with my husband. Having realised that this was the case, I thought much about my priorities, and made the decision to reduce my involvement in paragliding. As participation in what are potentially dangerous activities requires regular practice in order to achieve a certain level of competence, this subsequently made the safe pursuit of the sport difficult and resulted in what I hope is a temporary pause in my flying 'career'.

I have always considered myself to be very enthusiastic about participation in adventurous activities, but these women's narratives made me realise the extent to which I give priority to other aspects of my life, such as my job and my relationship with my husband. Unlike these women, my enthusiasm does not manifest itself in the motivation to take part whatever the difficulties or constraints. These women demonstrate that it is possible to sustain a high level of commitment to adventurous activities whilst carrying out a job in education, maintaining a long-term relationship, and for some fulfilling childcare responsibilities. This appeared to be facilitated by having a partner or husband who was also heavily involved in adventure sports. Such a partner, with an 'equal passion for adventure' (Debbie), can help 'keep you interested' (Cathy), is there as a 'ready made partner' to share special experiences with (Jenny), and understands the addictive nature of this type of physical activity. For these women, being in a significant relationship with someone with similar interests in adventure, facilitated the development of a network of like-minded friends and membership of a sporting subculture, which continued to reaffirm their identity as an adventure participant.

Whilst important relationships influence continued participation in leisure activities, according to Curtis et al (1999) once physical activity is started it is likely to be continued as long as it remains rewarding. The following section gives further

consideration to the meaning of adventurous activities for the women in this research, and examines ways in which some of their psychological needs were fulfilled.

The worth of adventurous activities

Throughout their narratives, the women in this research emphasised the benefits, values and importance of adventurous activity, and expressed their identities in terms of its worth. Like the windsurfers questioned by Wheaton (2000), they spoke about the ways in which outdoor adventure had influenced all aspects of their lives. Cathy explained that maintaining her adventure participation was 'more important than work or family, and it's the main way I get to know friends' and Faye said that the outdoors was '...what drives me to do everything...the outdoors is what's made me who I am'. A key motivating factor for all the women appeared to be resultant feelings of well-being connected to their bodily experiences in the outdoors. This was illustrated by Debbie who, after considering the benefits of her adventure participation, noted that '...more than anything I always think it makes me feel more alive'. The enlivening nature of the women's adventure experiences appeared to relate to feelings which they described as ones of excitement, euphoria, or 'a buzz', as well as to a great sense of satisfaction and achievement, arising out of successful completion of a demanding mental and physical challenge. According to Elias and Dunning (1986) experiencing excitement is vital in overcoming feelings of monotony arising out of the purposeful task-directed routines of every day life. They suggest that participation in 'playful' risk activities can result in pleasurable excitement and satisfaction as physical challenges are overcome and the fears and anxieties inherent in those risk activities are resolved. The emotions reported by the women appear similar to the feelings of omnipotence reported by experienced skydivers questioned by Lyng and Snow (1986). For the skydivers such feelings arose out of testing what they saw as their special skills 'to the limit'. Similarly, the women's positive emotions were associated with their ability to marshal the mental and physical skills necessary to survive life-threatening experiences, and as with the skydivers they were identified as their chief motivation for participation.

As identified above, fear is inherent in high-risk adventure, and as explained by Helen, 'you do get scared and controlling your fear is, I think, that's a part of it'.

In describing positive outcomes in terms of their excitement and sense of achievement, several of the women identified feelings of fear when faced with challenges they were not sure they could overcome. This contrasts with Lyng's (1990) assertion that as an individual gains experience and learns to manage risk in outdoor adventure, fear recedes. The following statement suggests that for Gill, the level of fear experienced contributed to the degree of excitement felt on completion of the task. When asked to describe a climb, Gill chose one that had been at the limit of her ability. She recalled how

> I was just looking at it and seeing to start with like a staircase and thinking "Yeah I can do it" and then starting off and everything sloping the wrong way, and you just think "Well can I really do this?". You are looking around at where to put the gear and all the gear is always at knee level...you can't protect it above you. I can just visualise it now, the terror of it. You're doing one bit at a time and when you've done that one bit you think "Well, I can't actually get down off here if I need to so I've got to go on". It's the first VS [very severe] climb I'd ever led – and you get more and more excited and you think something's going to go wrong at the top...and it almost did...I couldn't reach this bit so I had to pull in a load of rope behind me and jump...because there was no way up otherwise. But the excitement as soon as you make that last move is just amazing. It's worth the whole day just for that one move.

Although the climb had taken place four years ago, Gill could remember virtually every move as well as the feeling of euphoria when she got to the top. Similarly, Faye explained that when she had achieved a challenge that had scared her, the result had been '...an enormous buzz, you're just absolutely bananas for weeks afterwards and you just bore everyone to tears'. Debbie reported that canoeing often 'scared [her] stupid' although most of the time she

> ...got through the fear barrier; it's mostly just in my head, you know, I know I'm perfectly capable...I wouldn't do something I'm not capable of doing... It's pitting yourself against that fear and getting through it, I suppose.

In referring to her feelings of fear, like Debbie, Cathy identified the significance of psychological factors. She explained that at times, when faced with a difficult challenge, she felt petrified and would 'often have a good cry on the bank, trying to decide whether to do it or not'. She commented that on a big trip

> Perhaps one rapid will just freak me out, and sometimes I decide to paddle it and it's just part of getting my head into gear and other times I just walk round it.

Decisions about whether to attempt a particular challenge appeared to relate to the degree of control predicted. If the women did not feel psychologically prepared as well as physically capable, then at times they chose to opt out. Their narratives reveal that they enjoyed working at the edge of their abilities, but their stories support the findings of Celsi et al (1993:17) that high-risk adventurers

> rarely go beyond the limits of their control, preferring to back down to jump or climb another day.

These stories are of particularly interest in that they include reference to high levels of fear seldom reported by experienced (largely male) adventure participants. Individuals committed to high-risk adventure are generally presumed to be high sensation seekers (see Zuckerman, 1979) with a tendency to underestimate risk and experience less anxiety than low sensation seekers. Whilst novices might be expected to exhibit signs of fear regardless of their optimal level of arousal, it is my contention that dedicated adventure participants who have adopted a subcultural identity learn to manage risk and rarely express serious concern for their own safety.

Leaman and Carrington (1985) suggest that girls are socialised into having more concern for others than for their own interests, and as noted by Henderson (1998) many women perceive themselves as family members first and individuals second. However, a common theme identified as important by the women in this research was the high priority placed on time for themselves. This time in the outdoors was viewed as a chance to escape from the constraints and materialism of everyday life and was seen as valuable in terms of its benefits to the women's mental health. Emma described her adventure experiences as 'total escapism' and explained that because

> you're just totally absorbed in what you're doing... Everything else is just forgotten like all the worries about school and kids and work.

Jenny described how participating in adventurous activities away from everyday life enabled her to '...feel better, feel normal. Somehow you can put life in its proper place and get things in perspective'. Faye found being on her own in the outdoors 'rejuvenating' and at times 'peaceful' and 'calming'. She similarly explained that

> You might go out with something on your mind and you come back and it's just put in its place...It's just got everything combed out in your head...it's lovely, and you're free to carry on.

These perceived benefits mirror those identified by women in Fredrickson and Anderson's (1999:31) research, who indicated that periods of solitude in the wilderness 'had left them feeling rejuvenated' and had given them a renewed perspective on 'the challenges that were waiting for them back home'. Similarly, greater calm and peace of mind were identified by Kellert (1997) as adaptive advantages of experiences in the outdoors, and in addition, emotional well-being and the reduction of immediate and long-term stress were found by Ulrich (1999) to be key perceived benefits of recreation experiences in the environment. As in the stories told by the women with children in Davidson's (1996) research into holiday and work experiences, these accounts emphasise the value placed on 'getting away' from a sense of pressure experienced in every day life. However, whereas for the women questioned by Davidson freedom from pressure was identified as a state of mind rather than a physical 'getting away', for the women in this research the physical change of site and the actual places visited were of particular significance to the worth and well-being derived from their adventure participation.

In the pursuit of authenticity and meaning that was apparently lacking in their every day lives, both Emma and Jane emphasised the importance of escaping from the material 'quality of life', with its excesses and 'bustle', offered by western society (see Lyng, 1990). This was illustrated by Jenny when she said

> I find that traffic and buildings and being with lots of people and congestion quite oppresses me...I like not having distracting noise and when you get completely away you can just enjoy something very basic really.

Emma had spent over a year trekking and living in India during which time she had developed close friendships with many of the local people. It was evident that she saw this as a turning point in her life and 'the best thing I ever did' partly due to the fact that

> ...nobody could get at me...I couldn't be contacted, and all I'd got was my rucksack; all I'd got on me was the same as what people in Ladak had got. So it sort of brings everyone down to the same level...it does put life in perspective.

Similarly, for me, being in the outdoors far removed from everyday responsibilities and expectations with only a limited number of possessions has always given me a great sense of freedom and has held particular meaning due to the way in which individuals are generally accepted 'at face value'. Emma explained that although the people she had met in India had very little in terms of material possessions, they were 'always smiling and laughing and cheery' which made it difficult for her to understand 'when people moan about things here [in England]'. Living in India had led her to perceive 'certain excesses' in western society and to 'appreciate things much more'. She commented

> I leave water in the sink and I don't use much water, and that's because when I lived in the camp we had to collect all our water. We had to carry it, so it's the little things...

Through her travels Emma had clearly come to realise, as suggested by Drengson (1980:116), that 'well-being and happiness are not dependent on a large number of possessions'. Her experiences of the limited resources available to the people she had met in India, had influenced her subsequent levels of consumption and resulted in an attempt to lessen her impact on the environment. Like Jenny, her narrative suggests that she had found time in the environment, with only the bare necessities, a liberating experience facilitating an increased appreciation of simple pleasures (see Drengson, 1980).

Many aspects of the women's lives and identities as adventure participants set them apart from those not involved in adventure. As described by Kellert (1997:89), the close interaction with nature experienced through adventure challenge had produced 'a heightened sense of vitality' and 'a sharpened awareness and experience of the world' resulting in a sensation of 'living life rather than just passing through'. Challenges in the outdoors test emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual competence to personal limits seldom experienced in every day life. As explained by Debbie, adventurous activity is 'so much more exciting than real life...because you make real decisions'. Differentiating between their own life as an 'insider' of a high-risk sporting subculture, and the lives of others seen as 'outsiders' (see Donnelly and Young, 1999) was a common theme within the women's stories. This was illustrated in a statement made by Belinda who said

> You have a different way of living your life to people who don't ever take risks...I've come to the conclusion that there are two groups of people, there are those who are dreamers and those who are doers, and the people who do, do lots of things...and the dreamers are the sort of people who read books and watch lots of TV and basically live their life within that sort of...you know the brain, basically...And actually don't go out from that point, and don't need to, which is fine...I do need to, I need to be out there, I need to be experiencing.

Debbie also appeared conscious of there being 'other' people outside adventure sports when she explained that since having her children she had met what she called 'normal people' with 'very different things on their minds, and aspirations in life'. She said that she had never known 'ordinary people like that before' and felt that by being involved in adventurous activities, she was 'getting to see more than most people who are involved in their busy little lives'. Many non-participants would see the behaviour of a high-risk adventurer, apparently addicted to thrill and danger, as extreme. However, for those committed to outdoor adventure, high-risk activities form a distinct and integral part of their social 'reality' (see Elias and Dunning, 1986). Brannigan and McDougall (1983) suggest that as identity as an adventure participant develops, deviance neutralisation occurs as the ideology of the subculture is gradually assumed, and the properties of high-risk behaviour are seen as 'normal'. With the possibility of injury or death becoming a fairly common occurrence, as explained by Emma 'the decisions you have to make are a lot more serious' than in everyday life. Consequently, actions take on more significance and achievements become more meaningful. In comparison, the lives of those not involved in adventure participation are likely to appear lacking in stimulation and inconsequential (Iso-Ahola, 1980).

Taking part in adventurous activities provided opportunities for the women to reconstruct and nurture both an independent and a social self separate from their roles as a teacher, mother, and at times partner, and often absent in their normal routine (see Davidson, 1996). Jenny explained that being out in the mountains for her meant that 'you can just be yourself'. Debbie, who had two children, emphasised the importance of 'doing something for myself' and Gill said that her adventure participation was important because 'I don't have to think about anything but my safety...and I'm not constantly looking after little children'. Going into 'the outdoors' enabled choices to

be made about whether the individual or the social self would be engaged (see McIntyre and Roggenbuck, 1998). As explained by Faye, although she enjoyed participating with others,

> I do stuff on my own as well, like the fell running. I tend to do most stuff on my bike on my own, just because it's just me. I'm a self-contained unit, and that's really important to me as well.

The opportunities provided in the outdoors for personal challenge meant that the women had to rely on their own abilities (see Ewert, 1994), and as explained by Helen

> ...you have to be able to look after yourself...These activities don't come without some sort of contract between you and yourself...in the end you are the person running off the edge of a cliff with a bit of material attached to you.

Gill reported that she found this self-reliance, and the fact that 'if you get into trouble you've got to sort it out' exciting because it gives you 'confidence in your own ability to look after yourself'. Faye considered that through the personal challenge found in the outdoors 'you become a more whole person' which effects your 'well-being and self-esteem...because you do push yourself and take yourself to those extremes'. It is clear that through their adventure experiences the women had developed an ability to fairly accurately assess their own competence (see Lyng, 1990). Realising aspects of their mental and physical potential had increased their self-esteem and their cognitive abilities, as found by Ewert (1989) in a study of participants from several outdoor programmes. Cathy described aspects of her own personal development when she said

> I'm more self-confident, especially...I got a lot of self-confidence from doing a couple of trips where I was the leader...on a really difficult river, and you come back feeling that you can make those decisions [which are] much harder than any other decisions...I was hopeless at making decisions but now I'm quite happy to just say, this is it, we'll go with this one, and that's certainly something that probably stems from the canoeing.

The extent to which any positive outcomes from experiences in the outdoors can be generalised is open to debate, but it has been suggested that risk experience can be effectively used as a paradigm to inform situations from other aspects of life (see Robinson, 1992). In a letter sent in response to a directive I gave to the women after they had been interviewed (see Appendix I), Faye wrote

> Participation in outdoor adventurous activities makes you strong and driven in other areas of your life. You experience in the outdoors what it takes to get success (like determination, drive, motivation, strength and independence) and you become unafraid to use these things to enable you to get success in other areas of your life.

As suggested by Tinsley and Tinsley (1986), for these women, taking responsibility for their lives in ways not generally possible, evidently resulted in the worth of their adventure participation being seen as connected to self-fulfilment and personal growth.

In addition to giving examples of the ways in which outdoor experiences facilitated the development of an independent self, the above example suggests outdoor adventure as a site for the reconstruction and nurturing of a social self, arising out of shared events in the outdoors. As a result of her own research Davidson (1996) emphasises the importance of relationships in the study of women's leisure, and Bella (1989) suggests that the meaning of a leisure activity is found through the relationships it serves rather than through the activity itself. The following section examines the meaning of relationships formed through adventure for the women in this research.

The significance of relationships in the outdoors

The meaning and importance of relationships formed in the outdoors was a significant theme that emerged from all the life stories. Like the windsurfers in Wheaton's (2000) research, it was apparent that the women's friendships had developed almost totally out of their adventure participation. Cathy explained that her friends were 'virtually all based in outdoor activities' and Debbie's whole social circle was 'based around people that do the same activities as me'. The value placed by the women on shared experience supported the notion that women's leisure centres around social interaction, which contributes to the meaning of that leisure experience (Glyptis, 1985; Wimbush and Talbot, 1988). This was illustrated by Debbie's assertion that the social aspect of her adventure experiences was 'probably more [important] than anything'. Similar sentiments were expressed by members of an all women expedition group questioned by Fredrickson and Anderson (1999). Positive relationships formed on their expedition appeared to overshadow other aspects of the experience, such as

physical challenge. Gill considered positive outdoor experiences to be more meaningful when shared. She explained that

> When you get to the top of a mountain there's just the sky and nobody else around, it's a brilliant feeling...But I wouldn't like it if I was totally on my own; I have to have people there to share it with.

Whilst Helen noted that she 'could quite happily go and walk for instance over Striding Edge [in the Lake District] on my own', she said that she would get

> ...more out of it if there's somebody who's with me, because then there is someone who's sharing what you are enjoying.

Shared experience of the type and intensity found in outdoor adventure can lead to the formation of close bonds with other adventure participants, and can result in meaningful long-term relationships (see Celsi et al, 1993). Adventure participants often support each other in life-threatening situations, and as explained by Emma,

> ...the thing about paddling is you rely on the people around you...you look after them and they look after you. I don't think there are many things you get that quite so much in.

This strength of relationships formed in the outdoors was alluded to by Jenny when she said that shared wilderness experience

> ...connect[s] you with each other...the interaction you have with people in that [adventure] context is a lot more... rewarding.

Debbie explained that she had stayed 'really strong friends' with many of the people she had met through her climbing activities, and interaction with these people had helped to keep her motivated. As experienced adventure participants, several of the women perceived themselves as belonging to 'a small elite group' of like-minded people. Belinda explained that these people travelled the world and 'you actually meet people you know all the time, and I quite like that, I quite like belonging'.

One aspect of work with others which was identified as significant for the women in this research, and seldom mentioned in previous adventure research, was <u>who</u> they shared their adventure experiences with. All expressed a preference for certain conditions to be met by any other group members, although there was some variation in the priority given to particular requirements. Both Gill and Helen placed importance

on 'level of competence' because of the safety implications. Gill said that she did not like canoeing with somebody she did not know because 'you don't know if they can get you out of something'. Providing they were competent, Helen did not mind who she shared her adventure experiences with, whereas the relationship that she had with any outdoor companions held particular meaning for Faye. She said that it shocked her that her partner would 'just go and do any climb with anybody...I'm really, really choosy who I go with'. Faye only went into the outdoors with people she was 'very fond of' and commented that

> There's no way I'd have a really top day out if I'd pushed it and I'd achieved it, but it was the wrong people. The perfect day out is perfect conditions, perfect climb, perfect people to be with.

Of particular interest was her assertion that her 'perfect day' in the outdoors would be with someone she related to, but 'it wouldn't be a female'. This contrasted with Debbie's statement that at times she 'enjoyed doing things with other women'. Research suggests that women's leisure outside of the family has generally tended to centre around social interaction with other women (see Green 1998a; Henderson, 1990) whose company they appear to value (Wimbush, 1988). However, it appeared to be qualities stereotypically perceived as feminine rather than masculine, such as those associated with caring rather than risk-taking, that led Faye to say

> I don't like climbing with females, I don't like paddling with females, because it's like "Oh, do you think we should", "Oh, I don't know". I just hate that...I think it's more of an individual thing if you climb with a man; I think that's good [*implying that you have less support than if climbing with another women so you have to rely more on yourself*]. I find that women will say "Oh if it's too hard come down"...whereas a man would never say that...you <u>know</u> you can always come down and if you wanted to...you would.

This statement held particular significance for my own climbing practice as I have always climbed with men, and I have often suggested that they 'come down' part way through a climb if they appeared to be having difficulty. It led me to reflect on my male climbing partners' views about my obvious concern for their safety. My suggestions have always been made because when climbing, if the leader falls whilst being belayed from below, there is a chance that they will

be injured, particularly if the 'gear' placed in the rock does not hold and they hit the ground. Whilst generalisations about types of behaviour cannot be made to all men or all women, research suggests that female adventure participants are more likely than men to exhibit care-taking rather than risk-taking behaviour (Henderson, 1992). Many of the women in Loeffler's (1997) outdoor leadership career development study considered that women were more willing to take risks in the type of supportive, nurturing environment offered by all-women groups. However, Faye's comments support Henderson's (1996a) suggestion that a learning approach considered woman-centred may not be appropriate for all women. Faye appeared to have internalised some of the values seen as dominant in male outdoor culture (see Henderson, 1996a), and assigned particular meaning to adventure experiences offering a sense of independence and self-determination.

The effect of adventure participation on the women's roles as teachers

The women in this research worked in education, and all but one held full-time teaching posts. For some adventure participation had directly influenced their choice of teaching as a career, as illustrated by Cathy when she said that her experiences of adventure had 'started me wanting to be a teacher in the first place because I enjoyed working in outdoor things'. Debbie explained that after finishing her degree course all she was interested in was rock climbing, until she met a group of students from an outdoor education teacher-training course in the mountains and realised 'That's what I want to do'. All the women identified ways in which their pursuit of adventure had positively influenced the execution of their role as a teacher. At the time of the interview, Belinda was particularly pleased with her exam results which she considered were influenced by her 'zest for life' (brought about by her experiences of skydiving), 'which I think often comes across...certainly kids take that from you'. She explained,

> ...as soon as you start talking about it [*skydiving*] the excitement comes back...and this very much comes across to other people...If you can capture that sort of excitement in teaching about other things as well, the kids pick it up immediately and then you get 20 A*'s in your GCSE results!

Similarly, as a result of her own adventure participation, Gill saw herself as being 'more exciting' and more confident, and Emma felt that she was 'more bubbly' and 'more outgoing' as a teacher. Debbie considered her adventure experiences had helped her

> ...develop the skills to get me where I am in my job...I've had to have so much more mind control and be much more focused to get me down some of these big rivers.

Photographs and videos taken whilst participating in the outdoors had provided Emma and Gill with resources for their geography teaching, and Cathy said that she sometimes used examples from her adventure sports 'to put a point across' to the children. She talked about how her reference to adventure in lessons often initiated discussion which might focus on activities to be pursued by members of the class at the weekend.

> I say I'm going off to do canoeing, and all of a sudden they want to listen and they want to hear, and then they start telling me what their dreams are or what they want to do, so I think that's a nice spin-off from it.

Studies indicate that both women and men prefer at least one outdoor instructor of their own gender to act as a role model (see Bolton, 1980), and women questioned by Loeffler (1995) in a study of factors influencing women's career development in outdoor leadership, identified the constraining nature of a lack of female role models and mentors in outdoor adventure. It was clear that several of the women in this research saw themselves as role models for their female pupils, both in a passive sense, in the way they presented themselves as an image of an accomplished female adventure participant, and actively, when they took them to experience adventure in the outdoors for themselves. When Cathy gave a slide show at school after returning from a trip to Nepal, she said that

> ...very much [my] message then was that you can go out and do things, especially to the girls, who in that [northern] area...didn't do much with their lives.

Debbie believed that

> A lot of women aren't aware of what they are capable of and I think sometimes, in a way, I could be a bit of a role model for them...particularly some of the young female students, because...they seem so limited in their outlooks, and outdoor pursuits gives them a way of realising they're capable of doing an awful lot more than they think.

Emma explained how being a female canoeist had enabled her to provide adventure opportunities for some of the girls in her school. She said that she

> ...asked which kids would like to come canoeing and it's predominantly girls, so that's quite interesting...they obviously see it [canoeing] as being a female sport because I do it, whereas normally it isn't. So I think it's changed their attitude towards which sports women can do.

Although it is not possible to determine whether these women would have become involved in adventurous activities if they had not experienced adventure sports during their teens, their stories support the significance of the opportunities provided for them to sample these types of activities before they left school. Like Emma, their experience and levels of competence had enabled all except one of the women to regularly take their own pupils or students canoeing, which had positively influenced the way the women were perceived and the relationships they formed in school. Cathy referred to the benefits of canoeing with the pupils when she explained that although she had taught anyone interested, she had found that

> It actually works very well with the less able. It's really good for teaching them social skills and giving them some sense of achievement, so that's helped a lot usually within the school because you get a name for working with the less able students and they get a better rapport with you. So I think it's quite an important side to my teaching.

Debbie explained the way in which canoeing with her male students had positively influenced their approach to her, when she said

> The young lads try and give you a hard time, but then when you do the outdoor pursuits with them they're very different towards you. Particularly if they are feeling out of control on the kayaking...they do show you a little more respect.

Debbie's narrative held particular relevance for me as I have had similar experiences on adventure courses with male college students. Leaders of adventurous activities are generally male (see Neil, 1997), and this was reinforced to me at the beginning of a climbing course when I first met the unknown male participants. They asked me who was taking the course and when I said that I was, they did not attempt to hide their surprise. On the journey to the climbing wall their 'macho' behaviour suggested that they perceived themselves to be strong, 'powerful' males in comparison to their initial image of myself as a

small, 'weak' female. However, partway into the climbing session when I easily climbed a route that had 'defeated' all their attempts, their attitude changed. As the course progressed we developed a good rapport and they subsequently treated me with much more respect. This is a story of identities and gender. I imagine that the students' initial expectations of me were defined in terms of my gender, whereas after seeing me climb they related to my identity as an experienced climber. It is an example of the fact that women's competence is seldom assumed in the male-dominated adventure environment (see Nolan and Priest, 1994).

Women in the outdoors: the significance of gender

As competent adventure participants with a high level of technical skill and ability, the women appeared to have internalised some of the values (such as hard training and physicality) seen as dominant in male outdoor culture (see Henderson, 1996a). Some indicated that they did not perceive any difficulties associated with their gender, although this was qualified by Cathy when she explained

> I probably get accepted [by men] because I'm a reasonable level, and because of my personality [*implying her confident approach*] I can cope usually. But I think for some women it would be very difficult to get into canoeing because there aren't many other women there and the men tend to carry on as a group. They're quite happy so they're not going to bend over backwards to help someone into the sport...and it <u>is</u> huge numbers of men.

Debbie also alluded to her competence and confidence when she said she was 'pretty able to stand up for what I want to go for, so I wouldn't let that [*being a woman*] stop me'. She perceived benefits associated with being a woman in adventure and explained

> At the beginning I got a lot more recognition and glory...from being a woman [as] there weren't that many women doing these things, and I started climbing with another woman which was even more unusual at the time...And got popular with a lot of blokes which was nice.

Belinda felt that it had made 'very little difference' being a woman in skydiving which mirrors my own experiences in paragliding, and Helen said that she had not experienced any difficulties concerning participation in outdoor activities, or

related to working with either men or women in the outdoors. However, what is of particular interest is that although the women generally reported that they had not experienced any discrimination based on gender, like the adolescent girls questioned by Culp (1998) in her research on constraints and effective programming in outdoor recreation, some of their stories suggest that at times gender functioned to subtly undermine their position in the outdoors. When they felt competent, confident and safe the women appeared able to 'hold their own' in male dominated outdoor activities, but when this was not the case some reported feeling marginalized as often they were the only female in the group.

Unlike Cathy and Debbie who appeared to enjoy participating as the only woman in a group of adventure participants, Emma referred to her frustration at often being the only woman in a canoeing or climbing group and explained that she had been 'really angry over half term. I don't think men realise how important it is that women need to paddle with other women'. Emma felt that men often approached outdoor activities with a 'different mentality' and she described a canoeing course in Scotland where

> There were four women which was unusual, and one day they split us...and the other three women were...having a wonderful day and I had a terrible day and it was because I was the only woman in this group.

She reported that her level of enjoyment was also effected by the men she was with who were 'like a younger element of lads really...and it just wasn't enjoyable'. It was evident that she was concerned for her own safety when she said

> It's really important that...when you run rapids...you catch people's eyes...and you know they're [*the other people in the group*] looking out for you...and when you feel they're not, and you're not part of the group properly you paddle really badly...I had an awful day...Confidence was non-existent really.

Low self-esteem arising out of working in a predominantly male group was referred to by Jenny when she described courses she had attended where she was the only woman. She said

> You can get some men that are out to prove something...and I've felt very sort of inferior in my level, because I've not been as strong perhaps or as good at the canoeing. I've always felt more comfortable when there's other women doing something.

However, like Faye who differentiated between 'commando style men' in the outdoors who she did not like working with, and men who had 'similar feelings and values' to her own, Jenny explained that

> Just because some men, the attitude that comes across to me I don't particularly like, it's not always the case, you get some very good men...I don't think I've generally felt uncomfortable being a woman in a group and I think certainly that I could have had far worse experiences.

Suggesting that she was fortunate not to have experienced more blatant discrimination could be viewed as evidence of Jenny's acceptance that she was negotiating a male/masculine environment. Research suggests that women can find an emphasis on qualities seen as 'masculine', such as competition, technical competence and the 'quest' or outcome, intimidating (Henderson, 1992). The examples given by the women of negative experiences associated with gender, appear to relate to situations where types of behaviour traditionally seen as 'male' have been particularly prevalent within the group.

Gill's reference to comments made by male outdoor participants provides an example of the way in which 'male' language can subtly undermine a woman's confidence. She reported that men

> seem to treat you like "Oh, come on you can do this" but they don't say it to other males in the group, they only say it to me.

Gill agreed that it was as if there was the expectation that she might not be able to carry out the task; it would be a special thing if she could do it, whereas it would not be viewed as exceptional if the men achieved success. Warren (1996) supports the notion that women who encounter surprise when they do well are unlikely to have an internalised assumption of success. A few years before, being the only woman in a canoeing group had led Gill to become 'really fed up...You always felt you were competing with the men...I used to just not want to go almost because of it'. More recently she had met another woman who she often went canoeing with which had resulted in her experiencing 'less pressure'. Unlike one of the women questioned by Allin (2000) (in her research into issues of physicality for women in outdoor education) who found being looked after by men in the outdoors reassuring and 'a big plus', a perception that 'they [*men*] seem to be looking after you' appeared to undermine Gill's sense of competence. She felt that

> It's fine when you do it just for a safety thing but it feels patronising. I'm positive it wasn't done deliberately...but that's the way it felt.

Cathy explained that she got 'a bit annoyed inside' when women were looked after in the outdoors by men 'because I think "Come on a minute" we can carry them [*canoes*] just as well as you', however she also said that she sometimes got annoyed

> When I don't get help, because it can be quite a struggle, but they just accept that I carry the same as them...but if I ask they'll help out, they just get on with carrying their own boats up from the beach and I've just got to do it as well. But it can be hard physically, they obviously have more strength, and there's some paddling that I find very hard to do because I'm just not as strong as them...so I do have to try a little bit harder. I get round it with technique obviously, but there's times I wish I had a bit more power to get through some waves. But sometimes I just have to accept that I can't get out as far as them in the surf and things are different.

In a letter sent in response to a directive given to the women after they had been interviewed (see Appendix I), Faye referred to the way in which a woman's menstrual cycle can serve to limit her physical capabilities, when she wrote

> Being involved in the outdoors as a woman can be difficult at certain times of the month! Personally I find that just one or two days of my cycle I just cannot manage big, long, epic winter Scottish adventures because my body just has not got it in it!

Women questioned by Green (1994, cited in Carter, 2000) believed that the strength of men played a more important role in determining perceived competence in the adventure environment than the technical skills of women. However, although the performance of some of the women in this research did not always match the men's in terms of strength, their stories suggest that generally they felt confident about their own ability and their position in the outdoors.

The overall positive nature of their experiences of adventure, and the enjoyment found in overcoming physical challenges in the outdoors (alongside other like-minded participants who were generally male) was evident throughout the women's life stories. Although at times they were not able to compete with men in terms of strength, and particular encounters with males had served to undermine their confidence, generally their narratives suggest that they

considered themselves to be competent, confident and able to 'hold their own' within a male dominated outdoor environment (Allin, 2000:56). Rather than perceiving an emphasis on 'masculine' values as discrimination, like some of the women questioned by Allin they appeared to have altered their identity to fit in with a male outdoor culture. Carter's (2000:75) reference to an assumption that women gain credibility and confidence with the length of time they spend in outdoor adventure appears to hold some relevance here, as all the women had had extensive experience in the outdoors during which time they had demonstrated their 'determination and perseverance' in addition to their technical competence. Faye referred to the way in which her confidence to act on her own decisions, regardless of the opinions of any men she was working with, had come as a result of experience.

> What men think of me as a woman in the outdoors...used to mean an awful lot to me, but I don't think it does now...If I am following some man up a hill I'll quite happily just say "Oh right, I'll just go down this path instead" and just leave them to it, not tell them that I'm going. Whereas I wouldn't do that before. I think part of it is my skill level as well now, I'm much more confident in my own level of navigation or competence in the outdoors just to say, "Right well, stuff you, I'll see you later" and go.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter I have described some of the meanings of women's long-term participation in adventurous activities. I have illustrated that rather than being passive recipients of gender-related constraints, these women created opportunities for adventure and constructed individual and social identities as adventure participants. Decisions to leave any children with friends or family members, often for extended periods of time, challenged western society's traditional views of a mother's child care responsibilities, although motherhood had led to some modifications in risk-taking behaviour. Stories of the impact of adventure involvement on the women's roles as teachers and relationships with family members, support the suggestion that adventure participation was generally given a higher priority than their job or their family.

Parental influence and childhood self-determined play activities were perceived as significant for the women's subsequent adventure involvement. In addition, teenage extended experiences of adventure and subsequent relationships with a partner committed to adventurous activities were considered important in the women's initial and on-going socialisation into adventure. The development of a network of like-minded friends and membership of a sporting subculture continued to reaffirm their identities as adventure participants. High-risk adventure experiences were described as being more 'meaningful' than events in everyday life, and were seen by the women to positively influence their well-being, self-esteem, confidence and competence. Faye appeared to reflect the views of all the women when she explained that the outdoors was 'what drives me to do everything...the outdoors is what's made me who I am'. Their adventure involvement was perceived by all the women to have positively influenced the way in which they fulfilled their roles as teachers. Some saw themselves as role models for their female pupils, several used resources from their outdoor trips to assist in their teaching and taking pupils canoeing was seen to have positively influenced relationships formed with pupils.

The high levels of fear reported by some of the women contrasted with Lyng's (1990) assertion that as an individual gains experience and learns to manage risk in outdoor adventure fear recedes. However, the number of women involved in Lyng's five-year ethnographic study of skydivers is unclear. The women's interpretation of their levels of anxiety could be partly explained by Ewert's (1988) conclusions, in his study of situational fears associated with outdoor recreation, that women are not more fearful than men, they are just more willing to admit their fears.

All the women placed importance on shared adventure experiences which were seen to lead to the formation of close bonds and often long-term friendships with other adventure participants. That some of them placed more importance on the social aspects than on the physical aspects of an activity supports Henderson's (1996:197) suggestion that concern for connections with others 'is a common description of female ways of being in the outdoors'. However, in order to succeed and 'survive' in what is a male dominated adventure environment, the

women appeared to have developed a strong sense of their own physical self and a high level of technical skill and ability; qualities often perceived as 'masculine'. Whilst the women did not feel they had experienced discrimination based on gender within the adventure environment, some did identify ways in which gender roles had functioned to subtly undermine their confidence and their self-esteem, particularly when they were the only woman in an outdoor adventure group. Although Graham (1997) asserts that the adventure environment is no longer 'a man's world', these women's stories suggest that in spite of increasing numbers of female participants, women remain in the minority.

The following chapter presents some overall conclusions and reflects critically on the study in addition to identifying possible directions for future research.

Chapter 5

WOMEN IN ADVENTURE: FINAL REFLECTIONS

Introduction

This study has explored the lives of women involved in outdoor adventure, and has attempted to understand the meanings of their participation by enabling them to recount aspects of their lives 'in their own voice'. In seeking to represent the women's stories, wherever possible their narratives have been integrated into the final written account. This research arose out of my own experiences and interests in the outdoors, and throughout the thesis I have sought to adopt a reflexive approach and make my own role as researcher explicit. Prior to conducting the interviews I considered myself to be an enthusiastic adventure participant. I had obtained several national coaching qualifications and regularly led people in climbing, mountaineering and sailing activities in the outdoors. I had taken up paragliding, had bought all the necessary equipment, and had started to integrate myself into what is described in the literature as a high-risk sporting subculture. I therefore perceived myself as an 'insider' able to understand the life experiences of the women adventure participants. Although to an extent this was the case, as the research progressed I began to realise that my priorities did not align with the women in this study. Whilst their regular engagement in adventurous activities appeared to take priority over their family and job responsibilities, my own enthusiasm for adventure did not manifest itself in such a single-minded approach. In addition, it cannot be assumed that my own experiences of adventure automatically resulted in a shared understanding of the meanings of their participation in the outdoors. However, through my own involvement I had gained an insight into the language, motivations, behaviour and experiences of members of high-risk sporting subcultures, and the data reveal that the women respondents viewed me as a like-minded, committed adventure participant, able to identify with the meanings they revealed.

The meanings of adventure participation for women working in education: a summary

Leisure has become increasingly important as a source and expression of identity (Wheaton, 2000) and the life stories of the women in this research revealed that they defined their identities largely in terms of their adventure participation. They worked hard to maintain these identities in the face of constraints relating to role expectations, and what is significant in connection with this is the way in which they prioritised their time and perceived their role responsibilities. Accordingly, a high priority was given to engagement in adventurous activities and generally they were willing to compromise the needs of their job or family in order to maintain their level of commitment. A focus on self has been identified as a consistent meaning associated with leisure activities (Deem, 1986; Wearing, 1990) and for the women in this study the meaning of their adventure participation was tied to the focus on self and freedom from obligations. For many women, leisure experiences meeting self-orientated needs are suspended or abandoned during active mothering (Bialeschki, 1994). However, after having children the women in this research, like one of the outdoor participants questioned by Roberts and Winiarczyk (1996:302), had 'continued to explore outdoor challenges while balancing motherhood and family responsibilities with [their] personal growth and skill development'. Resistance to stereotypical gender roles related to motherhood was evident, and whilst childcare responsibilities had initially curtailed their adventure participation, the women appeared comfortable about leaving their children in the care of others in order to create time for their own pursuit of adventure. Becoming mothers had, however, led to the development of a sense of responsibility for their children, and they had modified their risk-taking behaviour in order to reduce the possibility of serious injury or death.

The significance of childhood experiences for the women's interest in outdoor adventure somewhat parallels the findings of Henderson et al (1996:8) who concluded that 'a prerequisite to developing an appreciation of the outdoors for women revolve(s) around having exposure to outdoor opportunities as a child'. All but one of the women in this study had had an extended adventure experience during their teens, and as in Widdekind's (1995) research, the majority had been introduced to their favourite outdoor activity by the age of seventeen. However, this research offers

further insight into aspects of childhood experience identified by the women as holding meaning for their adult participation. In addition to being active outdoors with their families, parental influence was also evident in fathers (predominantly) or mothers acting as role models, in the encouragement and financial support provided, and in the freedom given to the women by their parents to follow their own unsupervised play activities with few external constraints. These play opportunities contributed to the women's development into individuals motivated to seek the type of varied and complex physical challenges offered by the outdoor adventure environment.

Whilst there was an assumption underpinning the interview conversations of the positive influence of adventure experiences on the lives of the participants, the women's stories revealed that at times their participation had impacted negatively on their relationship with older family members. Like the family members of the hangliders interviewed by Brannigan and McDougall (1983), some of the women's parents were concerned for their safety and would have preferred them to discontinue their active involvement in adventure. Through their long-term participation in the outdoors the women had learnt to manage risk and to perceive it as normal through a process of risk acculturation (Celsi et al, 1993) and deviance neutralization (Brannigan and McDougall, 1983). Rather than being seen as risky or dangerous, their activities were perceived as adventurous and challenging (see Ewert, 1994). However, it is evident that many members of the women's families did not hold similar views. In order to maintain a positive self-image and manage the pressures arising out of any opposition from family members, in addition to the processes identified above, the women had addressed these tensions either by lying about their involvement, or by omitting to tell their parents the true nature of their activities, which at times had led to feelings of guilt.

Coakley and Donnelly (1999) advocate that sustained participation in sporting activity is strongly influenced by social relationships and whether these continue to reaffirm sporting identity. For these women teachers, a key factor in their continuing involvement in adventure was a male partner with at least a similar level of commitment to the outdoors. They then had a 'ready made partner' (Jenny) for their

activities, although this in itself did not provide the basis for a successful relationship as most of the women spent time in the outdoors with male friends other than their partner or husband. It was important for them that any partner understood the full nature of the outdoor adventure environment with its addictive qualities, did not restrict their independence and development of an individual identity, and supported and facilitated their participation. Although long-term male partners or husbands were identified as 'significant others' in the women's ongoing socialisation into adventure, unlike women questioned previously (see Coakley and White, 1999; Spreitzer and Snyder, 1976), they did not give greater priority to their relationships than to their adventure participation, and would not have considered discontinuing their involvement if it did not fit in with what their partner liked. These women actively sought a partner with experience and interest in adventure and in this respect their stories extend debate about the importance of sporting involvement as a factor in 'mate' selection for women previously committed to sporting activity (see Henderson and Bialeschki, 1994; Spreitzer and Snyder, 1976).

This research provides new insights into the lives of women adventure participants employed in education, in that it has identified several ways in which their involvement in adventure positively influenced the execution of their role as a teacher or educator. They perceived themselves to be more exciting, energetic, confident, organised and focused as a result of their adventure experience, and felt that this transmitted itself to the pupils they taught and thereby improved the quality of their lessons. Debbie felt that the development of these skills and qualities had assisted in her career development. Several saw themselves as role models for their female pupils both in terms of the image they presented (as accomplished female adventure participants), and the leadership they provided during taught canoe sessions. Being viewed as competent in the outdoors was thought to have positively influenced the way in which they were perceived in school. It was seen to have assisted in the development of positive relationships with some of the less able pupils, and some of the boys whose initial expectations appeared to be defined in terms of the women's gender rather than their identity as experienced adventure participants.

Like the male and female windsurfers in Wheaton's (2000) research, it was apparent that the friendships of the women in this research had developed almost totally out of their adventure participation. In addition, they placed value on shared experience within the adventure environment, thus supporting the notion that women's leisure centres around social interaction which contributes to the meaning of their leisure experiences (Wimbush and Talbot, 1988). In a similar way to the women in Fredrickson and Anderson's (1999) research, at times positive relationships formed in the outdoors appeared to overshadow other aspects of their experience, such as the physical challenge. What is of particular significance here, is that although there was some variation in the priority given to particular requirements, the women expressed a preference for certain conditions to be met by anyone they shared adventure experiences with. Importance was assigned to knowing the competence level of other group members as this had implications for the women's safety, and generally they preferred to take part with a close friend or someone they knew well. More particularly, Faye noted that she would only take part with people she was 'very fond of' and who were male. All spent the majority of their time outdoors with males. This was not necessarily through choice, but often because 'there weren't any other women' (Gill) available. As confident, competent outdoor participants they appeared to have internalised some of the values seen as dominant in male outdoor culture (see Henderson, 1996a) and assigned particular meaning to adventure experiences offering a sense of independence and self-determination. Faye's preference for working outdoors with males, and the other women's confidence to take risks in all-male groups, has implications for our consideration of the case made by several writers for women-only groups in the outdoors (see Hornibrook et al, 1997). It has been advocated that these provide a supportive, nurturing environment within which women feel more comfortable about learning new skills and taking risks (see Loeffler, 1997). It has also been suggested that women-only groups can assist those with previous adventure experience in further developing their skill and their sense of competence (Hornibrook et al, 1997). However, the behaviour of the women in this research supports Henderson's (1996a) suggestion that an approach considered to be

woman-centred may not be appropriate for all women, any more than the traditional male approach is representative of all men

The women's stories of their adventure experiences at times contradicted Lyng's (1990) suggestion that as participants learn to manage risk in the outdoors, fear recedes. On occasions fear manifested itself in bouts of crying, and the women described their anxiety in terms of 'being petrified' (Cathy), 'scared stupid' (Debbie) and 'terrified' (Gill). It was apparent that for some, the level of fear experienced contributed to the degree of excitement or 'buzz' felt on completion of the task. These references to extreme anxiety are of particular interest because high levels of fear are seldom reported by experienced adventure participants, who learn to manage risk (Celsi et al, 1993) and rarely express serious concern for their own safety. In connection with this, it should be noted that previous research has tended to focus on the experiences of men in the outdoors, but in a study by Ewert (1988) of a one-off mixed-sex Outward Bound residential experience, women did consistently report higher levels of fear. Ewert concluded that rather than being more fearful of specific situations, women were more prone to admit their fears than men.

The research

The biographical method allowed these women's stories to be told in their own words and in so doing to reveal the meanings they ascribed to their experiences. The importance of a variety of contexts such as family, work, outdoors and life span was acknowledged, and as suggested by Bialeschki (1994) an integrated approach was employed in making sense of the data. Drawing on literature focusing on leisure, play, optimal arousal, and socialisation into sport, in addition to research from the field of outdoor adventure, offered a theoretical framework for understanding the meanings of adventure participation within the context of the women's lives. Feminist research provided alternative views for understanding the decisions made by the women in the light of family and gender role expectations.

This biographical study contributes to our understanding of the lives of women committed to adventure participation in that it explores meanings related to the links between past and present involvement rarely examined hitherto. Whilst in their study

of the gendered meanings of the outdoors for women students, Henderson et al (1996) did give some consideration to contact with the outdoors whilst growing up, this was done through the use of focus groups rather than the in-depth exploration of individual women's lives, and a limited theoretical framework was employed in the interpretation of the data. Little research has examined the effects of the changing role demands experienced with the onset of motherhood on leisure. The stories of the women with children afford an insight into ways in which gender roles related to childcare, impacted on, and were resisted through adventure participation (see Bialeschki, 1994).

In interpreting the stories of the women in this research, I was conscious of the limitations of language and the fact that the words used to describe their experiences provided a particular view of reality. I took note of Robertson's (1999) assertion that understanding what something means to somebody is dependent upon the discourses available, resulting in experience being open to contradictory interpretations. Whilst the outdoors can be used to facilitate many different kinds of adventure experience depending on the level and type of physical challenge, it appeared at times that the women were describing similar positive outcomes in different ways. For example, when identifying resultant emotions after overcoming a difficult challenge, Gill referred on several occasions to a 'state of excitement' whereas Debbie recalled feeling a 'sense of achievement'. The physical sensations of interacting with the water when canoeing held particular meaning for Cathy, who said that for her 'water is like what you think of air...I just want to flow with it'. During her college course Faye had considered theoretical aspects of high-risk behaviour, and so at times was able to verbalise the outcomes of her adventure experiences in terms of the levels of challenge and competence and the decision-making processes involved. I am not suggesting that different aspects of their experiences in the outdoors were not of particular significance for different women, but it is important to acknowledge the limitations of language and consider whether at times similar meanings were simply being described in different ways.

Collective stories

These narrative accounts also contribute to our understanding of 'women in the

outdoors' in that they raise the question of what it means to be woman, a partner, a mother and a teacher. Western society's dominant views of women as nurturing and self-sacrificing are called into question, and these narratives offer further cultural possibilities in the form of alternative 'ways of being'. These women's narratives in the form of a collective story offer transformational possibilities for women constrained by family and work role expectations and responsibilities. Jenny referred to the positive effects of observing 'possible behaviours' that challenge established beliefs, when she said

> I could get very depressed thinking about having a child and then looking around at the majority of women's lives, so when you see one you think "She's doing it [outdoor adventure]" you know "It's OK". It gives me hope and confidence really, that I know life has to change but you don't have to give everything up.

Jenny's narrative reveals that although the women's high level of involvement in adventurous activities challenged stereotypical views of female behaviour, their decisions concerning their participation were still made within the context of material, cultural and ideological constraints that had to be overcome. In maintaining their commitment, they themselves were influenced by the stories of other 'women in the outdoors'.

Future research

In considering the directions of future research, it is important to note that the women in this study were all relatively privileged, white, British, heterosexual and middle-class. Whilst there is some reference within adventure literature to women across cultures (see Roberts and Winiarczyk, 1996), there is a need for further research recording the experiences of women with differences in education, sexual orientation, social class and ethnic background. Given the male dominated nature of the adventure environment, there are relatively few women with a high level of long-term involvement in the outdoors. As this requires some financial commitment in addition to a certain level of independence, women participants are likely to be middle-class, educated and in full-time employment (see Kay, 1996).

In future research it would be informative to interview male partners to gain an alternative view of aspects of the lives of the women respondents. The meanings

of their adventure participation could only be revealed by the women themselves, and an insight into the life of a significant 'family other' would afford an alternative perspective on the constraints and opportunities within which the women's decisions about their adventure participation were made. Possible future developments, in addition to extending the number and type of women interviewed, might also be to include male respondents in order to increase understandings of the meanings of participation in adventurous activities for them. To-date there is a dearth of research exploring early socialisation into outdoor adventure, consequently little is known about the significance of childhood experiences for women's adult involvement in the outdoors. Further research in this area would have implications for those seeking to encourage larger numbers of women to become involved in adventurous activities.

Personal outcomes

This research has taken the form of a personal expedition employing a map that has written itself as the journey has progressed. Whilst I have attempted to document many of what for me have been significant events along the way, there are numerous others that have remained below the surface. Their neglect has not been intentional, but has been due to the fact that many alterations in a person's view of behaviour and of 'the world' are subtle, or go unnoticed when observed singly. This study has provided an opportunity for me to view my own and other's behaviour 'in the outdoors' from alternative perspectives, and to consider the meanings that I attribute to my own adventure participation. As suggested by Robertson (1999) the sense we make of life stories fluctuates over time, and I chose to interpret these women's narratives in a particular way, focusing on issues that held particular significance for me. I would, though, contend that whilst my interest in particular aspects of these women's lives originated from my own experiences in and understanding of the outdoors, it developed out of the stories that were told. One of the main assumptions underpinning all aspects of this research is the positive nature of involvement in the outdoors, which should not be taken for granted. However, I continue to be amazed by the

women's ability to maintain their adventure involvement alongside domestic and family responsibilities, and a job in education. A partner also heavily involved in the outdoors was clearly a significant factor for all the women, but the level of personal motivation and determination required should not be underestimated.

Conclusions

This study has sought to provide further insight into the nature and meaning of the individual lives of women in the outdoors. Life stories have varying degrees of 'truth' (Denzin, 1989) and being told in the present they are influenced by 'the cultural conventions of telling, by the listener and by the social context' (Bruner, 1984:7). It is likely that if someone other than myself had conducted the interviews these women's stories would have been different, at least in direction, if not in the meanings revealed. However, as suggested by Garrett and Hodkinson (1998), I believe that the 'truthfulness' of these women's accounts should be assessed on whether they appear believable on the basis of our own experience. In judging the authenticity of these stories, I earlier made a case for the criteria of persuasiveness and correspondence. Additionally, like Robertson (1999) I attribute value to questioning whether these narratives are moving, give alternative ways of thinking about the subject matter and are potentially empowering to others. I do not claim a final and authoritative account, since these interviews were considered illustrative rather than representative of women adventure participants. However, this study contributes to a better understanding of the meanings of outdoor adventure for women teachers, and of the ways in which they live out their lives and pursue their leisure choices within a framework of opportunities and constraints.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

PILOT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

What was a recent experience of an adventurous activity like:

What was it like
How did you feel
What were the highlights/pleasures
What were the low points/difficulties

What events at any time in your life have lead to your participation in adventurous activities

e.g. significant events/people

What are your reasons for going and taking part in adventurous activities

What motivates you to continue
What do you gain from adventurous experiences
What do these experiences bring to the rest of your life

Other people

How does your participation in adventurous activities effect people around you
What influence do the people around you have on your participation
What are the opinions of significant people around you about your participation
Are there significant people around you who take part in these activities with you

Appendix B

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILES

Belinda

Belinda is 44 and teaches in a large mixed secondary school. She has taught science with some physical education for 21 years and she has also taught English as a foreign language abroad. Her main adventurous activity is skydiving but in addition she currently pursues sub-aqua and has been a keen motorcyclist since the age of eighteen.

Cathy

Cathy is 37 and teaches geography in a mixed secondary school. She has taught in schools in England for 12 years and has also spent time teaching abroad. Her main adventurous activities are white water canoeing and surfing but she also takes part in mountain biking and some hill walking. She often travels to venues outside the United Kingdom and has been involved in a white water canoe expedition in Nepal.

Debbie

Debbie is 36 and currently lectures in a college of further and higher education where she has taught for 6 years. She previously worked as a sports development officer, in an outdoor equipment retailers and as a teacher in an outdoor centre. Her main adventurous activities are rock climbing and white water canoeing, but she is also experienced in mountaineering. She has climbed mountains and taken part in a white water canoe expedition abroad and has two children under the age of ten.

Emma

Emma is 44 and teaches geography with some physical education in a mixed secondary school; she has taught for 23 years. Her main adventurous activity is canoeing, but she also rock climbs, winter climbs and treks. She has led several trekking groups in the Himalayas and a few years ago she spent a year away from work living in Asia.

Faye

Faye is 27 and teaches at an educational outdoor centre where she has worked for 8 years. She is a qualified teacher and holds a certificate in counselling skills. She spends much of her time in the outdoors climbing or white water canoeing, but she also takes part in fell-running, winter climbing and mountain biking. She has gained experience of white water canoeing and climbing in Scotland.

Gill

Gill is 37 and teaches in a primary school. She has taught in several different primary schools and has held various posts of responsibility. Her main adventurous activities are white water canoeing and rock climbing, but she also does some winter climbing and mountain walking and has recently experienced white water rafting in the Alps. She has three children under the age of six.

Helen

Helen is 46 and she works in a college of further education where she has been for 15 years. Previously she taught physical education in secondary schools for 10 years. Her main adventurous activities are canoeing, mountain walking and scrambling, but she also takes part in caving and rock climbing. She has travelled extensively and has pursued mountain walking, climbing and white water rafting in several countries abroad.

Jenny

Jenny is 38 and she has been employed as a part-time youth worker for 3 years. Initially she trained to be a primary teacher, but she left teaching after working in schools for 2 years. Her main adventurous activities are white water canoeing and caving, but she also participates in mountain walking and mountain biking. In addition to taking part in canoeing, she is an experienced sailor and has a child under the age of one.

Appendix C

INFORMATION SENT TO INTERVIEWEES

PARTICIPATION IN ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES
INTERVIEW INFORMATION

Thank you for agreeing to take part in an interview focusing on 'participation in adventurous activities'. I have included some information below so that you will know what to expect, and will have some idea beforehand of the areas to be considered.

The interview will take no longer than an hour and the content will be treated as completely confidential. Your identity will not be disclosed, and any responses referred to in the final written report will remain anonymous.

If you agree, the interview will be audio-taped as this enables responses to be more accurately recorded than if notes are taken.

Questions within the interview will focus on:

1. The significance of adventurous activities within your life;

2. Significant events and influences in your life leading to participation in one or more adventurous activities;

3. Motivations to continue participating in adventurous activities;

4. Positive and negative aspects of participating in adventurous activities;

5. Other people around you: the impact your participation has on them, and their influence on your participation;

6. What the experience of e.g. white water canoeing is like;

7. Ways in which your participation has influenced you as a person, and as a teacher;

8. The significance of being out in the environment;

9. The significance of gender for your adventure experiences.

If you would like to discuss any of the above before the interview please do contact me.

Many thanks
Maggie Boniface

Appendix D

INTERVIEW GUIDE

How important are adventurous activities within your life

Could you imagine life without this type of activity; how much would it matter; would your life be fulfilled

How easy/difficult is it to go climbing/canoeing

Do you participate in OAA as much as you would like

What significant events/people and influences in your life have lead to participation in climbing/adventurous activities

Aspects of life history but draw out 'turning points re. adventurous activities

What motivates you to continue to participate in OAA

Your reasons for e.g. canoeing/climbing

What do you gain from the experience

What, if any, are the negative aspects of participating in OAA

What difficulties does participation lead to and how do you overcome these

What impact does your climbing/canoeing or participation in other OAA have on people around you, and what is their influence on your participation

What do significant people around you think of your participation

How do their opinions influence you

Are there significant people around you who take part as well

Do you ever have to compromise your participation because of other people

What is the experience of climbing/canoeing (or another adventurous activity) like

How does it feel

Highlights/pleasures

Low points/negative aspects

Csikszentmihalyi's characteristics of flow (reference to):

Control	Clear goals	Immediate feedback
Time altered	Narrow focus	Challenge-skill balance

How has participation in adventurous activities influenced you as a woman, a partner, a teacher/instructor:

What do these experiences bring to the rest of your life

Have they changed you in any way; are you a different person as a result of adventurous activities

How significant is the fact that you take part out in the environment

How does being in the outdoor adventure environment make you feel

How significant is gender for your experiences of outdoor adventure

Do you find being a woman in the outdoors significant in any way

Appendix E

POST-INTERVIEW DIRECTIVE

Please could you write about any of the following areas whenever you have any thoughts or reflections concerning these issues, or any others that relate to your participation in adventurous activities. Any reflections no matter how small are really important. Think about the part that adventurous activities plays in your life. How does taking part make you feel? What are the high points and the difficulties or compromises? How do others around you see your participation and do they influence it in any way? What do these activities bring to your life? What do they mean to you as a woman, a partner, a teacher/instructor? Below is a copy of the interview schedule to remind you of further areas you might consider.

How important are adventurous activities within your life

Could you imagine life without this type of activity; how much would it matter; would your life be fulfilled
How easy/difficult is it to go and take part
Do you participate in OAA as much as you would like

What significant events/people and influences in your life have lead to participation in adventurous activities

Life history but consider 'turning points re. adventurous activities

What motivates you to continue to participate in OAA

Your reasons for e.g. canoeing or climbing
What do you gain from the experience

What, if any, are the negative aspects of participating in OAA

What difficulties does participation lead to and how do you overcome these

What impact does your participation in OAA have on people around you, and what is their influence on your participation

What do significant people around you think of your participation
How do their opinions influence you
Are there significant people around you who take part as well
Do you ever have to compromise your participation because of other people

What is the experience of taking part in one activity (e.g. the one you take part in the most) like:

How does it feel
Highlights/pleasures
Low points/negative aspects
Csikszentmihalyi's characteristics of flow (reference to):

Control	Clear goals	Immediate feedback
Time altered	Narrow focus	Challenge-skill balance

How has participation in adventurous activities influenced you as a women/partner/instructor/teacher:

What do these experiences bring to the rest of your life

Have they changed you in any way; are you a different person as a result of adventurous activities

How significant is the fact that you take part out in the environment

How does being in the outdoor adventure environment make you feel

How significant is gender for your experiences of outdoor adventure

Do you find being a woman in the outdoors significant in any way

Appendix F

PERSONAL PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please could you complete the following questions about your education and employment history. This will provide a context for the information given previously during the interview.

NAME_____ **AGE** _____

EDUCATION SINCE THE AGE OF 16

Years	Educational Establishment	Full/Part Time	Type of Course / Qualifications

MAIN EMPLOYMENT SINCE LEAVING SCHOOL

Years	Place of Employment	Type of Employment / Position

OUTDOOR AND ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES PROFILE

I am interested in how you first became involved in different adventurous activities as this will help me build a more complete picture of your experience. If you have taken part in many adventurous activities, could you identify the main ones and give a summary of any subsequent involvement.

Activity	First Experience		Summary of Subsequent Experience	Any qualifications, who you usually take part with, and/or the 'leader'
	Age	'Leader'*		

* Leader or mentor or person who introduced you to the activity (indicate whether 'teacher'/friend/relative etc.)

Thank you for completing the profile. If you have any further information please continue over the page.

'TURNING-POINT' OR SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

With reference to your participation in adventurous activities, could you outline below up to five of the most significant events in your life that influenced your subsequent participation. Please identify any significant people that were part of these occasions. ('Events' might include books/ films/poems etc if these were particularly significant)

Age (Approx)	**Event - could you give as much detail as possible concerning the place, occasion etc. and why the event was significant**	**Significant people - could you identify individuals and indicate their relationship to you and their role**

Thank you for completing the questionnaire

Appendix G

A SUMMARY OF THE ACTIVITIES PROFILES

OUTDOOR AND ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES PROFILE – BELINDA

Activity	First Experience		Summary of Subsequent Experience and Qualifications
	Age	'Leader'*	
Camping and Hiking	10	Parents	Many years of hill walking and camping in the British Isles with family and friends
Motor-cycling	18	Father	Taught and marshalled at race meetings Proficiency and leader qualifications
Skiing	23	Myself	Holidays and school ski trips abroad with friends and husband
Sky Diving	30	Husband	Cat 10 'D' Licence achieved (200 jumps); sky diving in British Isles and abroad with husband
Water Skiing	40	Myself	Did not enjoy or continue
Sub-Aqua	42	Club	Diving abroad; Open Water, Advanced Open Water and Rescue Diver qualifications
Horse-Riding	42	Lessons	Hacking, jumping and dressage
White Water-Rafting	41	Myself	Abroad

* Leader or mentor or person who introduced you to the activity (indicate whether 'teacher'/friend/relative etc.)

OUTDOOR AND ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES PROFILE – CATHY

Activity	First Experience		Summary of Subsequent Experience and Qualifications
	Age	'Leader'*	
Mountaineering	Pre 16	Scouts	Mountain walking and hill walking
Canoeing	16	Venture Scout – canoeist who had done some big expeditions	Learnt the basics of canoeing with the venture scouts over six months Six week expedition in British Isles Several trips to different rivers in British Isles
	18	University	Canoe clubs; coaching qualification; taught canoeing abroad Canoe on weirs in British Isles with friends and partner Canoe expedition abroad in a wilderness environment Canoeing abroad with partner and friends Teach canoeing to young people
Parachuting	19		At university with friends
Surfing			In the British Isles
Mountainbiking			Local area - more distant locations during holidays

* Leader or mentor or person who introduced you to the activity (indicate whether 'teacher'/friend/relative etc.)

OUTDOOR AND ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES PROFILE – DEBBIE

Activity	First Experience		Summary of Subsequent Experience and Qualifications
	Age	'Leader'*	
Multisports: Kayaking/ Walking/ Ropes Course /Cycling	14	YHA Holiday course	Start of an interest in outdoor pursuits
Rock-Climbing	20	Friends and partner	Main activity; earlier on climbed with a club Climb with friends, colleagues and partner Have climbed to E3 but more recently to E1 Prefer to lead although enjoy seconding with partner
Mountaineering	20	Husband and friends	University club then continued with friends Technical winter ice climbing Expedition abroad with friends
Kayaking: inland/White Water	20	Husband and friends	Began at university; led others; kayaked abroad
Sea Kayaking	20	Husband	Initially bought a boat but did not continue

* Leader or mentor or person who introduced you to the activity (indicate whether 'teacher'/friend/relative etc.)

OUTDOOR AND ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES PROFILE – EMMA

Activity	First Experience		Summary of Subsequent Experience and Qualifications
	Age	'Leader'*	
Rock-Climbing	16	Scout leader	Encouraged to lead by a friend; climb with friends MLTB Mountain Leader qualification Climbed abroad
Winter Climbing (Snow and Ice)	23	Friends	With friends; have led to grade III.
Kayaking	25	Friends	With friends; regular winter paddling in British Isles Level 3 Inland Coach and Level 4 Sea Coach qualifications; Aquatic First Aid
Sea Kayaking	35	Friends and partner	With partner and friends in British Isles
High Altitude Trekking	30	Friend	Have led treks abroad and trekked with friends Rescue and Emergency First Aid qualifications
Open Canoeing	40	Partner	Share leading with friends in British Isles and abroad

* Leader or mentor or person who introduced you to the activity (indicate whether 'teacher'/friend/relative etc.)

OUTDOOR AND ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES PROFILE – FAYE

Activity	First Experience		Summary of Subsequent Experience and Qualifications
	Age	'Leader'*	
Canoeing	17	Teacher	Usually paddle with work colleagues. BCU Level 2 Coach qualification Canoe regularly; canoe expeditions in British Isles
Rock Climbing	18	Friend	Climb with friends or partner; hold SPA Instructor qualification
Caving	18	Teacher	Cave with a work colleague; Local Mine Leader qualification
Winter Climbing	19	Friend	Winter trips in the British Isles
Fell Running	19	Solo	Prefer to run solo at own pace, own route, own fitness level
Mountain Biking	21	Friend	Ride with friends or alone; Off-Road Leader qualification

* Leader or mentor or person who introduced you to the activity (indicate whether 'teacher'/friend/relative etc.)

OUTDOOR AND ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES PROFILE – GILL

Activity	First Experience		Summary of Subsequent Experience and Qualifications
	Age	'Leader'*	
Canoeing	14	Guide Leader	Canoe regularly with friends and husband; some racing but found it boring; a few slaloms
Canoeing and Climbing	17	Guide and Scout campsite	Worked at the campsite with a group of people for the summer canoeing and climbing while there.
	21	College	Canoeing and climbing initially with the club and then with friends
	26	Club	Joined a canoeing and climbing club and took it up seriously.
Mountain Walking	28		With friends and husband in British Isles
White Water Canoeing	30		Every winter with friends and/or husband
Winter Climbing	31		Several winters with friends and/or husband in British Isles
Climbing			A lot every summer with friends; SPA Instructor qualification
White Water Rafting	36		With family including children last year

* Leader or mentor or person who introduced you to the activity (indicate whether 'teacher'/friend/relative etc.)

OUTDOOR AND ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES PROFILE – HELEN

Activity	First Experience		Summary of Subsequent Experience and Qualifications
	Age	'Leader'*	
Camping/ Walking	10	Father	Walking in British Isles and abroad with friends; some winter experience MLTB Mountain Leader qualification
Canoeing	17	PGL Holiday	Canoeing in British Isles and abroad with friends; BCU Senior Instructor Competition white water rafting
Caving	17	PGL Holiday	Caving/Potholing in the British Isles and abroad with family, friends and a club
Climbing	20	Outdoor centre	Climbing in British Isles and abroad with family and friends Mainly seconding, some leading Leader qualification
Paragliding	42	Commercial company	Fairly limited; too weather dependent Have instructed groups

* Leader or mentor or person who introduced you to the activity (indicate whether 'teacher'/friend/relative etc.)

OUTDOOR AND ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES PROFILE – JENNY

Activity	First Experience		Summary of Subsequent Experience and Qualifications
	Age	'Leader'*	
Hill Walking	5	Parents	Weekends / holidays with parents Weekends with friends (Duke of Edinburgh Award); holidays with husband Run trips for teenagers; county mountain certificate
Sailing	14	Friend	Attended teachers in-service courses; RYA Level 5 Bought own dinghy and joined club; regularly sailed for several years
Canoeing	16	School activity week	Continued to present day; Level 2 (kayak), Level 2 trainee (canoe) Bought own canoe and joined a club; coach and attend club events with husband.
Caving	32	Attended residential weekend	With husband and friend; Cave Leader 1 qualification Take teenagers as part of club run with husband

* Leader or mentor or person who introduced you to the activity (indicate whether 'teacher'/friend/relative etc.)

Appendix H

FIRST RESIDENTIAL OR EXTENDED ADVENTURE EXPERIENCES

	Age	Organisation	Length	Venue	Activities
Cathy	16 16	Venture scouts Venture scouts	Regularly - six months/ 7 days	Local area Residential in Scotland	Canoeing Canoe expedition
Debbie	14	YHA adventure holidays	7 days	Residential at a centre in Yorkshire	Canoeing, adventure walk, orienteering, ropes course
Emma	11-18	Guides, Venture rangers	Regularly	Countryside	Camping and campcraft, canoeing, climbing
Faye	17	School – sixth form	8 days	Residential at a county activities centre in Wales	Abseiling, climbing canoeing, hill-walking
Gill	14 17	Guides Guide and scout camp	2 evenings a week/ 5/6 weeks	Local area Residential in the countryside	Canoeing Canoeing, climbing
Helen	17	PGL	7 days	Residential at an activities centre in Wales	Canoeing, caving
Jenny	16-18	County council	2x7 days	Residential at a county activities centre	Sailing, climbing, canoeing

Appendix I

DIRECTIVE RESPONSE FROM FAYE

Flow in Outdoor and Adventurous Activities

In response to the questionnaire:

- For me you never are confident that you have the skills to complete the challenge. This would run against the whole nature of what challenge is all about. I feel uncertainty is a key component in flow/peak experiences.
- Total control implies that your skill level exceeds or equals the challenge, and again removes the uncertainty. Perhaps you only realise you had complete control once you have succeeded.
- Perhaps a flow experience occurs each time you really push yourself to your absolute limit – and succeed- - which is why you are not completely confident you have the skills. This is because it is new territory. You think you might have it in you, or you probably have the skills but you are not absolutely sure.
- For me the characteristics of flow include clear goals, narrow focus, success, challenge-skill balance (as discussed above). But for me it also involves a complete and utter feeling of peace with yourself and the environment. The environment is of key importance. For example, in wild remote wilderness. The harsh lonely landscape, the flora and fauna. No visible paths, no evidence of human inhabitancy...litter, signposts, erosion for example.
- A flow experience may not last long. For example a cycle ride lasted five hours, but I would only class one short section of technical downhill of about 400m as the peak experience.
- The risks involved are important. I knew [on the cycle] that a fall would have had serious consequences, especially in view of the remote area. There is another key factor.
- In terms of mountain biking there is also the risk of mechanical failure. The time spent on maintenance and repairs all seems to start to sew the seed for a flow experience. The hours spent tinkering and fiddling in the lounge, my bike in bits, are contributing to eventual success if conditions are right.
- I also feel luck plays a part. In some ways this relates back to the skill-challenge balance. Often I have been in a situation which showed potential for peak flow experience in that all the right ingredients were there but I have failed due to no other reason than 'bad luck'.
- Following the success of a flow experience comes a feeling of satisfaction, of self worth and of independence. I feel the independence is important.

Participation in Adventurous Activities

Thoughts and reflections following the interview:

- Participation in outdoor adventurous activities makes you strong and driven in other areas of your life. You experience in the outdoors what it takes to get success (like determination, drive, motivation, strength and independence) and you become unafraid to use these things to enable you to get success in other areas of your life.

- Participation in outdoor adventurous activities can make you quite selfish. You have to feed this addiction to the outdoors by adventuring whenever and wherever possible. Sometimes I know I compromise my family and non-outdoor friends to be in the outdoors.
- Adventuring in the outdoors means I find difficulty in 'switching off' and stopping. I work really hard in the outdoors and play hard too. This leads to me becoming very burnt out. This is no good for work or personal stuff in the outdoors, but I just have to be out there doing it. For example, school holidays I spend doing what I do at work but on a different level. This keeps me motivated for work but it means that I go back at the start of a new term exhausted from both the last term and a busy 'holiday'. Even annual 'holidays' abroad are spent on long, hot bolted [climbing] routes in Spain rather than reading a book on the beach.
- Being involved in the outdoors as a woman can be difficult at certain times of the month! Personally I find that just one or two days of my [menstrual] cycle I just cannot manage big, long, epic winter adventures because my body just has not got it in it! This can be really frustrating when you have travelled fourteen hours by car up the country and have been stuck in a bothy waiting for snow conditions to come in with a load of hairy male climbers.
- Being involved in the outdoors is much more than just a personal challenge. It is also the spiritual/psychological benefits. This effects me greatly as a teacher but also in all areas of my life...relationships, family, friends. It reaches the point where the outdoors is not a bit of my life, but its ethos is an integral part of me. In many ways the outdoors makes you appreciate life and how fragile it is (in particular following my canoeing accident). It makes you get up and grab life and live it to the absolute full!

REFERENCES

Alberta Recreation and Parks Department Division (1988, January) *Women and Leisure* (A Look at Leisure 21 1-12) Edmonton, Alberta: Author

Albert, E. (1999) Dealing With Danger: The Normalization of Risk in Cycling, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 34:2 157-171

Alderman, R.B. (1974) *Psychological Behaviour in Sport*, London: W.B. Saunders Company

Allin, L. (2000) Women into Outdoor Education: Negotiating a Male-Gendered Space - Issues of Physicality in B. Humberstone (Ed) *Her Outdoors: Risk, Challenge and Adventure in Gendered Open Spaces,* Eastbourne: Leisure Studies Association Publication No. 66

Allison, L. (1994) *The Changing Politics of Sport*, Manchester: Manchester University Press

Allison, M. and Duncan, M. (1987) Women, Work and Leisure: The Days of Our Lives, *Leisure Studies* 9 143-162

Allison, P. (1998) Greenland: More Questions than Answers, *Horizons* 2 16-20

Allison, P. (2000) Research from the Ground Up. Post Expedition Adjustment, *Occasional Papers 1,* Ambleside: Brathay Hall Trust

Alvarez, A. (1972) I Like to Risk my Life in E.W. Gerber (Ed) *Sport and the Body,* Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger

Alvermann, D.E., O'Brien, D.G. and Dillon, D.R. (1996) On Writing Qualitative Research, *Reading Research Quarterly* 31 114-120

Annat, M. (1995) Challenge and Success - Whose Decision Is It Really?, *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Leadership* 12:1 23-24

Baker, C. (1997) Membership Categorization and Interview Accounts in D. Silverman (Ed) *Qualitative Research, Theory, Method and Practice,* London: Sage

Bain, L. (1989) Interpretive and Critical Research in Sport and Physical Education, *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport* 60:1 21-24

Ball, D. (1972) What the Action is: A Cross-Cultural Approach, *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 2 121-143

Barone, T. (1995) Persuasive Writings, Vigilant Readings and Reconstructed Characters: The Paradox of Trust in Educational Storysharing in J.A. Hatch and R. Wisniewski (Eds) *Life History and Narrative,* London: Falmer Press

Beal, B. (1999) Skateboarding. An Alternative to Mainstream Sports in J. Coakley and P. Donnelly (Eds) *Inside Sports,* New York: Routledge

Beck, U. (1992) *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity,* London: Sage

Becker, H.S. (1963) *Outsiders,* London: Collier-Macmillan

Bella, L. (1989) Women and Leisure: Beyond Androcentrism in E.L. Jackson and T.L. Burton (Eds) *Understanding Leisure and Recreation: Mapping the Past, Charting the Future*, State College, Pennsylvania: Venture Publishing,

Bennett, R.S., Whitaker, K.G., Woolley Smith, N.J. and Sablove, A. (1987) Changing the Rules of the Game: Reflections Towards a Feminist Analysis of Sport, *Women's Studies International Forum* 10:4 369-379

Berlyne, D.E. (1960) *Conflict, Arousal and Curiosity,* New York: McGraw Hill

Bernard, J. (1968) The Eudaemonist in S. Klausner (Ed) *Why Men Take Chances*, New York: Anchor

Bernard, J. (1974) *Sex Differences: an Overview,* New York: MSS Modular Publications, Inc.

Bertaux, D (Ed) (1981) *Biography and Society,* London: Sage

Bialeschki, M.D. (1994) Re-entering Leisure: Transition Within the Role of Motherhood, *Journal of Leisure Research* 26:1 57-74

Blaxter, L., Hughes, C. and Tight, M. (1996) *How to Research,* Buckingham: Open University Press

Blinde, E.M., Taub, D.E and Han, L. (1993) Sport Participation and Women's Personal Empowerment: Experiences of the College Athlete, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 17 47-60

Blinde, E.M., Taub, D.E. and Han, L. (1994) Sport as a Site for Women's Group and Societal Empowerment: Perspectives From the College Athlete, *Sociology of Sport Journal* 11 51-59

Bolton, E. (1980) A Conceptual Analysis of the Mentor Relationship in Career Development of Women, *Adult Education* 30:4 195-207

Boniface, M. (2000) Towards an Understanding of Flow and Other Positive Experience Phenomena Within Outdoor and Adventurous Activities, *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning* 1:1 55-68

Bonington, C. (1981) *Quest for Adventure,* London: Hodder and Stoughton

Brannigan, A. and McDougall (1983) Peril and Pleasure in the Maintenance of High Risk Sport: A Study of Hang-Gliding, *Journal of Sport Behaviour* 6:1 37-51

Brim, O.G. (1966) Socialisation Through the Life Cycle in O.G. Brim and S. Wheeler (Eds) *Socialisation after Childhood,* New York: John Wiley and Sons

Brown, T.J. (1999) Adventure Risk Management in J.C. Miles and S. Priest (Eds) *Adventure Programming,* State College, Pennsylvania: Venture Publishing

Bryson, L. (1987) Sport and the Maintenance of Masculine Hegemony, *Women's Studies International Forum* 10:4 349-360

Burgess, R. (1984) *The Research Process in Educational Settings: 10 Case Studies,* London: Falmer Press

Burgess, H. (1985) Case Study and Curriculum Research: Some Issues for Teacher Researchers in R. Burgess (Ed) *Issues in Educational Research: Qualitative Methods,* Lewes: Falmer Press

Cantor, D.W. and Bernay, T. (1992) *Women in Power: The Secrets of Leadership,* Boston: Houghton Mifflin

Carrington, B, Chivers, T. and Williams, T. (1987) Gender, Leisure and Sport: A Case Study of Young People of South Asian Descent, *Leisure Studies* 6 265-279

Carter, M. (2000) Developing Confidence in Women Working Outdoors: An Exploration of Self Confidence and Competence in Women Employed in Adventure Recreation in B. Humberstone (Ed) *Her Outdoors: Risk, Challenge and Adventure in Gendered Open Spaces,* Eastbourne: Leisure Studies Association Publication No. 66

Celsi, R.L., Rose, R.L. and Leigh, T.W. (1993) An Exploration of High-Risk leisure Consumption Through Skydiving, *Journal of Consumer Research* 20 1-23

Charmaz, K. (1990) Discovering Chronic Illness: Using Grounded Theory, *Social Science and Medicine* 30 1161-1172

Charmaz, K. (1995) Between Positivism and Postmodernism: Implications for Methods, *Studies in Symbolic Interaction* 17 43-72

Clandinin, D.J. and Connelly, F.M. (1994) Personal Experience Methods in N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* London: Sage Publications

Clarke, G. (1998a) *Voices from the Margins: Lesbian Teachers in Physical Education,* Unpublished PhD thesis, Leeds Metropolitan University

Clarke, G. (1998b) Voices from the Margins: Regulation and Resistance in the Lives of Lesbian Teachers in M. Erben (Ed) *Biography and Education,* London: Falmer Press

Clarke, G. and Humberstone, B. (Eds) (1997) *Researching Women and Sport,* London: Macmillan Press

Coakley, J. (1986) Socialisation and Youth Sports in C.R. Rees and A.W. Miracle *Sport and Social Theory,* Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics Publishers, Inc.

Coakley, J. (1993a) Socialisation and Sport in R.N. Singer, M. Murphey and L.K. Tennant (Eds) *Handbook of Research on Sport Psychology*, New York: MacMillan Publishing Company

Coakley, J. (1993b) Sport and Socialisation in J.O. Holloszy (Ed) *Exercise and Sport Sciences Reviews,* Volume 21, New York: Williams and Wilkins Publishing

Coakley, J. and Donnelly, P. (1999) (Eds) *Inside Sports*, New York: Routledge

Coakley, J. and White, A. (1999) Making Decisions. How Young People Become Involved and Stay Involved in Sports in J. Coakley and P. Donnelly *Inside Sports,* New York: Routledge

Coe, C. (1991) The politics of Cultural Representation: Visions of Fields/Fields of Visions, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 26 36-49

Cohen, L. and Manion, L. (1985) *Research Methods in Education,* London: Croom Helm

Colley, A. (1984) Sex Roles and Explanations of Leisure Behaviour, *Leisure Studies* 3 335-341

Collins, P.H. (1990) *Black Feminist Thought,* Boston: Unwin Hyman

Collins, D. (2000) Recognising Women: Discourses in Outdoor Education in B. Humberstone (Ed) *Her Outdoors: Risk, Challenge and Adventure in Gendered Open Spaces*, Eastbourne: Leisure Studies Association Publication No. 66

Condry, J. (1977) Enemies of Exploration: Self-Initiated Versus Other-Initiated Learning, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 35 459-477

Connelly, F.M. and Clandinin, D.J. (1990) Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry, *Educational Researcher* 19:5 2-14

Cooper, G. (1996/7) Assessing the Value of Outdoor Education Programmes Provided by Residential Centres, *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Leadership* 1:4 12-15

Corradi, C. (1991) Text, Context and Individual Meaning: Rethinking Life-Histories in a Hermeneutic Framework *Discourse and Society* 2:1 105-118

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1975) *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety,* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990) *Flow: the Psychology of Optimal Experience,* New York: Harper and Row

Culp, R.H. (1998) Adolescent Girls and Outdoor Recreation: A Case Study Examining Constraints and Effective Programming, *Journal of Leisure Research* 30:3 356-379

Curtis, J., McTeer, W. and White, P. (1999) Exploring Effects of School Sport Experiences on Sport Participation in Later Life, *Sociology of Sport Journal* 16 348-365

Curtis, J.E. and White, P.G. (1984) Age and Sport Participation: Decline in Participation With Age or Increased Specialisation With Age? In N. Theberge and P. Donnelly (Eds) *Sport and the Sociological Imagination,* Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press

Darlison, L. (1983) The Games and the Place of Women in Australian Sport and Society in *The 1982 Commonwealth Games: A Retrospect,* Queensland: Australian Studies Centre, University of Queensland

Davidson, P. (1996) The Holiday and Work Experiences of Women With Young Children, *Leisure Studies* 15 89-103

Deem, R. (1986) *All Work and No Play? The Sociology of Women and Leisure,* Milton Keynes: Open University Press

Deem, R. (1987) Unleisured Lives: Sport in the Context of Women's Leisure, *Women's Studies International Forum* 10:4 423-432

Deem, R. (1996) No Time for a Rest? An Exploration of Women's Work, Engendered Leisure and Holidays, *Time and Society* 5:1 5-25

Deem, R. (1999) How Do We Get Out of the Ghetto? Strategies for Research on Gender and leisure for the Twenty-First Century, *Leisure Studies* 18 161-177

Denscombe, M. (1995) Explorations in Group Interviews: An Evaluation of a Reflexive and Partisan Approach, *British Educational Research Journal* 21:2 131-148

Denzin, N.K. (1987) *The Recovering Alcoholic,* Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Denzin, N.K. (1989a) *Interpretive Biography,* Newbury Park: Sage

Denzin, N.K. (1989b) *Interpretive Interactionism,* Newbury Park: Sage

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds) (1994) *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* London: Sage

Dickinson, H. (1998) Perspectives on Learning Difficulties through Biographies in M. Erben (Ed) *Biography and Education. A Reader,* London: Falmer Press

Donnelly, P. (1978) The Need for Stimulation in P. Donnelly and S. Birrell (Eds) *Motivation and Sport Involvement. The Needs for Stimulation and Achievement,* Ontario: CAHPER

Donnelly, P. and Young, K. (1988) The Construction and Confirmation of Identity in Sport Subcultures, *Sociology of Sport Journal* 3 223-240

Donnelly, P. and Young, K. (1999) Rock Climbers and Rugby Players: Identity Construction and Confirmation in J. Coakley and P. Donnelly *Inside Sports,* New York: Routledge

Douglas, J.D. (1985) *Creative Interviewing,* Beverley Hills: Sage

Drengson, A.R. (1980) Wilderness Travel as an Art and as a Paradigm for Outdoor Education, *Quest* 32:1 110-120

Du Bois, B. (1983) Passionate Scholarship: Notes on Values, Knowing and Method in Feminist Social Science in G. Bowles and R.D. Klein (Eds) *Theories of Women Studies,* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

Eddy, E., Doran, M. and Escudero, M.L. (1998) Does NOLS Have a Gender Bias in Student and Instructor Course Evaluations? *National Outdoor Leadership School Newsletter* December 17-23 [http://www.research.nols.edu/]

Elias, N and Dunning, E. (1986) The Quest for Excitement in Leisure in N. Elias and E. Dunning (Eds) *Quest for Excitement,* Oxford: Basil Blackwell

Ellis, M.J. (1973) *Why People Play,* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Erben, M. (1996) The Purpose and Processes of Biographical Method in D. Scott and R. Usher (Eds) *Understanding Educational Research,* London: Routledge

Erben, M. 1998) Biography and Research Method in M. Erben (Ed) *Biography and Education,* London: Falmer Press

Evans, J. (1992) A Short Paper about People, Power and Educational Reform in A.C. Sparkes (Ed) *Research in Physical Education and Sport: Exploring Alternative Visions*, London: Falmer Press

Evans, J. (Ed) (1993) *Equality, Education and Physical Education,* London: Falmer Press

Evans, J., Penny, D. and Davies, B. (1996) Back to the Future; Policy and Physical Education in N. Armstrong (Ed) *New Directions in Physical Education - Change and Innovation,* London: Cassell

Ewert, A. (1985) Why People Climb: The Relationship of Participant Motives and Experience Level to Mountaineering, *Journal of Leisure Research* 17:3 241-250

Ewert, A. (1988) The Identification and Modification of Situational Fears Associated with Outdoor Recreation, *Journal of Leisure Research* 20:2 106-117

Ewert, A. (1989) *Outdoor Adventure Pursuits,* Columbus, OH: Publishing Horizons

Ewert, A. (1994) Playing the Edge: Motivation and Risk Taking in a High-Altitude Wildernesslike Environment, *Environment and Behaviour* 26:1 3-24

Ewert, A. and Hollenhorst, S. (1989) Testing the Adventure Model: Empirical Support for a Model of Risk Recreation Participation, *Journal of Leisure Research* 21:2 124-139

Finch, J. (1984) "It's Great to Have Someone Else to Talk To": The Ethics and Politics of Interviewing Women in C. Bell and H. Roberts (Eds) *Social Researching: Politics, Problems, Practice,* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

Fredrickson, L.M. and Anderson, D.H. (1999) A Qualitative Exploration of the Wilderness Experience as a Source of Spiritual inspiration, *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 19 21-39

Friedrich, M. and Priest, S. (1993) Developing Androgynous Individuals Through Outdoor Adventure Experiences, *Adventure Education and Outdoor Leadership* 9:3 11-12

Garrett, D. and Hodkinson, P. (1998) Can There Be Criteria for Selecting Research Criteria? A Hermeneutical Analysis of an Inescapable Dilemma, *Qualitative Inquiry* 4:4 515-539

Geertz, C. (1973) *The Interpretation of Culture,* New York: Basic Books

Gensemer, R. (1985) *Physical Education: Perspectives, Inquiry, Applications,* Philadelphia: Saunders

Gerber, G. (1988) Leadership Roles and Gender Stereotypes Traits, *Sex Roles* 18 649-667

Gilligan, C. (1982) *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, London: Harvard University Press

Gilroy, S. (1997) Working on the Body: Links Between Physical Activity and Social Power in G. Clarke and B. Humberstone (Eds) *Researching Women and Sport*, London: Macmillan Press

Gilroy, S. (1999) Intra-household Power Relations and the Impact on Women's Leisure in L. McKie, S. Bowlby and S. Gregory (Eds) *Gender, Power and the Household*, London: MacMillan Press

Glucksmann, M. (1994) The Work of Knowledge and the Knowledge of Women'sWork in M. Maynard and J. Purvis (Eds) *Researching Women's Lives from a Feminist Perspective*, London: Taylor and Francis

Glyptis, S. and Chambers, D. (1982) No Place Like Home, *Leisure Studies* 1:3 247-262

Goode, E. (1978) *Deviant Behaviour: An Interactionist Approach,* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall

Goode, E. (1990) *Deviant Behaviour,* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall

Goodson, I. (1992) Studying Teachers' Lives: An Emergent Field of Inquiry in I. Goodson (Ed) *Studying Teachers' Lives,* London: Routledge

Graham, J. (1997) *Outdoor Leadership: Technique, Common Sense and Self-Confidence,* Seattle, WA: The Mountaineers

Grant, B.C., Thompson, S.M. and Boyes, M, (1996) Risk and Responsibility in Outdoor Recreation, *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance* 67:7 34-35

Green, E. (1998a) Flexible Work, Disappearing Leisure? Feminist Perspectives on Women's Leisure as Spaces for Resistance to Gender Stereotyping in C.

Aitchison and F. Jordan (Eds) *Gender, Space and Identity: Leisure, Culture and Commerce,* University of Brighton, LSA Publications No. 63

Green, E. (1998b) Women Doing Friendship': an Analysis of Women's Leisure as a Site of Identity Construction, Empowerment and Resistance, *Leisure Studies* 17 171-185

Green, E. and Hebron, S. (1988) Leisure and Male Partners in E. Wimbush, and M. Talbot (Eds) *Relative Freedoms,* Milton Keynes: Open University Press

Green, E., Hebron, S. and Woodward, D. (1985) A Woman's Work is Never Done, *Sport and Leisure* June/July 36-38

Green, E., Hebron, S. and Woodward, D. (1987) *Gender and Leisure: A Study of Sheffield Women's Experiences of Leisure* ESRC/Sports Council Report, London: Sports Council

Green, E., Hebron, S. and Woodward, D. (1990) *Women's Leisure, What leisure?* London: Macmillan Press

Greendorfer, S.L. (1977) The Role of Socialising Agents on Female Sport Involvement, *Research Quarterly* 48 304-310

Grovaerts, F. (1985) The Role of Women in the Development of Culture in Society, *Society and Leisure* 1:2 285-3000

Groves, S. and Laws, C. (2000) Children's Experiences of Physical Education *European Journal of Physical Education* 5:1 19-27

Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry*, London: Sage

Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1989) *Fourth Generation Evaluation,* London: Sage

Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1994) Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research in N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* London: Sage

Hall, M.A. (1985) Knowledge and Gender: Epistomological Questions in the Social Analysis of Sport, *Sociology of Sport Journal* 2 25-42

Hammersley, M. (1992) *What's Wrong with Ethnography?,* London: Routledge

Hargreaves, J. (1986) Where's the Virtue? Where's the Grace? A Discussion of the Social Production of Gender Relations In and Through Sport, *Theory, Culture and Society* 3:1 109-121

Hargreaves, J. (1990) Gender on the Sports Agenda, *International Review for Sociology of Sport* 25:4 287-305

Harrington, M., Dawson, D. and Bolla, P. (1992) Objective and Subjective Constraints on Women's Enjoyment of Leisure, *Loisir et Société* 15:1 203-222

Hayllar, B. (1997) You Make 'em Laugh, You Make 'em Cry. The Process of Outdoor Management Development: an Explanatory Analysis, *The Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Leadership* 14:2 6-11

Henderson, K.A. (1990) The Meaning of Leisure for Women: An Integrative Review of the Research, *Journal of Leisure Research* 22:3 228-243

Henderson, K.A. (1991) *Dimensions of Choice*, State College, PA: Venture Publishing

Henderson, K.A. (1992) Breaking With Tradition: Women and Outdoor Pursuits, *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance* 63:2 49-51

Henderson, K.A. (1996a) Feminist Perspectives on Outdoor Leadership in K. Warren (Ed) *Women's Voices in Experiential Education,* Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt

Henderson, K.A. (1996b) Women and the Outdoors: Toward Spiritual Empowerment in K. Warren (Ed) *Women's Voices in Experiential Education,* Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt

Henderson, K.A. (1998) Enhancing Women's Physical Activity Involvement, *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal* 7:1 13-26

Henderson, K.A. and Bialeschki, M.D. (1987) A Qualitative Experience of a Women's Week Experience, *Journal of Experiential Education* 10:2 25-28

Henderson, K.A. and Bialeschki, M.D. (1991) Feminist Perspectives on Women in Recreation Leadership, *Journal of Applied Recreation Research* 16:4 281-296

Henderson, K.A. and Bialeschki, M.D. (1994) Women and the Meanings of Physical Recreation, *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal* 3:2 21-37

Henderson, K.A., Bialeschki, M.D., Shaw, S.M. and Freysinger, V.J. (1989) *A Leisure of One's Own: A Feminist Perspective on Women's Leisure*, University Park, PA: Venture Publishing

Henderson, K.A., Winn, S. and Roberts, N.S. (1996) "Kind of in the Middle:" The Gendered Meanings of the Outdoors for Women Students. *Draft paper presented to the Coalition for Education in the Outdoors*, January 1996, Bradford Woods, Indiana

Hirschi, T. (1969) *Causes of Delinquency*, Berkeley: University of California Press

Hitt, W. (1990) *Ethics and Leadership: Putting Theory into Practice*, Columbus, OH: Batelle Press

Holstein, J.A. and Gubrium, J.F. (1995) *The Active Interview,* Qualitative Research Methods Volume 37. Thousand Oaks: Sage

Holstein, J.A. and Gubrium, J.F. (1997) Active Interviewing in D. Silverman (Ed) *Qualitative Research Theory, Method and Practice,* London: Sage

Hornibrook, T., Brinkert, E., Parry, D. Seimens, R., Mitten, D. and Priest, S. (1997) The Benefits and Motivations of all Women Outdoor Programs, *Journal of Experiential Education* 20:3 152-158

Humberstone, B. (1994) Equality and Access in the Outdoor World, *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Leadership* 11:4 26-27

Humberstone, B. (1996) Other Voices; Many Meanings? Technique and Philosophy for Outdoor Adventure The Case for Women, *The Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Leadership* 13:2 47-51

Humberstone, B. (1997) Perspectives on Research in Outdoor Education Values and Ethics, *The Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Leadership* 14:1 7-9

Humberstone, B. (2000) The 'Outdoor Industry' as Social and Educational Phenomena: Gender and Outdoor Adventure/Education, *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning* 1:1 21-35

Iso-Ahola, S.E. (1980) *The Social Psychology of leisure and Recreation,* Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company

Janesick, V.J. (1994) The Dance of Qualitative Research Design: Metaphor, Methodolatry, and Meaning in N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* London: Sage Publications

Johnson, M. (1993) *Moral Imagination: Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Jones, S. (1985) Depth Interviewing in R. Walker (Ed) *Applied Qualitative Research,* Aldershot: Gower

Jordan, D.J. (1992) Effective Leadership of Girls and Women in Outdoor Recreation, *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance* February 61-64

Jordan, D.J. (1996) Snips and Snails and Puppy Dog Tails...The Use of Gender-Free Language in Experiential Education in K. Warren, M. Sakofs and J.S. Hunt (Eds) *The Theory of Experiential Education,* Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt

Kahn, P.H. (1999) *The Human Relationship with Nature: Development and Culture,* Massachusetts: The MIT Press

Kaplan, R. and Kaplan, S. (1989) *The Experience of Nature: A Psychological Perspective,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Kay, T. (1996) Women's Work and Women's Worth: the Leisure Implications of Women's Changing Employment Patterns, *Leisure Studies* 15 49-64

Keighley, P.W.S. (1997) The Impact of Experiences Out-of-Doors on Personal Development and Environmental Attitudes, *Horizons* 2 27-29

Kellert, S.R. (1997) *Kinship to Mastery: Biophilia in Human Evolution and Development,* Washington, DC: Island Press

Kidder, T. (1982) *The Soul of a New Machine,* New York: Avon Books

King, E. (1996) The Use of the Self in Qualitative Research in J.T.E. Richardson (Ed) *Handbook of Qualitative Research: Methods for Psychology and the Social Sciences,* BPS Books

Kirk, J. And Miller, M.L. (1986) *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research,* London: Sage

Klint, K.A. (1999) New Directions for Inquiry Into Self-Concept and Adventure Experiences in J.C. Miles and S. Priest (Eds) *Adventure Programming,* State College, Pennsylvania: Venture Publishing

Knapp, C. (1985) Escaping the Gender Trap: the Ultimate Challenge for Experiential Educators, *Journal of Experiential Education* 8:2 16-19

Kohli, M. (1981) Biography: Account, Text, Method in D. Bertaux (Ed) *Biography and Society. The Life history Approach in the Social Sciences,* London: Sage

Koleva, D. (1999) Tradition in the Construction of Self-Identity in Life Histories, *Auto/Biography* 7:1&2 27-33

Krane, V. (1994) A Feminist Perspective on Contemporary Sport Psychology Research, *The Sport Psychologist* 8 393-410

Kvale, S. (1995) The Social Construction of Validity, *Qualitative Inquiry* 1 19-40

Kvale, S. (1996) *InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing,* London: Sage

Langer, E.J. (1975) The Illusion of Control, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 32 311-328

Lather, P. (1986) Issues of Validity in Openly Ideological Research: Between a Rock and a Hard Place, *Interchange* 17 63-84

Lather, P. (1993) Fertile Obsession: Validity after Poststructuralism, *The Sociological Quarterly* 34 673-693

Laws, C. (1998) *Physical Education, Curriculum Change and Individualism,* Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Southampton

Leaman, O. and Carrington, B. (1985) Athleticism and the Reproduction of Gender and Ethnic Marginality, *Leisure Studies* 4 205-217

Le Feuvre, N. (1994) Leisure, Work and Gender: a Sociological Study of Women's Time in France, *Time and Society* 3:2 151-178

Letherby, G. and Zdrodowski, D. (1995) 'Dear Researcher' the Use of Correspondence as a Method Within Feminist Qualitative Research, *Gender and Society* 9:5 576-93

Letherby, G. and Ramsay, K. (1999) So Why Are You Doing This Project?: Issues of Friendship, Research and Autobiography, *Auto/Biography* 7:1&2 35-41

Lincoln, Y. (1993) I and Thou: Method, Voice and Roles in Research with the Silenced in D. McLaughlin and W. Tierney (Eds.) *Naming Silenced Lives,* New York: Routledge

Lincoln, Y. (1995) Emerging Criteria for Quality in Qualitative and Interpretive Research, *Qualitative Inquiry* 1 275-289

Lipscombe, N. (1999) The Relevance of the peak Experience to Continued Skydiving Participation: a Qualitative Approach to Assessing Motivations, *Leisure Studies* 18 267-288

Loeffler, T.A. (1995) Factors Influencing Women's Outdoor Leadership Career Development, *Melpomene Journal* 14:3 15-21

Loeffler, T.A. (1997) Assisting Women in Developing a Sense of Competence in Outdoor Programs, *The Journal of Experiential Education* 20:3 119-123

Lopez, L.L. (1987) Between Hope and Fear: The Psychology of Risk, *Advances in Experimental Psychology* 20 255-295

Lyng, S. (1990) Edgework: A Social Psychological Analysis of Voluntary Risk Taking, *American Journal of Sociology* 95:4 851-886

Lyng, S. and Snow, D.A. (1986) Vocabularies of Motive and High-Risk Behaviour, *Advances in Group Processes* 3 157-179

Manning, K. (1997) Authenticity in Constructivist Inquiry: Methodological Considerations without Prescription, *Qualitative Inquiry* 3 93-115

Marcus, G.E. and Fisher, M.J. (1986) *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Mason, S. (1999) Beyond Flow: the Need for a Feminist Ethics of Leisure, *Leisure Studies* 18 233-248

Maynard, M. (1994) Methods, Practice and Epistemology: The Debate about Feminism and Research in M. Maynard and J. Purvis (Eds) *Researching Women's Lives from a Feminist Perspective*, London: Taylor and Francis

McAvoy, L. and Dustin, D. (1983) In Search of Balance: A No-Rescue Wilderness Proposal, *Western Wildlands* 9:2 2-5

McIntyre, N. (1989) The Personal meaning of Participation: Enduring Involvement, *Journal of Leisure Research* 21 167-179

McIntyre, N. and Roggenbuck, J.W. (1998) Nature/Person transactions During an Outdoor Adventure Experience: A Multi-Phasic Analysis, *Journal of Leisure Research* 30:4 401-422

McPherson, B.D. (1984) Sport Participation Across the Life Cycle: A Review of the Literature and Suggestions for Future Research, *Sociology of Sport Journal* 1 213-230

Measor, L. (1985) Interviewing: A Strategy in Qualitative Research in R. Burgess (Ed) *Strategies of Educational Research: Qualitative Methods,* Lewes: Falmer Press

Mehrabian, A. and Russell, J.A. (1973) A Measure of Arousal Seeking Tendency, *Environment and Behaviour* 5 315-333

Mehrabian, A. and Russell, J.A. (1974) *An Approach to Environmental Psychology,* Cambridge: MIT Press

Meier, K.V. (1976) The Kinship of the Rope and the Loving Struggle: A Philosophic Analysis of Communication in Mountain Climbing, *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 3 52-64

Miles, J.C. (1999) Wilderness in J.C. Miles and S. Priest (Eds) *Adventure Programming,* State College, PA: Venture Publishing, Inc.

Miller, J. and Glassner, B. (1997) The 'Inside' and the 'Outside' Finding Realities in Interviews in D. Silverman (Ed) *Qualitative Research Theory, Method and Practice,* London: Sage

Mitchell, R.G. (1983) *Mountain Experience: The Psychology and Sociology of Adventure,* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Mitten D. (1996) A Philosophical Basis for a Woman's Outdoor Adventure Program in K. Warren (Ed) *Women's Voices in Experiential Education,* Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt

Morley, L and Walsh, V. (Eds) (1995) *Feminist Academics: Creative Agents for Change*, London: Taylor and Francis

Morse, J.M. (1991) Strategies for Sampling in J. M. Morse (Ed) *Qualitative Nursing Research: A Contemporary Dialogue,* Newbury Park: Sage

Mowl, G. and Towner, J (1995) Women, Gender, Leisure and Place: Towards a More Humanistic Geography of Women's Leisure, *Leisure Studies* 14 102-116

Mulqueen, M. (1995) *On Our Own Terms; Redefining Competence and Femininity,* Albany, NY; State University of New York Press

Murphy, T.P. and Heimlich, J.E. (1997) *The Meaning of Wilderness*, EETAP Resource Library 21

Naisbitt, J. and Aburdene, P. (1990) *Megatrends 2000,* New York: William Morrow

Neill, J.T. (1997) Gender: How Does It Effect the Outdoor Education Experience A paper presented at the *10th National Outdoor Education Conference*, Sydney, Australia, January 20-24

Nixon, H.L. and Frey, J. (1996) *A Sociology of Sport*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth

Nolan, T. and Priest, S. (1994) Outdoor Programmes for Women Only, *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Leadership* 10:1 14-17

Oakley, A. (1981) Interviewing Women in H. Roberts (Ed) *Doing Feminist Research,* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

Okely, J. (1992) Anthropology and Autobiography: Participatory Experience and Embodied Knowledge in J. Okely and H. Callaway (Eds) *Anthropology and Autobiography*, London: Routledge

Oliver, K.L. (1998) A Journey Into Narrative Analysis: A Methodology for Discovering Meanings, *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 17 144-159

O'Neill, G. (1993) *A Night Out With the Girls*, London: Women's Press

Page, M. (1998) Collecting Slices of College Dropouts' Lives in M. Erben (Ed) *Biography and Education. A Reader,* London: Falmer Press

Pargman, D. (1993) Individual Differences: Cognitive and Perceptual Styles in R.N. Singer, M. Murphey and L.K. Tennant (Eds) *Handbook of Research on Sport Psychology,* New York: MacMillan Publishing Company

Patton, M.Q. (1990) *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods,* Newbury Park: Sage

Personal Narratives Group (1989) *Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press

Pidgeon, N. (1996:76) Grounded Theory: Theoretical Background in J.T.E. Richardson (Ed) *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods for Psychology and the Social Sciences*, Leicester: British Psychological Society Books

Pidgeon, N. and Henwood, K. (1996) Grounded Theory: Practical Implementation in J.T.E. Richardson (Ed) *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods for Psychology and the Social Sciences*, Leicester: British Psychological Society Books

Plummer, K. (1983) *Documents of Life: An Introduction to the Literature of a Humanistic Method,* London: Allen and Unwin

Plummer, K. (1990) Herbert Blumer and the Life History Tradition, *Symbolic Interaction* 13:2 125-144

Plummer, K. (1995) *Telling Sexual Stories: Power, Change and Social Worlds,* London: Routledge

Polkinghorne, D.E. (1995) Narrative Configuration in Qualitative Analysis in J.A. Hatch and R. Wisniewski (Eds) *Life history and Narrative,* London: Falmer Press

Powch, I.G. (1994) Wilderness Therapy: What Makes it Empowering for Women? in E. Cole, E. Erdman and E.D. Rothblum (Eds) *Wilderness Therapy for Women: The Power of Adventure*, New York: Haworth Press

Powney, J. and Watts, M. (1987) *Interviewing in Educational Research,* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

Priest, S. (1990) The Adventure Experience Paradigm in J.C. Miles and S. Priest (Eds) *Adventure Education,* State College, PA: Venture Publishing, Inc.

Priest, S (1992) Research in Outdoor Education: Individual and Personal Growth, *Proceedings of the First Annual Research Symposium of the Council for Education in the Outdoors* 8-19

Priest, S. (1993) A New Model for Risk Taking, *The Journal of Experiential Education* 16:1 50-53

Priest, S. (1999) The Semantics of Adventure Programming in J.C. Miles and S. Priest (Eds) *Adventure Programming*, State College, Pennsylvania: Venture Publishing

Progen, J. (1972) Man, Nature and Sport in E.W. Gerber (Ed) *Sport and the Body,* Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger

Reason, P. and Rowan, J. (1981) Issues of Validity in New Paradigm Research in P. Reason and J. Rowan (Eds) *Human Inquiry. A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research,* Chichester: John Wiley and Sons

Reason, P. and Rowan, J. (Eds) (1981) *Human inquiry. A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research,* Chichester: John Wiley and Sons

Reay, D. (1996) Insider Perspectives or Stealing the Words out of Women's Mouths: Interpretation in the Research Process *Feminist Review* 53:Summer 57-73

Reinharz, S. (1992) *Feminist Methods in Social Research,* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Reinharz, S. (1994) Feminist Biography: The Pains, the Joys, the Dilemmas in A. Lieblich and R. Josselson (Eds) *Exploring Identity and Gender: The Narrative Study of Lives*, London: Sage

Renold, E. (1997) 'All They've Got on Their Brains is Football': Sport, Masculinity and the Gendered Practices of Playground Relations, *Sport, Education and Society* 2:1 5-23

Ribbens, J. (1989) Interviewing - an "Unnatural Situation"?, *Women's Studies International Forum* 12:6 579-592

Richards, K. (1999) Outdoor Adventure and Eating Disorders: A Personal Perspective to Research, *Horizons* 3 23-25

Richardson, L. (1990) *Writing Strategies: Reaching Diverse Audiences,* Qualitative Research Methods Series 21 London: Sage

Richardson, L. (1992) Trash on the corner: Ethics and Technography, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 21 103-119

Ricouer, P. (1991) *From Text to Action*, London: Athlone Press

Riessman, C.K. (1993) *Narrative Analysis,* London: Sage

Roberts, N.S. and Winiarczyk, E.J. (1996) Women in Experiential Education Speak Out: An Anthology of Personal Stories Across Cultures in K. Warren (Ed) *Women's Voices in Experiential Education*, Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt

Robertson, R.D. (1986) The meaning of Natural Sports: Philosophical Dimensions of Outdoor Adventure Activities in Trends and Developments in Physical Education *Proceedings of the VIII Commonwealth and International Conference on Sport, Physical Education, Dance, Recreation and Health,* E & F.N. Spon Ltd

Robertson, J. (1999) Writing and Re-Writing the Self: An 'Ex-Bulimic/Woman/ Researcher' Researching with 'Bulimics', *Auto/Biography* Vol VII 1 and 2 69-76

Robinson, G.O. (1975) *The Forest Service,* Baltimore, MD: Resources for the Future

Robinson, D. (1992) A Descriptive Model of Enduring Risk Recreation Involvement, *Journal of Leisure Research* 24:1 52-63

Rowan, J. and Reason, P. (1981) On Making Sense in P. Reason and J. Rowan (Eds) *Human Inquiry: A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research,* Chichester: John Wiley and Sons

Rowland, G.L., Franken, R.E. and Harrison, K. (1986) Sensation Seeking and Participation in Sporting Activities, *Journal of Sport Psychology* 8 212-220

Ruderman, M.N., Kram, K. and Ohlott, P. (1996) *The Realities of Management Promotion,* Greensboro, North Carolina: Center for Creative Leadership

Rudestam, K.E. (1997) Motivation and Disinhibition in High Risk Sports: Sensation Seeking and Self-Efficacy, *Journal of Research in Personality* 31 355-374

Scherl, L.M. (1989) Self in Wilderness: Understanding the Psychological Benefits of Individual-Wilderness Interaction Through Self-Control, *Leisure Sciences* 11 123-135

Scott, D. (1996) Making Judgements about Educational Research in D. Scott and R. Usher (Eds*) Understanding Educational Research,* London: Routledge

Scott, D. (1998) Fragments of a Life: Recursive Dilemmas in M. Erben (Ed) *Biography and Education,* London: Falmer Press

Scott, D. and Usher, R. (Eds) (1996) *Understanding Educational Research,* London: Routledge

Scott, S. (1985) Feminist Research and Qualitative Methods: A Discussion of Some of the Issues in R. Burgess (Ed) *Issues in Educational Research: Qualitative Methods*, London: Falmer Press

Scraton, S. (1992) *Shaping up to Womanhood,* Milton Keynes: Open University Press

Scraton, S. (1994) The Changing World of Women and Leisure: Feminism, 'Postfeminism' and Leisure, *Leisure Studies* 00 249-261

Scraton, S. and Flintoff, A. (1992) Feminist Research and Physical Education in A.C. Sparkes (Ed) *Research in Physical Education and Sport: Exploring Alternative Visions*, London: Falmer Press

Scraton, S. and Watson, B. (1998) Gendered Cities: Women and Public Leisure Space in the 'Postmodern City', *Leisure Studies* 17 123-137

Shaw, S. (1994) Gender, Leisure and Constraint: Towards a Framework for the Analysis of Women's Leisure, *Journal of Leisure Research* 26 8-22

Sheridan, D. (1993) Writing to the Archive: Mass-Observation as Autobiography, *Sociology* 27:1 27-40

Shreyer, R., White, R. and McCool, S. (1978) Common Attributes Uncommonly Exercised, *Journal of Physical Education and Recreation* 49:4 36-38

Silverman, D. (1993) *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction,* London: Sage.

Slanger, E. and Rudestam, K.E. (1997) Motivation and Disinhibition in High Risk Sports: Sensation Seeking and Self-Efficacy, *Journal of Research in Personality* 31 355-374

Smith, J. (1993) *After the Demise of Empiricism: The Problem of judging Social and Educational Inquiry*, Norwood, NJ: Ablex

Smith, R.E., Johnson J.H. and Sarason, I.G. (1978) Life Change, the Sensation Seeking Motive and Psychological Distress, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 46 348-349

Snyder, E.E. and Spreitzer, E. (1978) *Social Aspects of Sport,* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall

Snyder, E.E. and Spreitzer, E. (1983) Correlates of Participation in Adult Recreational Sports, *Journal of Leisure Research* 15:1 27-38

Social Trends (2000) *Social Trends 30*, London: The Stationery Office

Sparkes, A.C. (1992) The Paradigms Debate in A.C. Sparkes (Ed) *Research in Physical Education and Sport: Exploring Alternative Vision,* London: Falmer Press

Sparkes, A.C. (1994) Life Histories and the Issue of Voice: Reflections on an Emerging Relationship, *Qualitative Studies in Education* 7:2 165-183

Sparkes, A.C. (1995) Writing People: Reflections on the Dual Crises of Representation and Legitimation in Qualitative Inquiry, *Quest* 47 158-195

Sparkes, A.C. (1998) Validity in Qualitative Inquiry and the Problem of Criteria: Implications for Sport Psychology, *The Sport Psychologist* 12 363-386

Sparkes, A.C. (1999) Burning the Book: A Biographical Study of a Pedagogically Inspired Identity Crisis in Physical Education, *European Physical Education Review* 5:2 135-152

Sparkes, A.C. and Templin, T.J. (1992) Life Histories and Physical Education Teachers: Exploring the Meanings of Marginality in A.C. Sparkes (Ed) *Research in Physical Education and Sport: Exploring Alternative Vision,* London: Falmer Press

Spradley, J.P. (1979) *The Ethnographic Interview,* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston

Spreitzer, E. and Snyder, E.E. (1976) Socialization into Sport: An Exploratory Path Analysis, *The Research Quarterly* 47:2 238-245

Spreitzer, E. and Snyder, E.E. (1983) Correlates of Participation in Adult Recreational Sports, *Journal of Leisure Research* 15:1 27-38

Stacey, J. (1988) Can There be a Feminist Ethnography?, *Women's Studies International Forum* 11 21-27

Stake, R.E. (1995) *The Art of Case Study Research,* London: Sage Publications

Stanley, L. and Wise, S. (1993) *Breaking Out Again,* London: Routledge

Stanton, H.E. (1976) Hypnosis and Encounter Group Volunteers: A Validational Study of the Sensation-Seeking Scale, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 44 692

Stebbins, R.A. (1982) Serious Leisure: A Conceptual Statement, *Pacific Sociological Review* 25 251-272

Stebbins, R.A. (1992) *Amateurs, Professionals and Serious Leisure,* Montreal, Canada: McGill Queens University Press

Steinem, G. (1992) *Revolution from Within: A Book of Self-Esteem,* Boston: Little, Brown and Company

Stevenson, C.L. (1990) The Early Careers of International Athletes, *Sociology of Sport Journal* 7 238-253

Stewart, C.H. and Hemsley, D.R. (1984) Personality Factors in the Taking of Criminal Risks, *Personality and Individual Differences* 5 119-122

Stranger, M. (1999) The Aesthetics of Risk. A Study of Surfing, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 34:3 265-276

Strauss, A.L. and Corbin, J. (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Thompson, P. (1981) Life Histories and the Analysis of Social Change in D. Bertaux (Ed) *Biography and Society: the Life History Approach in the Social Sciences,* London: Sage

Thompson, S. (1999) The Game Begins at Home. Women's Labor in the Service of Sport in J. Coakley and P. Donnelly (Eds) *Inside Sports,* New York: Routledge

Tinsley, H.E. and Tinsley, D.J. (1986) A Theory of the Attributes, Benefits and Causes of Leisure Experience, *Leisure Sciences* 8 1-45

Torkildsen, G. (1992) *Leisure and Recreation Management,* London: E & FN Spon

Turner, R.H. (1972) Passages, margins, and Poverty: Religious Communitas, *Worship* 46 390-412

Turner, R.H. (1976) The Real Self: from Institution to Impulse, *American Journal of Sociology* 81 989-1016

Twist, H. (1992) *Effective Interviewing,* London: Blackstone Press

Ulrich, R. (1993) Biophilia, Biophobia, and Natural Landscapes in S.R. Kellert and E.O. Wilson (Eds) *The Biophilia Hypothesis*, Washington, DC: Island Press

Usher, R. (1998) The Story of the Self: Education, Experience and the Autobiography in M. Erben (Ed) *Biography and Education,* London: Falmer Press

Van Maanen, M. (1990) *Researching Lived Experience,* State University of New York Press

Vanreusel, B., Renson, R., Beunen, G., Claessens, A., Lefevre, J., Lysens, R. and Vanden Eynde, B. (1997) A Longitudinal Study of Youth Sport Participation and Adherence to Sport in Adulthood, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 32:4 373-387

Varpalotai, A. (1987) The Hidden Curriculm in Leisure: An Analysis of a Girls' Sport Subculture, *Women's Studies International Forum* 10:4 411-422

Waddington, I. (1998) Gender Stereotyping and Physical Education, *European Physical Education Review* 4:1 34-46

Walker, R. (1985) *Doing Research: A Handbook for Teachers,* London: Methuen

Wankel, L. (1997) The Social Psychology of Physical Activity in J. Curtis and S. Russell (Eds) *Physical Activity in Human Experience: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics

Warren, K. (1985) Women's Outdoor Adventures: Myth and Reality, *Journal of Experiential Education* 8:2 10-14

Warren, K. (1996) Women's Outdoor Adventures: Myth and Reality in K. Warren (Ed) *Women's Voices in Experiential Education,* Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt

Wearing, B. (1990) Beyond the Ideology of Motherhood: Leisure as Resistance, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* 26:1 36-58

Webster, M. and Sobieszek, B. (1974) *Sources of Self-Evaluation,* New York: John Wiley and Sons

Weiler, K. (1992) Remembering and Representing Life Choices: a Critical Perspective on Teachers' Oral History Narratives, *Qualitative Studies in Education* 5:1 39-50

Weisler, A. and McCall, R.B. (1976) Exploration and Play: Resume and Redirection, *American Psychologist* 31 492-508

Weiss, M.R. and Knoppers, A. (1982) The Influence of Socialising Agents on Female Intercollegiate Volleyball Players, *Journal of Sport Psychology* 4 267-279

Wheaton, B. (1999) "Just Do It": Consumption, Commitment and Identity in the Windsurfing Subculture, *Sociology of Sport Journal* 17 275-294

Whelan, W. (1991) *Nature Tourism,* Washington, DC: Island Press

White, A. and Coakley, J. (1986) *Making Decisions*, London: Sports Council, Greater London and South East Region

White, P. and Curtis, J. (1990) English-French Canadian Differences in Types of Sport Participation: A Test of the School Socialization Explanation, *Sociology of Sport Journal* 7 347-369

Whitson, D. (1994) The Embodiment of Gender: Discipline, Domination and Empowerment in S. Birrell and C. Cole (Eds) *Women, Sport and Culture*, Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics

Widdekind, L. (1995) *Human Powered Outdoor Recreation: State of the Industry Report*, Washington DC: The Outdoor Recreation Coalition of America

Wimbush, E. (1986) *Women, Leisure and Well-Being,* Report to Health Promotions Research Trust, Edinburgh: Centre for Leisure Research

Wimbush, E. (1988) Mothers Meeting in E. Wimbush and M. Talbot (Eds) *Relative Freedoms,* Milton Keynes: Open University Press

Wimbush, E. and Talbot, M. (Eds) (1988) *Relative Freedoms,* Milton Keynes: Open University Press

Wise, S. (1987) A Framework for Discussing Ethical Issues in Feminist Research: A Review of the Literature in *Writing Feminist Biography 2: Using life histories* Studies in Sexual Politics No. 19. Department of Sociology, University of Manchester

Witt, P.A. and Ellis, G.D. (1985) Conceptualizing Leisure: Making the Abstract Concrete in T.L. Goodale and P.A. Witt (Eds) *Recreation and Leisure: Issues in an Era of Change,* London: E. & F.N. Spon

Woods, P. (1985) Conversations with Teachers: Some Aspects of Life-History Method, *British Educational Research Journal* 11:1 13-25

Wright, J. and Dewar, A. (1997) On Pleasure and Pain: Women Speak Out About Physical Activity in G. Clarke and B. Humberstone (Eds) *Researching Women and Sport*, London: Macmillan Press

Yerkes, R. and Miranda, W. (1985) Women Outdoors: Who Are They?, *Parks and Recreation* 20:3 48-51, 95

Yoesting, D.R. and Burkhead D.L. (1973) Significance of Childhood Recreation Experience on Adult Leisure Behaviour: an Exploratory Analysis, *Journal of Leisure Research* 5 25-36

Young, I.M. (1990) Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Female Body Comportment, Motility and Spatiality in I.M. Young *Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory,* Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press

Young, R.A. and Crandall, R. (1984) Wilderness Use and Self-Actualisation, *Journal of Leisure Research* 16 146-160

Zuckerman, M. (1979) *Sensation Seeking: Beyond the Optimal Level of Arousal,* Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates