PICTURE PERFECT? GAZING INTO GIRLS' HEALTH, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY,
AND NUTRITION THROUGH PHOTOVOICE

by

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Dedication

This project is dedicated to the girls and young women who took part in it, to all of the incredible women I've been lucky enough to learn from, and my Mom, who taught me a little something about feminism, whether she intended to or not.

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Abstract

Adolescent girls are faced with challenges and contradictions regarding their health. They face pressure to be perceived as feminine and pretty, but also athletic, and yet are criticized for being perceived as too sporty or muscular, and equally so for being perceived as lazy or overweight. These complex issues, perpetuated through media and discourses of obesity and healthism, relate to the health of girls and young women, and more specifically, their physical activity and nutrition. Using a feminist poststructural approach and photovoice methodology, the purpose of this study is to comprehensively explore adolescent girls' and young women's physical activity and nutrition, through exploration of how their perceptions contend with social and cultural relations, how those perceptions intersect with gender, and how the body is constructed in those contexts.

Photovoice methodology allows researchers to see through the eyes of their participants, enables community reflection, promotes critical dialogue, and sparks change. The participatory photovoice process involved conducting a training workshop, which was followed by two-week periods to collect photos, and two follow up analysis sessions. The participatory process of analysis engaged the participants (n=7, ages 13-26) through selection of impactful photos; contextualization, or critically discussing them; and codifying, or engaging in participatory thematic analysis.

The photovoice process resulted in three themes identified with participants: First, *(Breaking) Stereotypes,* in which the participants identified how they are influenced by common gender norms, and the resultant conflicts and contradictions they negotiate; Second, the importance of *Emotional Safety*, or the contexts and circumstances in which girls and young women feel safe, confident, and comfortable; Finally, *Being Outside in Nature* emerged as significant and meaningful for the participants. Each theme is related to health, physical activity, and nutrition, and supported by quotations and photographs.

This project addresses several gaps in the literature and transcends traditional research methodologies using a participatory and visual health promotion approach. This work suggests that being outside in nature provides important context for girls and young women to feel emotionally safe such that they may engage in the complex navigation of competing discourses surrounding their health, nutrition, and physical activity.

List of Abbreviations Used

PA: Physical activity
PE: Physical education
SFNP: School Food and Nutrition Policy
SES: socioeconomic status
BMI: Body Mass Index
PAR: participatory action research

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When I began my doctoral studies, I had no idea I would get the opportunity to do something creative. I have been fortunate to work with many people who have made this project possible.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Adolescent girls are faced with numerous challenges, contradictions, and double-standards in relation to their bodies. They face pressures to be perceived as feminine, pretty, and thin, but also athletic, and yet are criticized for being perceived as too sporty or muscular, and equally so for being perceived as lazy or overweight (Azzarito, Solmon, & Harrison, 2006; Cockburn & Clarke, 2002; Evans, 2006; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). Similarly, media promotes unrealistically thin body ideals for girls and young women, but also permits them to be targeted by the food industry; these complex issues, perpetuated through discourses of obesity and healthism, relate to the health and well-being of girls and young women, and more specifically, their physical activity (PA) and nutrition (Brown & Witherspoon, 2002; Escobar-Chaves & Anderson, 2008; Sailors, Teetzel, & Weaving, 2012; Strasburger, Jordan, & Donnerstein, 2010). In this study, I used a feminist poststructural approach and photovoice methodology to comprehensively explore adolescent girls' PA and nutrition in Halifax, NS, Canada by exploring how their perceptions and constructions of their bodies take up and contend with social, political, and cultural relations, and how gender intersects with their perceptions.

Perspective of the Researcher

As this research took place as part of the Interdisciplinary PhD program at Dalhousie University, I incorporated elements of health promotion, leisure and recreation, and gender and women's studies, among other disciplines, though this research will primarily be grounded in health promotion, including social and structural determinants of health and population health approaches. The social determinants of health examine societal factors that shape health inequities, and the forces that shape those societal factors, including early life, education, gender, housing, and income

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distribution (Raphael, 2008). The social determinants of health are generally regarded not as a theory or model, but as a broader underlying way of understanding health and health inequities in the disciplines of health promotion and population health.

The structure of public health has been predominately reactive: we have responded to issues as necessary, historically due to disease outbreaks, and have viewed health as a responsibility, reliant on individual autonomy and choice (Fierlbeck, 2011). In the mid 1800s, however, the importance of environmental influences on health was established, and in the 1970s, Thomas McKeown determined that improvements in living conditions, not medical care, were responsible for the then current significant increase in lifespan (Evans, 2008; Fierlbeck, 2011; Raphael, 2008). Data indicate that there is a relationship between health and income; however, there are significant differences in health outcomes across countries with similar incomes, indicating wealth alone is not responsible for the health of populations, but how resources are distributed among its members (Evans, 2008; Fierlbeck, 2011).

Though Canada was a leader in health promotion in the 1970s and 1980s, such progress has slowed in recent years. This lack of progress can be partially attributed to political barriers, competing interests, and a need for shifting values from a biomedical to more sociocultural interpretation of health. The biomedical approach to health remains dominant, likely because it is relatively easy to 'prove' a certain pathogen causes a disease, or that a specific drug can combat said disease, while in population health, researchers need to prove what might happen in the absence or the advent of a program or policy, and randomized controlled trials are not plausible (Alvaro et al., 2011; Fierlbeck, 2011; McMillan & Nagpal, 2007). Through this research, I have attempted to advance the application of health promotion research approaches to health issues facing adolescent

girls and young women, by primarily on the social determinant of health of gender, though aspects of food, education, and social exclusion, among others, are considered.

As mentioned, adolescent girls face complicated challenges regarding their bodies, health, PA, and nutrition. My previous work includes a scoping review exploring gender norms in relation to girls' PA and nutrition, which highlighted several themes of relevance. These include the complex relationships experienced by girls with PA, the literature's focus on weight control rather than nutrition, the impact of body image and body-centered discourse, and the influence of social institutions and environments (Spencer, Rehman, & Kirk, 2015). The review also identified gaps in the literature including a lack of focus on older adolescent girls, inclusion of ecological approaches, and of consideration of PA and nutrition as intertwined or clustered behaviours (Spencer et al., 2015). Those gaps, and other factors including the school environment, social influences, and the media are explored in the following chapters, concluding that current discourses regarding obesity, dieting, food, and PA present paradoxes that problematize the bodies of young women, highlighting the necessity to shift toward research and practice that engages, empowers, and supports adolescent girls' health.

Socially, politically, and culturally, we are experiencing changes in regard to how gender is considered. Locally, several recent events have drawn attention to the way women, and their bodies, are treated in society. In 2013, the death of Rehtaeh Parsons was attributed to bullying following the distribution of photos of a group sexual assault, raising legal issues related to sexual assault and cyber bullying (Rehteah Parsons Society, 2017). In 2014, the murder of Loretta Saunders, a young Inuk woman, drew attention to issues of missing and murdered Aboriginal women (CBC News, 2017). Also, recently, the Dal Dentistry social media scandal, involving a Facebook group making misogynistic

comments about their women classmates, highlighted the issues of misogyny and rape culture in the academic environment (CTV News, 2016). These events, coupled with the international #MeToo movement have resulted in public outcry in relation to pervasive misogyny and patriarchy (Guerra, 2017). More broadly, these events also call into question what is known about girls and women, and brings attention, once again, to our bodies, though potentially in ways which are facilitating positive shifts in our society. The social, political, and cultural discourse around women's bodies in society is shifting, and these events and disruptions are creating an opportunity, or a window of interest, where research regarding gender, health, and the bodies of girls and women is both timely and necessary, particularly in Nova Scotia.

Defining 'Women' and 'Girls'

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) deems sex and gender to be so important to health that it requires all applicants to integrate the concepts into research designs and answer mandatory questions about how they do so (Government of Canada, 2006). According to CIHR, sex is defined as biological, and is associated with physical, physiological, genetic, hormonal, and reproductive attributes, while gender refers to socially and historically constructed roles, expressions, and identities (Government of Canada, 2006). A limit of the CIHR definitions is that both are typically only represented as a binary (male/female, woman/man, boy/girl), though they acknowledge there is variation in this, and that sex and gender are interrelated and interconnected to other social determinants of health (Government of Canada, 2006). Below, challenges regarding these categories are explored, including my own perspective.

Defining 'women' as a category raises challenges. Rigid categories, particularly those that are typically seen as part of a binary, or a spectrum, tend to be homogenizing

and essentializing, erasing difference and ignoring those who fall outside of norms. Butler (2006) wrote extensively on the category of woman, questioning its entire existence. As noted, while it is commonly agreed that 'sex' is physiological, and 'gender' is constructed, Butler (2006) insists that both are socially and historically constructed. Referring to Foucault (whose work will be discussed in the following chapters), Butler (2006) critiques that the subject of feminism is "discursively constituted by the very political system that is supposed to facilitate its emancipation" (p. 3) and that the category of women is "produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought" (p. 4). Butler draws on the premises of intersectionality, a perspective of feminism that acknowledges and analyses the forces of multiple and overlapping forms of oppression (Combahee River Collective, 1977; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). In critiquing the category of women, Butler notes it ignores the intersections of gender, class, race, and other forms of oppression, and presumes that patriarchy influences everyone equally, arguing that gender is a performance (Butler, 2006).

Of course, eliminating the category of women would complicate feminism significantly, and as such, other feminists have explored ways to defend its existence. In her paper defending the category of women, for example, Gunnarson (2011) acknowledges the problems with defining women but notes the basis for feminism being that "women are oppressed/exploited/ discriminated/excluded *by virtue of their being women*" (p. 24). Gunnarson (2011) discusses Butler's critique of the category but argues that the category can exist without essentialism or homogenization by using ideas of abstraction as a potential solution, recognizing that people are composites of many elements, and that we can talk about them without assuming that 'woman' means only one, fixed thing. Similarly, in exploring intersectionality, Garry (2011) suggests what she

calls family resemblance theory, stating that although there may be no specific element, property, or interest that all women would have in common, we can still identify women based on sets of overlapping, characteristics that become clear in social contexts. This is similar to the way that in a large family, for example, any two individual members may look or seem nothing alike, but when taken as part of the larger group bear enough resemblance that they can be identified as part of that group (Garry, 2011).

While I appreciate the perspective of Butler, and the issues that arise when we categorize women, my approach is aligned with Gunnarson and Garry, in that I think a category of women is necessary (otherwise, what are we fighting for, as feminists?). While greater detail regarding how feminism and feminist poststructuralism are incorporated into this work is found in the chapters to come, for the purpose of this thesis, I use the terms woman and women throughout. I also use the term 'girls' to describe women who are also children and youth. The ideas of abstraction (Gunnarson, 2011) and family resemblance theory (Garry, 2011) resonate with me, and I think, although it is impossible to define women based on any specific quality or set of characteristics, as a group, women have enough in common (including being historically disadvantaged by patriarchy) that the category should remain. I therefore use the terms women and girls, and define them only as abstracts, and/or as those who wish to self-identify in that way. I avoid language such as 'female' given its association with biology and physiology, as this project is focused on gender, gender norms, and gendered constructions.

A Brief Overview of Women's Bodies and Health through History

In order to understand the current social and political discourse around women's health and their bodies, it is important to understand their treatment through history. Women's bodies have been historically politicized; as early as the times of Greek

philosophers, women were portrayed as small, weak, and frail, limiting their abilities to engage in behaviours like PA (Weitz, 2002). Early Christianity contended that women posed only moral danger to men, setting the stage for their persistent historical portrayal as the temptress, driven only by sexual desire, not intelligent enough to act otherwise (Weitz, 2002). Women are therefore objectified and treated as property, with heteronormative laws in the 1700s actually entitling husbands to beat their wives; our weakness and frailty was used as justification for laws to 'protect' us, and while the early 1900s saw perhaps well-intended laws to protect women's work hours and mandate breaks, this only reinforced notions of frailty (Weitz, 2002). It was not until the 1960s that it was legally declared in the US that men cannot beat their wives, and not until the 80s North American courts declare husbands cannot rape their wives, though marital rape persists and is rarely prosecuted (Weitz, 2002). How women's bodies have been politicized and treated through time connect to how our bodies are managed and controlled today, which particularly relates to health, body image, nutrition, and PA.

Once rights to vote and seek education were established, second-wave feminism, introduced above in mentioning intersectionality, began in the 1970s/80s. This new wave of feminism draws attention to the historically white, middle-upper class tendencies of feminism to date, and raises issues of overlapping oppressions and identity politics through feminists like Audre Lorde and Kimberle Crenshaw (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Lorde, 1979; Weitz, 2002). Unfortunately, this also results in women criticizing one another, and enhances pressures on their bodies to be not only thin, now, but muscular as well (Weitz, 2002). The 1990s brought a new trend of feminists focusing on body politics, with women like Butler, Bordo, Duncan, Grisz, and Adelson drawing attention to previous mind-body dualism trends (Adelson, 1993; Butler, 1993; Duncan, 1994;

Grosz, 1994; Lloyd, 2007). Through history, the significance of women's bodies, and discourse relating to thinness and fitness (and therefore nutrition and PA) is evident.

The body-politic feminist writings of the 1990s contributed to the basis of this project. Butler furthered her notions of performativity introduced above, contending that the body is regulated by power and discourse, introducing "abject" or excluded bodies, noting certain bodies are valued more than others (Butler, 1993; Lloyd, 2007). Duncan (1994) noted the duplicity of a woman's body, the double-standards and contradictory expectations, and discussed the Foucauldian concept of the panopticon, or evaluative gaze, which is further elaborated upon in the upcoming chapters. The notable work of Bordo will also be further discussed in the following chapters; her work *Unbearable Weight*, originally published in 1993, was updated in 2003, noting in the preface that "…sexy booty is okay, apparently, only if it's high and hard, and if other body-parts are held firmly in check" (Bordo, 2003, p. xxii). This quote, referring specifically to Jennifer Lopez and Beyoncé, who claim to be feminists, comfortable in their bodies, but train daily, diet, and certainly have modified images illustrates the "contradictory demands of contemporary femininity" (Bordo, 2003, p.173). The 1990s feminist writings on the body lead to the works of the authors presented in the above-mentioned scoping-review, and the themes, trends, and gaps noted (Spencer, Rehman, & Kirk, 2015).

Global Context: Sustainable Development Goals

In 2000, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be attained by 2015, one of which was to promote gender equality and empower women (World Health Organization, 2015). While some progress was made, the MDGs were criticized for using aggregate data and therefore down-playing within-country inequities, focusing on specific diseases, meaning cross-cutting

approaches were overlooked, and focusing on health outcomes rather than reorienting health systems (World Health Organization, 2015). As a result, in September 2015 the UN adopted a new agenda, focused on sustainability by 2030; these 17 new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), one of which is to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" translate to 169 targets across economic, social, and environmental dimensions, focusing on integration and intersectoral coordination (World Health Organization, 2015).

The SDGs cite inequalities in education and employment as depriving women of basic rights, violating their human rights, and contributing to negative health consequences at a societal level (World Health Organization, 2015). They state that inequality occurs through violence, mistreatment, power differences, differing access to health services, and societies and laws that perpetuate the subjugation of women (World Health Organization, 2015). The right to health is emphasized by the SDGs, and gender equity has an expanded focus throughout the goals, including in calls for intersectoral action and the assertion that gender should be addressed as part of its own goal, but also as part of the other goals, including that of ensuring healthy lives and well-being for all (World Health Organization, 2015). These goals relate to global action in PA and nutrition as well, with a background document for Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health identifying PA as an emerging priority, nutrition as an area for necessary intervention, and the need for policy and environmental action (Temmerman et al., 2015). Current political action in nutrition and PA is further discussed at the beginning of Chapter 2. The calls for collaboration and intersectoral coordination are closely connected to the requirement for comprehensive interventions,

which are briefly introduced below, and more thoroughly described in the following literature review chapter.

Comprehensive Interventions

Complex problems require complex solutions, and this is well demonstrated in the literature (Kreuter et al., 2004; Signal et al., 2013; Ward et al., 2011). While PA and nutrition have traditionally been considered individual responsibility, the population health perspective recognizes that broader factors, contribute to individual health (Swinburn, Egger, & Raza, 1999). A review of policies concluded that the most effective interventions were those that targeted not only one element of behaviour, but were multicomponent (Pate et al., 2011). Similarly, a local study that determined the Annapolis Valley Health Promoting Schools approach was more effective than diet-only interventions concluded that multifaceted programs have the greatest impact (Veugelers & Fitzgerald, 2005). An international review of youth PA and diet programs also found that nutrition interventions alone had limited impact, while those with a multifaceted approach including elements of PA and self-esteem showed more significant results (Williams et al., 2013). That review also indicated that beyond being multifaceted, policies should also target multiple levels, for example, the school, home, and community (Williams et al., 2013).

A Canadian review of school PA policy similarly suggested programs go beyond PA to incorporate other behaviours for disease prevention (Lagarde & LeBlanc, 2010). Similarly, a recent scoping review of school-based interventions noted more interventions targeting either PA or nutrition, than targeting both (Robinson, Berg, & Gleddie, 2018). The need for comprehensive interventions to support nutrition and PA, and prevent overweight and obesity, is well established (Foltz et al., 2012; Mâsse, Naiman, & Naylor,

2013; Taylor et al., 2010). Nutrition, PA, and sedentary behaviours are, importantly, not independent of one another; the clustering, or combination, and interrelatedness of health behaviours is important due to their potential synergistic influence on disease risk, though they require greater consideration through research (Cameron et al., 2011; Elsenburg, Corpeleijn, van Sluijs, & Atkin, 2014; Gubbels et al., 2012; Sabbe, Bourdeaudhuij, Legiest, & Maes, 2008; Seghers & Rutten, 2010; Turner, Dwyer, Edwards, & Allison, 2011).

In addition to the necessity for policies and programs to be multifaceted, they need to be collaborative. Several studies conclude that collaboration is necessary in order to successfully apply policy to facilitate child and youth health (Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2013; Mckenna, 2003; Sallis, Bauman, & Pratt, 1998; Williams et al., 2013). This collaboration could, and should, occur in many ways. Collaboration is required between policy makers and policy users, for instance, to ensure a policy is designed in a way that it would be interpreted as both feasible and useful; teachers, for example, should be included in the design of school-based policies to facilitate effective implementation. Policies also need to include collaboration from government, both across levels (for example, federally, provincially, and municipally), and across sectors. A recent review identified achieving 'health in all policies' and partnering with the private sector as current critical challenges in public health (Kumanyika, 2014). An active transportation policy designed for students by the Department of Education, for example, is unlikely to be successful without collaboration from the Department of Transportation. The previously referenced Canadian review of school-based policies concluded that a broad range of stakeholders must be considered in order to develop and implement successful policies (Lagarde & LeBlanc, 2010). Further, a framework designed for PA policy

research noted the importance of collaborative research and multidisciplinary teams, in addition to the importance of incorporating ecological approaches (Schmid, Pratt, & Witmer, 2006). Several recent studies and reports also relate the need for comprehensive, multilevel, intersectoral, and collaborative action to the PA and nutrition of adolescent girls and young women (Beauchamp, Puterman, & Lubans, 2018; Federal, Provincial and Territorial Governments, 2018; Krebs et al., 2017; Temmerman et al., 2015; Weaving, 2012).

Study Overview

Research Purpose and Objectives

Broadly, the intended purpose of this study is to comprehensively explore the relationship between gender and adolescent girls' PA and nutrition, in Halifax, NS, Canada, by addressing the following research objectives:

- To explore how girls' perceptions of health, and the associated behaviours such as PA and nutrition, take up and contend with social, political, and cultural contexts.
- To explore how gender intersects with adolescent girls' perceptions of health, with a focus on PA and nutrition.
- To explore how the bodies of girls and young women are produced through the social, political, and cultural influences on health.

Summary of Theoretical Perspectives

This research employs a feminist poststructural approach, theoretically. Feminist theory is focused on women, gender, and political issues of oppression, including combating the patriarchy, or the concept of defining women in relation to some male norm (Hesse-Biber, 2012; Weedon, 1987). Feminist research generally departs from standard scientific methods and takes a political and value-laden stance (Doucet &

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Mauthner, 2006; Hesse-Biber, 2012; Landman, 2006). Poststructuralist theory tends to explore relations between experience, language, subjectivity, and social power (Numer & Gahagan, 2009; Weedon, 1987); it considers the function of structures, how knowledge is produced and reproduced, and the relationships between language, institutions, and power, conceptualizing power not as something to be possessed, but as relational (Barret, 2005; Weedon, 1987). Poststructuralism is often used to expose and explore the production and regulation of social narratives and norms, centering on language and discourse (Barret, 2005; Weedon, 1987).

Feminist and poststructural theories can be combined, as feminist poststructural approaches, which move beyond traditional approaches, recognize research is often confined by discourse, and analyze the production of knowledge (Barret, 2005; Weedon, 1987). Feminist poststructural approaches assume that language allows us to give meaning to the world, and that discourses contribute to perceptions and experiences (Weedon, 1987). Feminist poststructural analysis commonly concerns itself with exploring discursive practices and political discourse as embodied experiences and is thus interested with how discourse maintains power relations, and how it may be challenged (Azzarito et al., 2006; Weedon, 1987). Feminist poststructural approaches emphasize the importance of seeking ways to resist dominant social structures and can be used as a tool to subvert gender discourse, through forcing consideration of context and intersectionality (Azzarito et al., 2006; Azzarito & Solomon, 2005, Weedon, 1987).

Beginning in 1970s/80s, there was an emergent discourse of healthism and fitness, that has led to the now dominant obesity discourse. The dominant discourse on obesity places responsibility on individual choice and blames individuals for not eating well or exercising. Obesity is labeled as a moral failing, and this discourse is negotiated

by girls and young women, by calling attention to their bodies; obesity discourse is then added to complex gendered discourses related to femininity, slenderness, and 'throwing like a girl' (Azzarito, 2012; J. Evans, Evans, Evans, & Evans, 2002; Gerbensky-Kerber, 2011; Mansfield & Rich, 2013; Rich, 2011; Rich & Evans, 2005, 2013). These discourses are institutionalized and perpetuated through schools and the media, for example, where specific ideals and norms around girls' bodies are normalized, leading to the reproduction of inequalities (Azzarito, 2009, 2012; B. Evans, 2006; Rich & Evans, 2005). Discourses of thinness, beauty, femininity, and obesity tend to construct the body in a reductionist and binaried way, where the bodies of girls and young women are shaped by historical and current societal trends. These trends result in conflicting and competing discourses reflective of social and political movements that construct the body in a way where those who do not fit the dominant discourse can be silenced, marginalized, or oppressed (Azzarito, 2010, 2012; Azzarito & Sterling, 2010; Mansfield & Rich, 2013).

Community Connection: Girls Soar

This project begins with a local community connection as an entry point. Girls Soar is an initiative led by the regional Physical Activity Consultant through the Department of Communities, Culture, and Heritage (Girls Soar, 2018). The goal of Girls Soar is to is facilitate and advocate for an environment that is supportive of girls and young women to be physically active, through celebration, motivation, and education. The initiative follows objectives related to building knowledge and skills in those influencing PA in girls and young women, creating a network that contributes to a supportive environment, and growing the number of quality opportunities for girls and young women to engage in PA. As a member of the Girls Soar Advisory Committee, I

was provided with an entrance point to the broader system supporting girls' health locally.

Brief Overview of Methodology

I employed photovoice as the primary methodology in this study, a participatory method used to engage participants actively through photo-taking (Wang & Burris, 1997). Based on theories of education for critical consciousness, feminist thought, and participatory approaches, photovoice is used to enable reflection, promote critical dialogue, and reach decision makers (Wang, 1999; Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang, Yi, Tao, & Carovano, 1998). Photovoice is often used to engage women and youth, and is frequently applied in studies concerning health, making it particularly appropriate for this study (Wang, 1999, 2006). I followed the nine-step process described by Wang (2006), with the first two steps including population and recruitment, Step 3 through Step 7 focusing on data collection, Step 8 involving the participatory analysis process, and the final step implementing knowledge translation.

For this study, participants were recruited purposefully by targeting an existing group of adolescent girls, identified by a Girls Soar survey as having a focus relating to health, leadership, and gender issues. The photovoice process, outlined in detail in Chapter 4, involved conducting a workshop to explain the study, ethics, and camera use, and engage girls in the subject matter. Following time for taking photos, the participatory process of analysis engaged girls in discussion of their photos with a critical lens through selecting, contextualizing, and codifying, using the SHOWeD method (detailed in Chapter 4) (Wang, 2006; Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang et al., 1998). Knowledge translation also involved a participatory component, with the girls sharing their photos publicly at a gallery-style event.

Significance

      This project addresses several gaps in the literature, and as such, it makes a significant contribution to the areas of addressing health in older adolescent girls, comprehensively, considering nutrition and PA as clustered behaviours influenced by social and political contexts. Using a health promotion lens, and feminist poststructural approach, in conjunction with the participatory photovoice method further contributes to the uniqueness of this work. With the participatory focus of this study, there is also real-world applicability, offering the opportunity for adolescent girls to creatively engage with each other and other stakeholders, potentially facilitating future change to their environments. Further the Girls Soar initiative is currently in its last year of a 3-year plan, making this study timely in that it can contribute to the ongoing development and planning of local population interventions.

      Current literature, as will be outlined below and in the following chapters, tends to focus on individual girls and their experiences with individual behaviours. While these studies tell us a great deal about how girls experience health and health behaviours, little research examines the context, or the political and social structures that perpetuate and reinforce these norms. The current lack of comprehensive approaches addressing the specific concerns of older adolescent girls presents unique challenges and opportunities for health and gender interventions and research. As mentioned, recent local events, such as the Rehtaeh Parsons and Loretta Saunders cases, and the Dal dentistry social media scandal, have created local opportunities to challenge misogyny and consider how society contributes to the health of women and girls. I believe this points to the need for local gender and health research and presented me with a timely opportunity. Rather than discourses of healthism, obesity, and dieting, we need to shift away from a public health

discourse that problematizes that bodies of young women. Adolescent girls face complex

negotiations related to gender and behaviours such as PA and nutrition. This study

addresses these issues through using a participatory and feminist poststructural approach

to explore how adolescent girls' perceptions of health, with a focus on PA and nutrition,

and the construction of their bodies, take up and contend with social, political, and

cultural contexts.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

I began reviewing the literature for this study by conducting a scoping review that was published in the *International Journal of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity* (Spencer, Rehman, & Kirk, 2015). That review, using the framework of Arksey and O'Malley, summarized the current scope of the literature on how we understand gender norms in relation to PA and nutrition in adolescent girls (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Spencer et al., 2015). The review highlighted five major themes from the literature: First, girls' relationships with PA are complex; they perceive pressure to be both feminine and athletic, requiring complex gender negotiations (Spencer et al., 2015). Second, there is a focus in the literature on dieting or unhealthy weight control practices rather than on nutrition (Spencer et al., 2015). Studies noted unhealthy weight-control behaviours are common among young girls and relate to body image. Third, the literature indicates that girls are concerned about appearance and how others, especially their peers, may perceive them, and adjust behaviours accordingly (Spencer et al., 2015). Fourth, many studies discussed body image and feminine body ideals, noting the impact of body-centered discourse (Spencer et al., 2015). Finally, studies highlighted the importance of social influences, institutions, and environments, noting the value of a fun environment, impact of teacher attitudes, and the need for shifting norms, redefining gender roles, and supportive environments that challenge ideals (Spencer et al., 2015).

In this chapter the above-summarized scoping review is advanced. Beginning below with background information, the current issues related to PA, nutrition, and adolescent girls are presented. That is followed by a description of current action to address these issues. The gaps identified by the scoping review are then summarized and considered, in order to explore and discuss what is needed to advance our understanding

of adolescent girls' nutrition and PA. Discussion of gaps in the literature explore the tendency for evidence to be focused on younger girls (early and middle, rather than late adolescents), and the lack of literature incorporating ecological, comprehensive, or multilevel perspectives, despite their known importance in considering health behaviours. Gaps in the literature also include a general focus on PA, rather than nutrition, and the importance of considering the clustering of health behaviours, that is, the value of studying PA and nutrition together, rather than independently. Finally, factors identified by the scoping review that require additional exploration are identified and discussed, including the school environment, social influences, and the media.

Background

A lack of healthy nutrition, insufficient PA, and excessive sedentary behaviour have been identified as modifiable risk factors that contribute to preventable chronic diseases such as type II diabetes and heart disease (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2011). As it is expected that chronic disease will account for two-thirds of all deaths worldwide by 2020, prevention of contributing risk factors is crucial for health promotion (Beaglehole et al., 2007). That said, current public health discourse is limited by a focus on childhood obesity that problematizes the bodies of young people, particularly adolescent girls, and points to the need for better understanding of these behaviours in the context of their broader health environments.

Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Adolescent Girls

In addition to the SDGs highlighting gender equity as a global goal, the World Health Organization (WHO) has identified physical inactivity as a significant problem worldwide, which contributes to 6% of global mortality and is a major risk factor for breast and colon cancers, diabetes, and heart disease (World Health Organization, 2014,

2015). The WHO identified the Americas as one of the regions with the highest prevalence of physical inactivity, and determined that in all regions, women are less active than men (World Health Organization, 2014). Recent pooled analysis exploring worldwide trends notes the persistence of physical inactivity worldwide, and how women continually accumulate less activity than men (Guthold, Stevens, Riley, & Bull, 2018). The issue of physical inactivity is particularly concerning for youth, with recent Canadian reports indicating youth do not get sufficient PA, or meet the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines (ParticipACTION, 2018; Roberts et al., 2017)

By contrast, sufficient activity, is associated with metabolic health and prevention of cardiovascular risk factors, and lower morbidity and mortality due to type II diabetes and heart disease (Dumith, Gigante, Domingues, & Kohl, 2011; Gutin & Owens, 2011; Roberts et al., 2017). Other benefits of being active in youth include bone health and motor development, in addition to improved academic achievement and cognitive functioning (Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2013). Further benefits of PA include improved self-esteem and decreased depression and anxiety, constructs that contribute to other major public health concerns such as mental health (Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2013). The most recent ParticipACTION Report Card highlighted the importance of PA for brain health, creativity, learning, and mental health, (ParticipACTION, 2018). The mental health benefits of PA for adolescence are also emerging as an important area for exploration (Beauchamp, Puterman, & Lubans, 2018).

The issue of physical inactivity is particularly concerning for young girls. Canadian girls are insufficiently active, with only 2% of adolescent girls meeting all of the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines, and nearly 20% of girls meeting none of the guidelines (Roberts, et al., 2017). Over the lifespan, there is a decline in PA, and this

decline is greater for girls (Dumith et al., 2011; Roberts et al., 2017). In Nova Scotia, while 82% of boys and 80% of girls are considered to be meet PA recommendations in the 3rd grade, these values decrease to 28 and 13%, respectively, by the 7th grade, and less than 1% of 11th grade girls are sufficiently active (Thompson & Wadsworth, 2012). Other recent data indicates similar trends, with only 3% of girls aged 5-17 meeting recommendations in Canada in 2013 (Government of Canada, 2015). Physical inactivity, however, is not alone in its contribution to health, and should be examined alongside nutrition, both of which are highlighted in a recent Statistics Canada Report (Bushnik, 2016).

Canadian children and youth are not receiving adequate nutrition, particularly in regard to fruit and vegetable consumption (Bushnik, 2016; Fung, McIsaac, Kuhle, Kirk, & Veugelers, 2013; Riediger, Shooshtari, & Moghadasian, 2007). There is a notable decline in fruit and vegetable consumption in adolescents by tenth grade, for all genders, though adolescent girls have unique nutritional concerns as well; significantly fewer adolescent girls than boys report eating breakfast before school on all five weekdays, and girls report skipping breakfast more often, in general (Boyce, 2006). A recent report exploring the Health of Girls and Women in Canada noted adolescent girls do not get all of the nutrients they require from food, as well as an increasing prevalence of disordered eating (Bushnik, 2016). Nearly half of Canadian ten grade girls believe their bodies to be overweight, while some studies suggest that disordered eating is more common than obesity in adolescent girls, and youth would rather experience the loss of a parent or serious disease than be considered "fat" (Boyce, King, & Roche, 2008; National Eating Disorder Information Centre, 2015; Public Health Agency of Canada, 2006). Additionally, incorrect weight perception has been found to be associated problematically

with health behaviours, with girls who perceive themselves to be overweight less likely to consume adequate fruits and vegetables (Patte, Laxer, Qian, & Leatherdale, 2016).

Nutrition behaviours, particularly for adolescent girls, are intricately tied to issues of body image. Far more adolescent girls than boys indicate the desire or attempt to lose weight, and while the percentage of young men reporting weight loss behaviours remains consistent (and less than 10%) across grades, the percentage of girls who report attempting weight loss increases significantly as they get older (Boyce, 2006). As many as 64% of grade 10 girls reported weight control behaviours in the past 12 months (Boyce et al., 2008; National Eating Disorder Information Centre, 2015; Public Health Agency of Canada, 2006). With such a high prevalence of body dissatisfaction related to weight and weight control behaviours, eating disorders are a concern for adolescent girls. More women than men tend to be diagnosed with an eating disorder across the lifespan, ranging from 0.3-2% in men, and 0.9-3.5% in women, depending on the type of disorder (Hudson, Hiripi, Pope, & Kessler, 2007; Public Health Agency of Canada, 2006). Dieting has also been noted as an important antecedent to eating disorder diagnoses (Bushnik, 2016).

Though these prevalence rates may seem small, significantly more people will be undiagnosed, or demonstrate unhealthy weight control behaviours that may negatively impact their nutrition, but not qualify for eating disorder diagnosis; half of Canadians report knowing someone with an eating disorder (National Eating Disorder Information Centre, 2015; Public Health Agency of Canada, 2006). Eating disorders also have the highest mortality of any mental illness, resulting in as many as 1500 Canadian deaths each year, and while unspecified eating disorders (those beyond anorexia and bulimia, for example) tend to be regarded as less serious, they have been demonstrated to have similar

mortality rates (Crow et al., 2009; National Eating Disorder Information Centre, 2015). Especially concerning for adolescent girls is the fact that the prevalence of diagnosed eating disorders more than triples between adolescence and adulthood, indicating the significance of this transition (Hoek, 2006). Further, hospitalization for disordered eating is most common among girls ages 15-19, reinforcing the concern in adolescent girls (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2006). A recent consensus statement from the International Summit on the Nutrition of Adolescent Girls and Young Women noted the urgent need to raise the social status of girls and women, improve access to nutrient rich foods, and elevate girls' nutrition to international priority (Krebs et al., 2017).

To continue considering PA and nutrition as only a small part of overall health and wellbeing, we need to consider the environments, structures, and systems that facilitate or impede being healthy. To do so, PA and nutrition should not be considered as individual behaviours, but should be considered together, comprehensively, as part of a multilevel system that influences populations. One way to explore PA and nutrition with this broad, population lens, is to examine policy and systems level action, and to consider PA and nutrition not as separate, but as clustered health behaviours. Both of these concepts are explored further below.

Current Action in Physical Activity & Nutrition

Policy has been demonstrated as an effective method of changing health behaviours at a population level, and there is substantial evidence to suggest policies supporting childhood PA, especially those that are school-based, are effective (Lagarde & LeBlanc, 2010; Pate, Trilk, Byun, & Wang, 2011; Robinson et al 2018). Despite this, there are few policies to encourage youth PA, and a variety of barriers to implementing PA policy, including practical, implementation, and administrative challenges have been

identified (Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2013; Chorney, 2009; Chriqui, O'Connor, & Chaloupka, 2011; Evenson, Ballard, Lee, & Ammerman, 2009). The recently eliminated Children's Fitness Tax Credit, for example, was criticized, because as a non-refundable credit, it is of little benefit to low-income families who pay minimal tax (Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, 2009; Spence, Holt, Sprysak, Spencer-Cavaliere, & Caulfield, 2012).

National action in PA policy is limited, though suggests opportunity for change. In 2013, a national PA strategy was proposed, Active Canada 20/20, designed to engage stakeholders across policy, education, and community design, using an ecological approach, though little action has been documented from this initiative (Active Canada 20/20, 2013). These national strategies may have limited impact, because they do not necessarily support underlying inequities and determinants of health, yet offer the public appearance of supporting health, despite perpetuating norms that health somehow falls within control of individuals. Resultingly, the Common Vision for Increasing Physical Activity and Reducing Sedentary Living in Canada ("Let's Get Moving") has been recently introduced and is intended to serve as a national policy document, that combines, aligns, and complements previous and ongoing strategies like Active Canada 20/20 (Federal, Provincial and Territorial Governments, 2018). This document is intended to be comprehensive, intersectoral, and multilevel, and guided by principles including evidence, population approaches, and motivations, with focus areas including cultural norms, public engagement, and spaces and places (Federal, Provincial and Territorial Governments, 2018). The recent federal budget has also identified women, girls and sport as a priority, with a $30 million investment intended to advance participation (Canadian Minister of Finance, 2018).

Provincially, policies supporting youth PA vary, with examples including physical education (PE) and graduation requirements. In some provinces, Daily PA is mandated in schools, while others offer additional tax credits (Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, 2009). At the municipal level, policies and strategies to support youth PA are heterogeneous. Municipalities may have, for example, active transportation commitments or policies for parks and recreation. Halifax, for example, had a PA strategy called "Stepping Up", which provided networking opportunities and outlined action items for the municipality, though this strategy has recently been moved to operate in conjunction with United Way as the "Halifax Region Physical Activity Strategy". The local initiative is now called "Try Do" and combines PA and nutrition, with the PA portion being aligned with the Halifax Active Living Alliance. Girls Soar, introduced earlier, falls within the local strategy as girls have been identified as a target population, and intends to address the disparity that exists for girls' PA. Each of these local actions appear to currently be in transition, and it will be interesting to see if or how they are influenced by the recent national "Let's Get Moving" document.

Similar to PA, the value of population level intervention related to healthy nutrition has been noted in the literature, with a particular focus on schools as a site for intervention (Blanck & Kim, 2012; Hobbs, 2008; Marmot, Friel, Bell, Houweling, & Taylor, 2008). Most Canadian provinces now have school food and nutrition policies (SFNP) that are intended to improve access to healthy food and limit less healthy options, including Nova Scotia, which was one of the first provinces to adopt a SFNP, setting standards for food and beverages served and sold in schools (Province of Nova Scotia, 2008). SFNPs offer the ability to reach nearly all youth, thereby addressing issues of health equity, and by targeting environments, are able to assist with systematic change,

facilitating individual nutrition by making healthier options more accessible (Blanck & Kim, 2012; Story, Kaphingst, Robinson-O'Brien, & Glanz, 2008). Evaluation of specific SFNPs, though, including that in Nova Scotia, have indicated mixed results thus far (Fung et al., 2013; Mâsse, Niet-Fitzgerald, Watts, Naylor, & Saewyc, 2014).

With limited demonstrated effectiveness of SFNPs, further research is required. It has been suggested that challenges to SFNPs are similar to those of PA policy, including variable standards and difficulty with evaluation, indicating the need to explore policy dissemination and implementation, in order to better understand and predict efficacy (Kumanyika, 2014; Leo, 2007; Taylor, McKenna, & Butler, 2010). Importantly, the literature focused on youth nutrition policy is almost entirely devoted to studying SFNPs; gender concerns, including the unique nutritional issues of adolescent girls are not evident in the policy literature. Further, a local population study compared weight, diet, and PA of students in schools with and without a nutrition policy, to those partaking in the Annapolis Valley Health Promoting Schools program (AVHPSP), a multifaceted program targeting health beyond nutrition alone, and found students in the AVHPSP were less likely to be overweight, consumed more fruits and vegetables and less fat, and participated in more PA, further suggesting the need for more comprehensive interventions (Veugelers & Fitzgerald, 2005). Calls for national action in nutrition are ongoing and increasing in profile, with recent calls focused on the development of a federal national school food program (Hernandez et al., 2018; Kirk & Ruetz, 2018).

Addressing Gaps in the Literature

With the above context now understood, the below will advance the current literature. As mentioned above, the previously conducted scoping review highlighted several important gaps in the literature: a lack of inclusion of older adolescent girls, a

lack of literature exploring comprehensive interventions and the clustering of health

behaviours, and a general focus on PA, rather than nutrition. Below, these gaps are

discussed, with an attempt to advance our understanding of these trends in the literature.

Gap 1: Lack of Inclusion of Late Adolescent Girls

The World Health Organization defines adolescents as young people between 10

and 19 years of age. This group can be divided into three smaller groups: Early

adolescents (ages 10-13 or North American grades 5-7), middle adolescents (ages 13-16

or North American grades 8-10), and late, or older, adolescents (ages 16-19, or North

American grades 11 and above). Of the documents reviewed in the previously mentioned

scoping review, the majority focused on early-to-middle adolescents, with only one

document focusing exclusively on older girls (Richman & Shaffer, 2000; Spencer et al.,

2015). This is an interesting gap, as we know older adolescent girls are a unique

population, particularly with regard to PA and nutrition. As mentioned in the introductory

chapter, girls become more sedentary and less active with age, with very few older

adolescent girls achieving PA recommendations (Colley et al., 2011; Thompson &

Wadsworth, 2012). Thompson and Wadsworth (2012) also found that more girls than

boys did not meet recommended food group servings, with nearly 90% of grade 11 girls

not meeting the recommended daily fruit and vegetable intake (Thompson & Wadsworth,

2012).

As the specific inclusion and exclusion criteria used in developing the previously

referenced scoping review may have excluded articles including older adolescent girls, a

further literature search was performed to explore this group, although it is clear that a

majority of the literature on PA and nutrition is focused on children or early adolescents,

presumably because of a focus on early intervention, or the common belief that older

adolescents may not engage. One study, comparing the PA of girls in grades 7 and 11 found a less significant decline in participation, but that type and context for PA changed significantly, with younger girls playing more sports and engaging in group activities, while older girls focused more on unorganized, individual activities, while another indicated that girls who were sport-involved in earlier grades, were more likely to engage in sport in the 12th grade (Eime et al., 2013; Pfeiffer et al., 2006). Studies examining nutrition of older adolescents found that older adolescent girls engaged in dieting, unhealthy weight control behaviours, and binge eating more commonly than their male counterparts, and that the prevalence of disordered eating only remained high or increased between adolescence and young adulthood (Neumark-Sztainer, Wall, Larson, Eisenberg, & Loth, 2011). Examination of stressful life events in older adolescents and young adults (such as debt or ending a relationship) was also associated with extreme weight control behaviours, particularly in young women (Loth, van den Berg, Eisenberg, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2008).

Interestingly, the study included in the scoping review that focused on older adolescents provides key insight into older girls, and how they might conceptualize gender norms in relation to healthy behaviours (Richman & Shaffer, 2000). Richman and Shaffer discuss how, though athleticism is not traditionally considered a feminine characteristic, and women athletes are often scrutinized, complexities arise in negotiation between athletic and feminine characteristics (Richman & Shaffer, 2000). By having young women report their sport participation and assessing psychosocial variables such as body image and self-worth, the authors found that greater pre-college sport participation predicted more favourable body image, higher self-esteem, and more flexibility in regard to gender identity (Richman & Shaffer, 2000). They concluded that

participating in sports during adolescence promoted self-worth and facilitated flexible

attitudes toward what it means to be "female" (Richman & Shaffer, 2000). Although that

study was focused on sport in particular, rather than nutrition or clustered health

behaviours, it has important findings relating to conceptualization of gender identities in

older adolescent girls (Richman & Shaffer, 2000). These findings indicate that older girls

offer an interesting opportunity for future research, as girls in this age group may be more

aware of socially constructed feminine ideals and better able to understand and articulate

their thoughts and feelings in regard to societal norms and institutional influences. This is

consistent with what the Centers for Disease Control (2014) indicates in regard to

adolescent development, in that older adolescents are more independent, have a deeper

capacity for sharing and caring, and are able to describe their reasoning behind decisions.

Gap 2: Lack of Inclusion of Comprehensive Approaches

Ecological approaches, sometimes referred to as social ecological (or

socioecological) models or frameworks, are those that recognize the multi-level,

complex, contextual, and environmental influences that contribute to health behaviours,

from the micro or individual level, to a macro, or systems level, recognizing societal,

political, and economical influences on health. The value of considering context and

using ecological frameworks is well established in health promotion, particularly in

relation to obesity prevention, PA, and nutrition (Booth et al., 2001; Kirk, Penney, &

McHugh, 2010). Despite this, in the previously referenced scoping review, only one

document incorporated an ecological approach, indicating an important gap in the

literature (Barr-Anderson et al., 2008). Indeed, other authors have noted that, despite the

known importance of ecological approaches in health promotion, interventions are rarely

implemented, though several excellent examples exist to demonstrate their value and

promise (Richard & Gauvin, 2012). Richard, Gauvin, and Raine (2011) reviewed the use of ecological approaches over the past twenty years and noted that PA interventions are more and more successfully employing ecological frameworks, while research on fruit and vegetable consumption is starting to show signs of becoming more ecological. Richard et al. (2011) conclude that adopting ecological approaches "will accelerate the development of more powerful, effective population health interventions".

The one article using an ecological approach that was referenced in the scoping review used a socioecological framework to examine the PE enjoyment of girls in the 6th grade and recommended that girls need an environment that is supportive of girls and promotes gender equality, with an emphasis on teacher influence on PE experiences (Barr-Anderson et al., 2008). An intervention outlined in that article, the Trial of Activity for Adolescent Girls, was described elsewhere as an ecological approach incorporating schools and community settings in conjunction with several theories such as social cognitive and diffusion of innovations theory (Elder et al., 2007). Another intervention, targeting PA of girls in the 9th grade described using an ecological approach to modify physical and health education, school health services, staff health, and community engagement (Ward et al., 2006). Several other articles employing an ecological approach toward girls' health were found, primarily with the purpose of identifying factors across levels of the environment that contribute to the promotion or compromising of health behaviours (Casey, Eime, Payne, & Harvey, 2009; Cooper & Guthrie, 2007; Niven, Henretty, & Fawkner, 2014).

While the above and other examples of ecological approaches are now present in the literature, there is little available that is focused specifically on adolescent girls' health, and even less on older adolescent girls. The literature using ecological

approaches, also tends to be focused on PA, with little targeting nutrition, and even fewer

targeting both. The value of considering PA and nutrition as clustered health behaviours

is considered below, and while this study did not specifically or formally employ

ecological systems theory or the social ecological model, it used an ecological lens in that

the health of adolescent girls was considered from a systems perspective. This study

employed a feminist poststructural approach (described in the following chapter) that

permitted examination of issues within their broader societal, cultural, and historical

contexts. Previous literature has successfully incorporated ecological and poststructural

approaches (Ware, 2012), as well as examined ecological approaches using photovoice,

the methodology that was employed in this study, and further discussed below (Strack,

Lovelace, Jordan, & Holmes, 2010).

Gap 3: Physical Activity and Nutrition as Clustered Behaviours

As noted above, the literature on adolescent girls' PA and nutrition tends to

examine the behaviours independently, rather than together as clustered health

behaviours, although there is recent literature that examines these clusters. Clustering, or

the co-occurrence or combination of health behaviours, is important because multiple risk

factors may act synergistically to increase disease risk (Elsenburg, Corpeleijn, van Sluijs,

& Atkin, 2014; Gubbels et al., 2012; Sabbe, Bourdeaudhuij, Legiest, & Maes, 2008;

Seghers & Rutten, 2010; Turner, Dwyer, Edwards, & Allison, 2011). It is known that PA,

sedentary behaviour, and nutrition are health behaviours that are not independent of one

another, although their interrelatedness is complex and not yet well understood (Cameron

et al., 2011). Cameron et al. (2011) suggest that simple correlations between health

behaviours may be difficult to identify because relationships may occur in complex

clusters within specific population groups. Developing a better understanding of clustered

behaviours may allow interventions and recommendations to be targeted for the greatest potential impact on disease prevention (Elsenburg et al., 2014; Pearson, Atkin, Biddle, Gorely, & Edwardson, 2009; Sabbe et al., 2008; Seghers & Rutten, 2010).

The growing body of literature on clustered health behaviours has included studies using various forms of data collection, from surveys and scales to physical measurements, and has identified several clusters in children and youth. Some of these clusters are common throughout the literature and include, for example: those who engage in generally 'healthy' behaviours (Cameron et al., 2011; Leech, McNaughton, & Timperio, 2014; Ottevaere et al., 2011; Sabbe et al., 2008), those who engage in generally 'unhealthy' behaviours (Cameron et al., 2011; Ottevaere et al., 2011; Sabbe et al., 2008; Seghers & Rutten, 2010), those who have poor nutrition habits and engage in high amounts of screen time (Cameron et al., 2011; Gubbels et al., 2012; Leech et al., 2014), those who are active but still have high amounts of screen time (Gubbels et al., 2012; Seghers & Rutten, 2010; Turner et al., 2011), and those who are sedentary but have high quality diets (Ottevaere et al., 2011; Sabbe et al., 2008; Seghers & Rutten, 2010).

The literature highlights the complexity of these clusters when examined with socioeconomic status (SES), demographics, and body mass index (BMI). Some authors indicated no significant differences in BMI between clusters (Cameron et al., 2011; Ottevaere et al., 2011; Turner et al., 2011), while one indicated that a cluster of children with high screen time and snacking behaviours was longitudinally associated with increased BMI (Gubbels et al., 2012). While one author indicated that clusters were not related to SES (Sabbe et al., 2008), Hardy et al. indicated the prevalence of multiple risk behaviours was more common in low income households (Hardy et al., 2012), Cameron et al. noted the similarity between mother and child behaviours (Cameron et al., 2011),

and Elsenburg et al. demonstrated that children of parents with lower educational attainment were at more risk for multiple unhealthy behaviours (Elsenburg et al., 2014). Gender differences were highlighted throughout the literature; girls were found to display more risky behaviours (Dumith, Muniz, Tassitano, Hallal, & Menezes, 2012) and be less active in general (Elsenburg et al., 2014; Leech et al., 2014; Ottevaere et al., 2011; Pearson et al., 2009), indicating the important relevance of clustered behaviour approaches when studying nutrition and PA in adolescent girls.

Conclusions from the literature on clustered health behaviours in youth suggest that clusters exist, behaviours do not occur in isolation, and interventions should target multiple behaviours (Dumith et al., 2012; Gubbels et al., 2012; Ottevaere et al., 2011; Pearson et al., 2009). The literature highlights the complexity of these inter-behaviour relationships and suggests that clustered patterns indicate particular groups may be targeted for most effective disease prevention strategies and interventions (Cameron et al., 2011; Dumith et al., 2012; Hardy et al., 2012; Leech et al., 2014; Sabbe et al., 2008; Turner et al., 2011). While the current literature examining adolescent girls tends to focus on single behaviours, the literature on clustered health behaviours indicates the importance of considering behaviours together, rather than independently, in order to address this important gap.

Advancing the Literature: Important Factors Identified & Discussed

The above-referenced scoping review, in addition to identifying themes and gaps in the literature, resulted in several additional emergent factors that warrant consideration and discussion that was beyond the scope of that paper (Spencer et al., 2015). These important factors include the school environment, social influences, and the media.

Consideration of each of these factors is necessary in order to advance the literature and plan effective future interventions, policy, and research, including this proposed study.

The School Environment

The school environment is well established as important for child and youth health. We know that healthy youth learn better, and that schools are an appropriate environment for intervention, given their ability to reach populations of children (Dobbins et al., 2009; Florence, Asbridge, & Veugelers, 2008). There is substantial literature devoted to considering concepts such as Health Promoting Schools and Comprehensive School Health Programs, though despite their known value and potential, adopting comprehensive approaches in schools is still rare (McIsaac, Read, Veugelers, & Kirk, 2013; Stewart-Brown, 2006; St Leger et al., 2010). Deschesnes, Martin, and Hill (2003) suggest that integrating such health promotion programming into the school environment requires key conditions related to planning and coordination, intersectoral collaboration, political and financial support, and proper evaluation, but that comprehensive initiatives have "tremendous potential" (Deschesnes, Martin, & Hill, 2003). A Cochrane review of school-based PA interventions noted their ability to impact PA and fitness levels, but had limited value in changing overall health outcomes, though multi-component interventions had more positive effects (Dobbins, 2009). Locally, in Nova Scotia, provincial data indicate that children in schools with coordinated school health approaches had healthier diets, were more active, and had lower rates of obesity (Veugelers & Fitzgerald, 2005). Related to the above discussion on the value of ecological or comprehensive approaches, and the importance of considering clustered health behaviours, it is clear that multicomponent, multilevel interventions show the greatest potential for changing health.

Some articles considered in the scoping review highlight the specific concerns of adolescent girls in regard to PA and nutrition in the school environment (Spencer et al., 2015). The majority of these were focused on PE: They noted the complexity of gender role negotiation faced by young girls, who face double standards in stereotypes; they feel pressure to be feminine, but also to be successful in PE, balancing gender norms and femininity, with pressure to be good at sports, without appearing overly muscular or as a 'tomboy', while also not appearing lazy or overweight (Azzarito, Solmon, & Harrison, 2006; Cockburn & Clarke, 2002; Evans, 2006; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). The standard PE environment is also challenging for adolescent girls in that they tend to lack confidence in the activities performed, want more choice in activities, may be uncomfortable or feel pressure in mixed gender classrooms, and may dislike athletic attire and uniforms, or getting dirty or sweaty in the middle of the school day (Barr-Anderson et al., 2008; Evans, 2006; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). Teachers were also identified as important to girls' experiences at school, suggesting they can play a role in promoting gender equality (Barr-Anderson et al., 2008; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Wetton, Radley, & Pearce, 2013). Of course, these articles also contribute to perpetuating discourse and norms around girls' thoughts and beliefs related to PA and may exclude certain girls as well. Only one article from the scoping review targeted adolescent girls' perceptions of nutrition education at school but noted the discourse to be contradictory in that it promotes acceptance of all body types, but stresses importance of eating well to avoid obesity, which ignores the complex causes for nutritional issues, and caused anxiety for adolescent girls (Larkin & Rice, 2005). More recent research has also identified the school environment as one that may regulate and perpetuate gender norms and expectations (Kagesten et al., 2016).

Further literature was identified that noted the importance of comprehensive interventions to support adolescent girls in particular, though these were also PE-centered (Niven et al., 2014; Ward et al., 2006). These interventions included multiple components such as changes to the PE environment (physically and socially), curriculum changes, and role modelling, and noted the importance of considering broader factors, such as politics and economics when designing interventions (Niven et al., 2014; Ward et al., 2006). While there is plenty of literature now supporting comprehensive school health programs, the previously stated gaps are still present in this area: there is a lack of research devoted to older adolescent girls in particular, and most of the girl-centered literature is focused on PE, rather than looking at comprehensive interventions supporting nutrition as well. This is also evident in a recent scoping review examining school-based PA and nutrition interventions, which, while not gender-specific, notes that most interventions target one behaviour, and many occur in elementary schools (Robinson et al., 2018). These are important considerations for planning future research and interventions, as we need to better understand how the established success of comprehensive school health programs, may translate to the specific and unique concerns of older adolescent girls. While this study was not intended to specifically or exclusively take place in a school environment, the adolescent girls did discuss schools and their important influence as a setting.

Social Influence

Social influence is a well-established factor that impacts the health-related behaviours of adolescent girls. In the previously referenced scoping study, social influence was determined to be an important factor that was evidenced across all themes identified in the review (Spencer et al., 2015). Consistent with much of the above, this was particularly evidenced in the literature examining gender norms and PA. Adolescent

girls are strongly influenced through social interactions, and support from peers, friends, teachers, and parents is necessary to promote PA (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Vu, Murrie, Gonzalez, & Jobe, 2006; Witmer, Bocarro, & Henderson, 2011). These social interactions are complex and go beyond just supporting healthy behaviours to establish and further social norms and gender stereotypes, dictating what is considered socially acceptable behaviours (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Slater & Tiggemann, 2011; Vu et al., 2006). Similar to the PA literature, social influence from peers and friends is important in nutrition, particularly in relation to dieting and unhealthy weight control behaviours, which are reinforced by social norms (Eisenberg, Neumark-Sztainer, Story, & Perry, 2005). Both nutrition and PA behaviours of adolescent girls are contributed to by social influences surrounding body image, as media, parents, and peer influences combine to impact body satisfaction, and girls contribute to socially creating and reinforcing body ideals (Dunkley, Wertheim, & Paxton, 2001; Guendouzi, 2004; Holman & Johnson, 2013).

Many of the findings of the scoping review are consistent with further literature exploring social influence for youth PA. A review of barriers and motivators for PA found that in youth, social influences from parents and peers act as motivators, but peer pressure, teasing, and male dominance act as barriers for young girls (Allender, Cowburn, & Foster, 2006). A review investigating the relationship between peers and adolescent PA identified social processes including social support, peer norms, friendship, acceptance, peer crowds, and victimization as influencing youth PA (Fitzgerald, Fitzgerald, & Aherne, 2012). One study, exploring PA and dietary intake in youth over a two-year period, found that peers influenced PA, but not dietary intake (Coppinger, Jeanes, Dabinett, Vögele, & Reeves, 2010). Social influence for PA is evidenced in the

girl-specific literature as well, where Voorhees et al. noted that the frequency of activity with friends was a significant predictor of activity levels for girls, stressing the importance of engaging girls in PA (Voorhees et al., 2005). Finally, a review of qualitative studies exploring young girls' interpersonal influences for PA identified several mechanisms that influence PA, including ability comparison and competition, family, peer, and teacher influence (through social support and role modelling), and appearance concerns, as wanting to appear feminine resulted in a gender role conflict for PA (Standiford, 2013).

The findings of the scoping review in regard to social influence are consistent with the literature on nutritional concerns and body image as well. Research has discovered relationships between adolescents and their friend groups for whole-grain, dairy, and vegetable intake, as well as breakfast eating, unhealthy food consumption, and total energy intake (Bruening et al., 2012; Sawka, McCormack, Nettel-Aguirre, & Swanson, 2015). Further, studies have found a positive correlation between peer influence and disordered eating, as well as relationships between peer crowd affiliations, peer weight norms, and weight control behaviours in adolescent girls (Mackey & La Greca, 2008; Meyer & Gast, 2008). A study looking at high school girls found that girls compare themselves to other girls, and believe others to be thinner, have more ideal bodies, and engage in weight control practices (Sanderson, Wallier, Stockdale, & Yopyk, 2008). Similarly, body size comparison to peers has been found as an important component of adolescent girls' body image and weight-related behaviours (Carey, Donaghue, & Broderick, 2014; Rancourt, Choukas-Bradley, Cohen, & Prinstein, 2014). Recent literature exploring adolescent attitudes toward gender norms has also highlighted interpersonal influences, especially the influences of peers (Kagesten et al., 2016).

While social support is important, it is also clear that social influence can have a negative impact on the health of adolescent girls. These relationships are complex, influenced by societal and cultural norms, and are reinforced by adolescent girls and their peers. Similar to other sections of this paper, the focus of the literature is on early and middle adolescent girls, PA, and unhealthy weight control practices, rather than promotion of healthy nutrition and consideration of clustered health behaviours. It is clear that adolescent girls are socially influenced, and a better understanding of how messages reinforced by adolescent girls' peer groups are initiated at a larger, cultural, and societal level.

The Media

Much of the sociocultural messaging perceived by adolescent girls is represented through media. The influence of media was evidenced in the scoping review as a factor emerging from the literature that warranted further consideration. Mooney et al (2009) discussed how celebrities and their diet and PA routines influence young girls, while Lopez et al (2013) found media to be associated with gender role orientation (Lopez, Corona, & Halfond, 2013; Mooney, Farley, & Strugnell, 2009). A commentary included in the review discussed the changing patterns in media over time, how womanly ideals have often been associated with femininity and fertility, and how recent media sends mixed messages to young girls about what is considered acceptable, concluding the media has potential to influence obesity and eating disorders, and could be explored as an avenue to create positive change as well (Derenne & Beresin, 2006). Similarly, Dunkley et al (2001), while concluding the combined influence of parents, peers, and media was greatest, also noted that media had the most profound effect on body ideals and dieting behaviours (Dunkley et al., 2001).

The influence of media on adolescent health has been thoroughly researched. Recent research examining celebrity influence on adolescent health found more than 70% of the non-alcoholic beverages promoted by celebrities were sugar-sweetened, and more than 80% of the endorsed foods were energy dense and nutrient poor (Bragg, Miller, Elizee, Dighe, & Elbel, 2016). Literature in this area, however, commonly includes both men and women participants, and is focused beyond nutrition and PA alone, with literature commonly focused on violence, aggression, substance use, and sexuality, though some reviews have also included obesity or eating disorders as a focus. Media has the potential to influence health behaviours such as PA and nutrition (which may contribute to obesity prevention) in a number of ways. First, the act of media consumption tends to be a sedentary activity (and TV time has been associated with high calorie snack consumption); further, food industry advertising tends to target young people; finally, media has established influences on body ideals and body image concerns, contributing to behaviours such as PA and nutrition (Brown & Witherspoon, 2002; Escobar-Chaves & Anderson, 2008; Strasburger, Jordan, & Donnerstein, 2010).

As mentioned, the media influence on adolescent girls' PA and nutrition is most commonly researched and understood through the concept of ideals and body image concerns. Young girls are presented with a media paradox, in which they are targeted by food advertising, but represented in the media as unrealistically thin, resulting in internalization of thin ideals, body image dissatisfaction, and normalization of disordered eating or unhealthy weight control behaviours (Brown & Witherspoon, 2002; Grabe, Ward, & Hyde, 2008). In presenting findings from focus groups with adolescents, Spurr et al (2013) determined that, although adolescents recognized media images as idealized and unrealistic, they still influenced beliefs about their own appearance, concluding that

youth perceive pressure to conform to ideals and that the media has a negative impact on adolescent body image (Spurr, Berry, & Walker, 2013).

Interestingly Taveras et al (2004), in examining adolescent PA and the media concluded that wanting to look like media figures was associated with increased PA, suggesting that the media cultivation of healthy body images may promote healthy behaviours. Little and Hoskins (2005), in a reflection on their work with adolescent girls recovering from eating disorders, note that girls are required to undergo complex negotiations of gendered scripts as they receive paradoxical and contradictory messages from the media. They discuss how "media does not 'make' girls anorexic", and how they are able to recognize and articulate the problems with media ideals, but that these complex negotiations may result in girls engaging in unhealthy weight control behaviours as a perceived "agentic choice", with eating disorder diagnoses being part of an "acceptable identity" (Little & Hoskins, 2005). More recent literature has explored media representation of women as athletes, and noted the problematic nature of their portrayal, relating to sexualization and objectification, potentially contributing to the trivialization of their athletic abilities (Sailors, Teetzel, & Weaving, 2012; Weaving, 2012; Weaving, 2014).

A notable fact about the literature on adolescent health and the media, particularly that related to young girls and body image concerns, is that the bulk of the evidence comes from the nineties, focusing on media forms popular in that time (Turner, 2014). There has been a recent shift in media, from television and print media such as magazines, to newer forms including social media, which are less passive, more interactive, and more personal and interpersonal in nature (Brown & Bobkowski, 2011; Perloff, 2014). These newer forms of media are linked to violence, aggression, cyber-

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bulling, and other harmful social issues (Brown & Bobkowski, 2011). A recent review indicated that social media are also being used to promote adolescent health, including in relation to nutrition and PA, suggesting social media shows promise for intervention, though there is still a lack of high-quality evidence (Hamm et al., 2014). A theory and model examining social media influence on body image suggests that social media work via social comparisons and peer normative processes to significantly and negatively impact body image dissatisfaction in young women (Perloff, 2014). Responses to this recent model include the need to consider the potential benefit of social media, compare the effects of social media to other types of media, and consider a broader conceptualization of influences on body image (Andsager, 2014; Turner, 2014; Williams & Ricciardelli, 2014).

Consideration of contemporary media influences suggests the need to explore solutions to the harmful effects of media. In a school-based intervention attempting to reduce the impact of media by challenging norms, girls who received the intervention reported basing their self-worth less strongly on their appearance, being more satisfied with their bodies, and being less concerned by the perceptions of others (Strahan et al., 2008). Veldhuis et al (2012) demonstrated that appropriate weight labelling on media imagery (i.e. noting how underweight models are) resulted in girls being less body conscious, while presenting underweight models as "normal" increased body dissatisfaction (Veldhuis, Konijn, & Seidell, 2012). Similarly, Daniels (2009) presented adolescent girls with a variety of media imagery and found that performance athlete imagery resulted in less self-objectification, while sexualized images of women generated more feelings of self-objectification (Daniels, 2009). Other solutions showing promise in the literature include policy, industry regulation, media advocacy, parent intervention,

school-based education, and media literacy, though more research is required in many of these areas (Andsager, 2014; Borzekowski & Bayer, 2005; Brown & Bobkowski, 2011; Brown & Witherspoon, 2002; Hobbs, Broder, Pope, & Rowe, 2006; Levin-Zamir, Lemish, & Gofin, 2011; Strasburger et al., 2010).

Media literacy has emerging evidence in the literature as a potential means of combating negative media influences. Media literacy is a concept that involves education about purposes of messages, increasing skepticism, and creating critical consumers of media, in order to potentially reduce its impact (Andsager, 2014; Brown & Witherspoon, 2002). Media literacy shows promise in the literature as a means of using media for positive, rather than negative outcomes, and through education of critical and analytical skills, may address some of the issues related to distorted body imagery and body dissatisfaction, though it has been noted that more comprehensive and integrated programs are required (Andsager, 2014; Borzekowski & Bayer, 2005; Brown & Bobkowski, 2011; Brown & Witherspoon, 2002). Key components of media literacy involve education about recognizing author purpose and target, identifying techniques and persuasive claims, and understanding sociocultural and political contexts of messages (Hobbs et al., 2006). Using these criteria, Hobbs et al (2006) found girls were able to identify persuasive techniques but were less able to recognize purpose or target audience and had little awareness of contextual factors (Hobbs et al., 2006). Levin-Zamir et al (2011), developed the concept of "media health literacy", by combining elements of health literacy and media literacy, and determined it to be associated with empowerment and health behaviours in Israeli youth (Levin-Zamir et al., 2011). Concepts and interventions such as these show promise for health promotion and warrant further study.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter coalesces our understanding of gender norms, PA, and nutrition in adolescent girls. Expanding upon and moving forward from the previously conducted scoping review, this chapter discussed the current gaps in the literature and other factors identified as important. The gaps in the literature, identified by the scoping review included a lack of focus on late adolescent girls in the literature, a lack of inclusion of ecological or comprehensive approaches, and a lack of consideration of PA and nutrition as clustered health behaviours. Older adolescent girls are a unique population with equally unique concerns that need to be addressed in future research and intervention. Considering ecological approaches and PA and nutrition as clustered behaviours are related and speaks to the important necessity to consider health of young girls more broadly and contextually. In some areas of the above discussion, PA is a focus, while in others, nutritional concerns (particularly dieting) are a primary focus. It is clear, and demonstrated by the above, that these behaviours, and potentially others, should not be separated, but examined together, just as they should not be separated from their sociocultural, economic, and political contexts.

Additional factors presented and discussed in this paper include the school environment, social influences, and the media. The school environment and social influences for health are well established as impacting girls in the literature. Girls are profoundly socially influenced, and comprehensive school interventions show the most promise. The gaps described above still exist in these areas, with a need for focus on older adolescent girls and ecological approaches that do not ignore the broader social and environmental influences. Media impacts the health of young girls in multiple ways, through promotion of sedentary behaviour, through food industry advertising, and

through proliferation of gender norms and unhealthy idealized imagery that contributes to body dissatisfaction and weight control behaviours. Solutions to reduce the negative impacts of the media requires further research, though media literacy (and media health literacy) show promise. In sum, rather than a discourse of obesity and dieting, which presents a paradox that problematizes the bodies of young women, we need to shift toward breaking down this discourse and replacing it with research and practice that engages, empowers, and supports adolescent girls' health. This study uses a participatory and feminist poststructural approach to explore how adolescent girls' perceptions of health, including behaviours such as PA and nutrition, and the construction of their bodies, take up and contend with social, political, and cultural contexts.

CHAPTER 3: THEORY

The previous chapter explored the literature surrounding gendered aspects of adolescent girls' health, highlighting the increasingly understood concept that systems and environments influence health, including the capacity for populations to engage positively in behaviours such as PA and nutrition (Swinburn & Raza, 1999). Children and youth are not receiving adequate nutrition, only a small minority of Canadian youth attain PA recommendations, and adolescent girls face unique challenges in regard to these behaviours (Bushnik, 2016; Dumith et al., 2011; Fung et al., 2013; ParticipACTION, 2018; Riediger et al., 2007; Roberts et al., 2017). As mentioned, my previous work has explored the complexities related to adolescent girls' health; emphasizing important social and cultural gendered influences related to nutrition and PA as comprehensive health behaviours (Spencer, Rehman, & Kirk, 2015). This chapter explores the relevant associated theory, by discussing how feminist and poststructural theories contribute to the research on adolescent girls' health-related behaviours of nutrition and PA.

This chapter begins by discussing feminist and poststructural theories in general, followed by a review of feminist poststructural approaches, including contributions by Michel Foucault and the relevance of the concept of discourse. The chapter is concluded by a discussion of feminist poststructural thought as it relates to adolescent girls' health, including nutrition, PA, and the body. This project will also employ photovoice as methodology, a method that is highly theoretical in its own right. The theory underpinning photovoice and how it will be used in conjunction with a feminist poststructural approach in the context of this project are discussed near the beginning of the methodology in Chapter 4.

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory is derived from the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1960s, and while there is not one specific feminist theory, there are tenets that are generally common amongst feminist approaches, such as concern with broad social change, and focusing on gender, social inquiry, and the lived experiences of women (Doucet & Mauthner, 2006; Hesse-Biber, 2012; Landman, 2006; Sarantakos, 2004; Weedon, 1987). Feminist approaches are political, and deal with issues of power and oppression, particularly concerning differences in power between men and women in society (Barret, 2005; Doucet & Mauthner, 2006; Hesse-Biber, 2012; Weedon, 1987). Modern feminist thought often concerns itself with issues related to power, recognizes that knowledge is always partial, assumes social capital and power differ in the perceptions of men and women, and aims to expose underlying structures that contribute to women's issues, with the objective of social change (Landman, 2006; Sarantakos, 2004).

Of interest among researchers conducting feminist work is the power relations grounded in patriarchy. The basis of the patriarchal discourse is that the role of women in society is defined in relation to some male norm, resulting in power relations where women's interests are subordinated (Weedon, 1987). Following the patriarchal assumption that women are biologically equipped for different social tasks than men, power relations are produced and reproduced structurally, taking many forms, including division of labour and ideas of femininity (Weedon, 1987). Feminist theory is concerned with equity and is derived from the need for a theory that explores and resists underlying inequities, related to gender primarily, but also of race, class, ability, and age, as well as the intersections of those issues as the sites where inequitable conditions are manifested and maintained (Numer & Gahagan, 2009; Weedon, 1987).

Research taking a feminist lens differs from traditional scientific methods in that it disrupts traditional ways of learning and knowing, and challenges mainstream methods of data collection (Doucet & Mauthner, 2006; Hesse-Biber, 2012). Research employing feminism takes up issues of power, ethics, advocacy, reflexivity, and challenges objectivity (Doucet & Mauthner, 2006; Hesse-Biber, 2012; Landman, 2006). Feminist research is generally not positivist in nature but employs value-laden methods and a political stance (Hesse-Biber, 2012; Sarantakos, 2004). There is no specific or standard feminist research methodology, rather, a multitude of techniques and epistemological approaches that underpin the approach and employment of various research methods (Doucet & Mauthner, 2006; Hesse-Biber, 2012; Sarantakos, 2004).

Poststructuralist Theory

Poststructuralist approaches are derived from theories of linguistics, theories of discourse and power (for example, those presented by Foucault), Marxism, and psychoanalysis (Weedon, 1987). Based on the Marxist assumption that human nature is not concrete or essential, but fluid, socially produced, and constantly changing, poststructuralist theory attempts to address the need for a theory that explores relations between experience, language, identity (or subjectivity in poststructuralist terms), and social power (Numer & Gahagan, 2009; Weedon, 1987). Poststructuralist thought offers a way to consider the functions of structures, how knowledge and understanding is produced (and reproduced), and a way to conceptualize the relationship between language, social institutions, individual consciousness, and power (Barret, 2005; Numer & Gahagan, 2009; Weedon, 1987). Power, how it is exercised, and the possibility for change, is central to poststructural approaches (Weedon, 1987). Poststructural theorists conceptualize power not as one-sided, or as simply possessed by some and not others, but

as a relational, multidimensional concept that is always in flux (Numer & Gahagan, 2009; Weedon, 1987).

Poststructuralist theory enables the exposure and exploration of the production and regulation of social and cultural narratives, focusing on the force of language and discourse, and bringing marginalized discourses to the forefront (Barret, 2005). Language and discourse are central to poststructural approaches and will be further discussed below in relation to feminist poststructural approaches. Central to poststructuralist thought are ideas of subjects and subjectivity, categories and category maintenance, and agency (Weedon, 1987). Using poststructural approaches, individuals are regarded as subjects, as active agents who help create their own identity and reality, rather than objects, whose identities would be established by others (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005). Poststructural thinking considers the social meaning of language and discourse, and proposes that subjectivity is fluid, and constantly reconstituted through discourse, stating that the subject takes up available discourse and subject positions (Barret, 2005; Weedon, 1987). The concept of agency is also relevant to poststructural approaches, acknowledging that subjects take up discourses and available subject positions, while being subjected to social and cultural narratives and recognizing that actions are examined in relation to the dominant discourse (Barret, 2005; Weedon, 1987).

Regarding the patriarchal structures in society, associated discourses, and subject positions within them, poststructuralist approaches can act as a theory that addresses structural and societal concerns, while also recognizing individual consciousness and agency (Weedon, 1987). A poststructural approach can enable us to theorize about women's oppression, while recognizing the subjectivity of women's lived experiences and realities (Weedon, 1987). As such, Weedon has developed a form of poststructuralist

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theory, employing its most relevant and useful parts to produce a specific version, called feminist poststructuralism (Weedon, 1987).

Feminist Poststructural Approaches

Feminist poststructural approaches are associated with moving beyond the traditionally white, middle class heterosexual focus of second wave feminism to a (potential) third wave of feminism (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005). Using feminist poststructural thought allows us to view how traditional work, such as that conducted with a positivist lens, might be confined by its own discourse, and requires going beyond asking the meaning of experiences to explore how people understand those meanings in a particular time and place (Barret, 2005). Feminist poststructural approaches can explore assumptions underlying traditional research and theory and can help analyze discourse from where knowledge had been produced to locate it socially or institutionally (Weedon, 1987).

The concepts of language and discourse are central to feminist poststructural approaches. Using a feminist poststructuralist lens assumes that it is language which enables us to give meaning to the world around us through speech and thought, and that it is discourse which makes up social and cultural institutions (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Weedon, 1987). Feminist poststructural analysis may examine the role of language in the maintenance of power relations and privilege, and views discourse as a force capable of shaping, not only individual identity, but broad social and cultural institutions (Barret, 2005; Gerbensky-Kerber, 2011). Dominant discourse relevant to feminist poststructural thought centre on the patriarchal assumption of biological differences between male and female bodies (Azzarito, Solmon, & Harrison, 2006). Feminist poststructural analysis, therefore, commonly concerns itself with exploring discursive practices and political

discourse as embodied experiences (Azzarito et al., 2006; Weedon, 1987). Those

conducting research with a feminist poststructural lens, then, may explore how discourses

maintain power, where there might be resistance, and how they may be challenged

(Azzarito et al., 2006; Weedon, 1987).

Feminist poststructural theories see subjectivity, consciousness, and agency as

produced through language and discourse (Weedon, 1987). Employing a feminist

poststructural lens then, assumes that subjectivity is not fixed or essential (Azzarito &

Katzew, 2010; Bordo, 2003). Subjectivity, rather, is plural, and socially, historically, and

culturally constructed and mediated, meaning people make sense of the world around

them jointly with the influence of society and history, and these understandings are fluid

and ever-changing (Azzarito & Katzew, 2010; Bordo, 2003). Employing a feminist

poststructural approach may allow us to explore the subject, question how it is shaped,

make visible the ways bodies are produced through discourse, and thereby enable us to

challenge dominant structures (Barret, 2005; Gerbensky-Kerber, 2011; Numer &

Gahagan, 2009).

In feminist poststructural thought, we are able to choose between differing

accounts of reality based on social constructions and implications; it is a mode of

knowledge production, which can be used to identify existing power structures and

opportunities for resistance based on particular social, cultural, and historical contexts

(Azzarito & Solomon, 2005; Weedon, 1987). Feminist poststructural approaches

emphasize the importance of empowerment and seeking opportunities for resistance to

dominant social structures and discourses through deconstructing and dismantling

accepted notions of power (Bordo, 2003; Gerbensky-Kerber, 2011; Numer & Gahagan,

2009; Weedon, 1987). A feminist poststructural lens may be used as a tool to subvert

dominant gender discourse through acknowledging individual agency, viewing women not just as passively oppressed, but as active agents, allowing exploration of what it means to be a gendered person, and offering tools and strategies for subverting dominant discourses and deconstructing ideas about femininity (Azzarito et al., 2006; Azzarito & Solomon, 2005).

Employing a feminist poststructural approach forces consideration of context and intersectionality. Feminist poststructuralist thought deliberately draws attention to social, and historical contexts, and how individual subjects are constructed at a given place and time (Weedon, 1987). Feminist poststructuralism also allows exploration of multiple oppressions and their intersections, to consider overlapping sites of oppression such as gender, race, and social class, among others (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005). Feminist poststructural thought recognizes that elements of identity (and oppression), are multiple and intertwined, and need to be considered in relation to cultural, historical, and political discourse (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005). Employing such theories in health promotion requires us to consider how dominant discourses impact health, and challenges health promotion to move beyond dominant discourses to explore the complexities within them and consider alternative discourses (Numer & Gahagan, 2009). Health promotion, for example, should consider the potentially harmful outcomes of the obesity discourse, which are explored further below.

As mentioned above, subjects and subjectivity are important to feminist poststructuralism. Subjectivity refers to our ability to understand ourselves in relation to the world (Weedon, 1987). Subjectivity is fluid, constantly shifting, frequently recreated and changed through language and discourse, and sometimes contradictory (Weedon, 1987). The concept of subjectivity assumes that there is no essential self or identity, but

that the experiences of subjects can thought of as productions of social and historical

discourse (Barret, 2005; Weedon, 1987). Focusing on how the subjectivity experience is

formed enables consideration of the multiple influences and processes that shape these

so-called identities, as well as the fact that certain opportunities for subjectivities are only

available to some, and not available to others (Rich & Evans, 2013). In feminist

poststructural approaches, subjects may speak themselves into available positions, in

relation to dominant discourse, while having thoughts and actions reflective of social and

power relations (Barret, 2005; Numer & Gahagan, 2009). Many examples of this are

visible in the findings and analysis presented in Chapters 5 through 7, in which the

participants of this research discuss the complexities and contradictions associated with

their engagement in behaviours that may be considered typical or traditional for girls and

women, compared to those in which they challenge or resist stereotypes and norms.

Foucault

Poststructuralist and feminist poststructural approaches and theorists, often draw

on the work of Michel Foucault, particularly in relation to discourse and power (Weedon,

1987). While there is some feminist rejection of theorists such as Foucault (given his

status as a man), Weedon argues that it does not matter, if his work can produce an

analysis of patriarchy and contribute to change, when employed by feminists (Weedon,

1987). According to theorists such as Lisa Downing, Foucault's work questions the way

in which knowledge is produced and operates and argues that knowledge is dependent on

history (which he also calls into question), and cannot be separated from power relations

(Downing, 2008). Foucault argues that abilities associated with knowledge that are

commonly believed to be inherent to human beings, such as the ability to think, reason,

question, or analyse, are not actually inherent, but dependent on our social and historical location and timing (Downing, 2008).

Foucault's work is heavily centred on ideas of power; he describes power as a relational and multidirectional force, and knowledge as something produced in power relations (Downing, 2008; Foucault, 1980). Foucault contends that power is not something that someone or some group possesses and uses, while others do not; instead, power should be thought about as relationships, networks, practices, and negotiations that create positions of dominance and oppression, through institutions, language, and discourse (Bordo, 2003; Downing, 2008; Foucault, 1980; Foucault, 1995; Gerbensky-Kerber, 2011; Numer & Gahagan, 2009; Wright, O'Flynn, & Macdonald, 2006). Individuals do not have or make meaning of discourse, but rather create subject positions that are formed and reproduced through social practices (Azzarito et al., 2006; Downing, 2008). Foucault suggests people are not passive users of discourse, but engage in processes, take up discourse based on their own histories and social circumstances, and shape their sense of self accordingly (Wright et al., 2006). As such, girls and young women are only subjects who passively consume discourse about obesity, dieting, and exercise, but they engage with it, and interpret it, based on their own subjectivity and experiences.

As an extension of ideas about power, and how it is relative, comes the concept of disciplinary power. Disciplinary power describes the control and authority that comes with being part of or engaging in dominant systems and structures, and plays out through and on bodies, including those of women and girls (Azzarito, 2009; Foucault, 1995). With regard to gender, bodies, nutrition, and PA, Foucault's ideas around evaluative gaze, as an extension of his analysis of power, is important. More specifically, Foucault

presented ideas around evaluative gaze through discussion of a concept called the panopticon (Azzarito, 2009; Downing, 2008; Foucault, 1995). The panopticon is a historical system of prison surveillance, where the guard, in a tower at the centre of the prison grounds, can see all prisoners, although they cannot see the guard (and cannot confirm the guard's presence), resulting in an impersonal relationship with power, and a constant sense of being evaluated (Azzarito, 2009; Downing, 2008; Duncan, 1994; Foucault 1995).

The guard in the panopticon acts as a disembodied form of power, which is analogous to the self-regulation of women and girls (through unhealthy weight control behaviours, for example), which is evident when they feel personally responsible for not attaining patriarchal feminine ideals (Azzarito, 2009; Downing, 2008; Duncan, 1994). In Foucault's words, "Inspection functions ceaselessly. The gaze is alert everywhere" (Foucault, 1995, p. 195). Public and media discourse about becoming fit and thin, as well as ideas related to 'throwing like a girl', and women inhibiting their movements to take up less space in PA are related to this panoptic gaze, as the potential or perceived evaluation of others holds power over individual bodies (Azzarito, 2009, 2010; Duncan, 1994; B. Evans, 2006). This translates to girls' PA and nutrition behaviours, through the common perception of having our bodies evaluated against norms and ideals.

Discourse

As mentioned, the concepts of language and discourse are significant in feminist poststructural thought. It is the assumption of feminist poststructural approaches that individual letters, words, and phrases do not carry intrinsic meaning; rather, language acquires meaning through culture, history, and social narratives (Barret, 2005; Weedon, 1987). Through language, realities and subjectivities are created and these are always

plural, political, and socially specific in time and place (Barret, 2005; Numer & Gahagan, 2009; Weedon, 1987). Through language comes discourse, or sets of beliefs, assumptions, and understandings that are organized in our society through institutions such as law, church, medicine, and school (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005; Barret, 2005; Weedon, 1987). Like power, discourse is not something that is possessed by individuals, rather they are taken up, create subject positions, and lead to what might be considered socially acceptable actions and behaviours (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005; Barret, 2005; Downing, 2008; Weedon, 1987).

Subjects and subjectivity are constructed through discourse, as part of wider social interactions and power relations (Downing, 2008; Weedon, 1987). Power is exercised through discourse in the way that it is able to create and regulate subjects (Weedon, 1987). Subjects and subject positions are constantly reconstituted based on available and accessible discourses, which hold power differently depending on context, and are therefore frequently conflicting and contradictory (Barret, 2005). A feminist poststructural helps analyze discursive practices and associated power relations, allowing us to explore how discourse is produced and whose interests are served by discursive practices, and exposes the constitutive forces of discourse allowing us to explore where there is resistance and opportunity for change (Barret, 2005; Weedon, 1987).

In relation to adolescent girls, gender, PA, nutrition, and health, there are several discursive formations that warrant discussion. Stemming from the neoliberalism of the 1970s and 1980s, there is a popular discourse associated with obesity and a culture of healthism, which promotes individual choice and responsibility to make healthy decisions, to eat well, and to exercise regularly, which regard overweight and obesity as a moral, individual failing (Azzarito, 2012; J. Evans, Evans, Evans, & Evans, 2002;

Gerbensky-Kerber, 2011; Mansfield & Rich, 2013; Rich, 2011; Rich & Evans, 2005, 2013). Obesity discourse constructs "normal" (and therefore abnormal, bad, or deviant) bodies for comparison, and equates idealized bodies not only with health, but with social capital, personal control, and virtue (Azzarito & Katzew, 2010; Gerbensky-Kerber, 2011; Mansfield & Rich, 2013, 2013; Rich, 2011; Wright et al., 2006).

In addition to discourse around obesity and health, women and girls are subjected to gender-specific discourse related to femininity, thinness, slenderness, ideal body types for women, and ideas around 'throwing like a girl'. Discourse surrounding femininity directly contrasts that of hegemonic or heteronormative masculinity, which is derived from historical patriarchal discourse and is associated with the strong, aggressive, sporting body (Azzarito, 2009; Azzarito & Solomon, 2005; J. Evans et al., 2002; Rich & Evans, 2013). These gendered discourses contribute to the perpetuation of gender binaries and norms. Further, there are "celebratory discourses" promoting progress toward equity for women, negating the lack of progress in many areas for many women (Mansfield & Rich, 2013). Based on their bodies and positions in society, youth (and young girls, specifically), then have to negotiate these discourses, which are reflective of ongoing societal trends.

These dominant discourses relating to obesity and femininity tend to construct the body in reductionist, essentialist and dichotomous ways, that is, male/female, fat/skinny, healthy/ill, or normal/ different (Azzarito, 2012). As such, the bodies of young women are sites for conflicting discourses, where traditional ideas of femininity remain, but health, diet, and exercise discourse presents challenges (Azzarito, 2010, 2012; Azzarito & Sterling, 2010). These discourses, shaped by broader political power struggles, silence the experiences of those who do not fit the dominant discourse, and negate powerful

contributing social determinants of health such as poverty, employment, education, and access (Mansfield & Rich, 2013). That said, people do not simply subvert to discourses, rather they are active in adopting available subjectivities, and negotiating their position in relation to the dominant discourse (Azzarito & Sterling, 2010; Wright et al., 2006); Wright et al. (2006), for example, determined that the health and fitness discourse was important to male participants, while young women identified more closely with the appearance and ideal bodies discourse, noting complexities in relation to health (Wright et al., 2006).

In regard to adolescent girls' health, schools and the media play significant roles in perpetuating discourse related to health, PA, and nutrition. Discourses of health are institutionalized, often as a target for obesity prevention, and continue to normalize specific body ideals, reproducing inequities in gender, as well as race and class, among other sources of oppression (Azzarito, 2009, 2012; B. Evans, 2006; Rich & Evans, 2005). Rich & Evans (2005) found that girls with eating disorders perceived health education negatively, as blaming individual girls, and instructing them to make healthier choices (Rich & Evans, 2005). J. Evans et al (2002) focused their research on eating disorders but noted that it is not only those at the extremes who are negatively impacted by school-based discourses, rather, schools, through policy, curriculum, and teachers, transmit a culture of slenderness as the opposition to obesity (J. Evans et al., 2002). Media trends promote similar discourse, promoting thin, glamorized images of lean bodies, which problematize the bodies of youth, particularly young women, those of minority, and those with limited opportunities (Azzarito, 2010; Mansfield & Rich, 2013).

Feminist Poststructuralist Thought, Girls, Nutrition, and Physical Activity

Nutrition

With regard to adolescent girls' nutrition, feminist poststructural approaches are most often employed in relation to disordered eating. Eating disorders are understood and analyzed, through a variety of disciplines, including psychology, biology, and epidemiology, though they are most often viewed as pathology in medicine, effectively ignoring the associated social, moral, and gender influences (Bordo, 2003; Rich & Evans, 2005). Strangely, health behaviours are most commonly analyzed independent of their social context (Rich & Evans, 2005); obesity and disordered eating are rarely considered together, despite the fact that they are "critically interconnected discursively" (J. Evans et al., 2002, p. 193). Among medical and psychiatric conditions, eating disorders are unique in that they are influenced greatly by social and cultural discourse, including feminine body ideals (J. Evans et al., 2002). The effects of discourse related to body image, health, and obesity are perpetuated through media and schools, which problematizes adolescent girls' relationships with food and commonly results in unhealthy eating practices (J. Evans et al., 2004).

Bordo points out that some would question how we can explain those who do not practice disordered eating, if we are to blame culture, but argues that we are not all exposed equally, we take up different social and cultural practices, and have different histories (Bordo, 2003). Feminist poststructural approaches offer the opportunity to explore these ideas further, by analyzing influential discourse and its effects, but recognizing individual agency and subjectivity. As mentioned previously, schools are often targeted as a potential intervention site for obesity prevention, though we frequently do not consider how these processes and discourses may also be damaging to body

images of adolescent girls (J. Evans et al., 2002). Alarmingly, authors using a feminist poststructural lens to explore eating disorders have found girls construct subjectivities in terms of their disorder, and actually perceive anorexia to be a source of power, status, and identity (J. Evans et al., 2004; Rich & Evans, 2005). Feminist poststructural approaches are used, in these cases for example, to explore how individual behaviours are learned and taken up through institutions to contend with broader social and cultural issues and discourse (J. Evans et al., 2004; Rich & Evans, 2005).

Physical Activity

Feminist poststructural approaches have also been used to analyze adolescent girls' relationships with PA. Historical and traditional discourses related to constructions of heterosexual femininity position masculine as active and feminine as passive, reproducing gender roles that maintain male dominance in PA (Azzarito et al., 2006; B. Evans, 2006). These discourses contribute to girls' relative lack of participation in PA, as it may be perceived as male space (Azzarito et al., 2006; B. Evans, 2006). As a result, girls have complex relationships with PA, and despite images of active women and girls becoming progressively more apparent since the 1970s, girls still tend to identify best with recreational PA in gender-specific spaces, while boys are represented publicly with sporting bodies (Azzarito, 2010; Azzarito et al., 2006; Azzarito & Sterling, 2010). These ideas around the representation of girls' bodies also connect to Judith Butler's concept of performativity, where gender can be seen not only as part of subjectivity but something that we "do" (Butler, 2006; B. Evans, 2006; J. Evans, Rich, Allwood, & Davies, 2008).

In alignment with the previous discussion related to schools, PE emerges in the literature as particularly challenging. The literature indicates that girls enjoy and value PE, but perceive a lack of appealing options for them, and interpret PE as a complex and

contradictory space where they recognize gender stereotypes and male dominance (Azzarito et al., 2006; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). Girls feel pressure to be both feminine and athletic, while being evaluated by their peers, other girls, boys, and teachers, and alter their gender performances acccordingly (Azzarito, 2009; Azzarito et al., 2006; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). Feminist poststructural approaches may be used in these instances to deconstruct social and historical discourses that are perpetuated through PE to challenge the traditional sport-based curriculum and inform spaces that may better support girls (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001).

Feminist poststructural approaches may also be used to better understand the contradictory and conflicting information girls perceive about PA. Socially and culturally reproduced images of girls demand that they be both feminine and athletic, often with the goal of attaining some unspecified and unrealistic goal (Azzarito, 2010; B. Evans, 2006; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). Additionally, women's relationships with PA cannot be, and should not be separated from their roles as daughters, mothers, or in careers, but the complexity of these relationships should be recognized and further explored (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Weaving, 2012). Some authors have suggested that youth have more fluid ideas about gender, their bodies are used to contest traditional gender discourses related to PA and thinking about 'hybrid bodies' may promote the multiple forms girls' bodies take up, and celebrate difference, pointing to potential future shifts and opportunities (Azzarito, 2010; Azzarito & Katzew, 2010; B. Evans, 2006).

The Body

> A teen magazine: tips on how to dress, how to wear your hair, how to make him want you. A movie seen at the theater, still large and magical in the dark. The endless commercials and advertisements we believe we pay no attention to.

Constant, everywhere, no big deal. Like the water in the goldfish bowl,

barely noticed by inhabitants. Or noticed but dismissed: "Eye Candy" – a

harmless indulgence. They go down so easily, in and out, digested and forgotten.

Hardly able anymore to rouse our indignation. Just pictures. (Bordo, 2003, p. xiii)

The above quotation is from Susan Bordo's preface to the 10th anniversary of her well-

known work about the body, culture, and feminism, titled *Unbearable Weight*, originally

published in 1993. The quote illustrates the pervasive influence of body related discourse

in society, indicating how normalized and accepted body ideals have become (Bordo,

2003). In the preface to the 10th anniversary, Bordo notes that when the book was

originally published, there were virtually no eating disorders in Asian countries, but that

her book had recently been translated into Chinese and Japanese languages (Bordo,

2003). She also notes that, although she described the number of cosmetic surgeries being

performed to attain body ideals as problematic in 1993, the number had increased more

than tenfold by the book's 10th anniversary (Bordo, 2003). These facts indicate alarming

global trends in body ideals and raise questions around what has happened more recently

and what the future will bring.

We are constantly presented with body images in modern society, and with

inescapable discourses about obesity, health, diet, and fitness, the body, particularly that

of young women, has become a site of conflict, where social, cultural, historical, and

political discourses intersect (Azzarito, 2009; Azzarito & Sterling, 2010; Mansfield &

Rich, 2013; Weaving, 2014). The body is a powerful medium for culture, and is

considered an outward expression of identity, with overweight, for example, representing

neglect or irresponsibility (Bordo, 2003; B. Evans, 2006; J. Evans, Rich, & Holroyd,

2004). Historically, women have been portrayed as the temptress, and as having passive

bodies, while those of men are portrayed actively; these historical representations and ideologies are internalized by women, homogenizing difference, normalizing ideals, and creating shame and guilt associated with our bodies (Bordo, 2003). As a result, women and girls commonly experience body discipline; with the function of women body discipline appearing as beauty, the underlying issue, disempowerment, is often obscured (Duncan, 1994). Larger bodies are stigmatized, and lean bodies are glamourized; while a 'normal' body is difficult to define, some bodies are privileged and valued over others, and young girls exercise discipline over their bodies to attempt attainment of unrealistic ideals (Mansfield & Rich, 2013; Wright et al., 2006).

The body is intertwined with power operations; normalization of body ideals acts as a form of social control, and the appearance of the body has become an indicator of social value (Bordo, 2003; Wright et al., 2006). With young women, it has been suggested that attaining a particular image or ideal is no longer the primary concern, but that it is the body dissatisfaction and associated practices that are important (J. Evans et al., 2002). Young girls are presented with incredibly complex and conflicting ideas about their bodies: they are taught to be virtuous, feminine, and slender, but also to be 'fit' and exercise, and therefore demonstrate historically masculine traits of strength and determination, while still appearing feminine (Azzarito, 2010; Bordo, 2003; B. Evans, 2006). Further, feminine bodies are characterized by practices such as wearing certain clothes, shaving, dieting, and applying makeup, all of which work to conceal natural or biological bodies (Duncan, 1994).

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter explored how feminist and poststructural theories contribute to understanding adolescent girls' health-related behaviours of nutrition and PA. Feminist

theory explores patriarchal influences on health, looking at gender as political and exploring issues of power. Poststructuralist theory considers how knowledge is produced, highlighting the importance of social and historical contexts. A feminist poststructural approach allows feminism and poststructuralist theory to be combined in order to consider how socially constructed gender norms are produced and maintained through discourse. The existing literature applying feminist poststructural approaches to girls' health highlights the importance of how the body is constructed, and how that relates to nutrition and PA. Previous work by this author has noted that gaps in the literature include a lack of comprehensive research exploring nutrition and PA together, and a lack of employment of ecological approaches, resulting in evidence that perpetuates discourse related to individual responsibility for health, rather than exploring broader system-level influence (Spencer et al., 2015). These gaps remain when considering the literature using feminist poststructural theory, indicating an opportunity for research using a feminist poststructural approach to explore societal level discourse in relation to adolescent girls' nutrition and PA.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This chapter describes the methodology and methods for the proposed study. In this chapter, the research objectives are presented, and are followed by discussion connecting the below methodology with the previous theory and literature. Photovoice as a methodology, is then described, including its theoretical underpinnings and previous applications with women, youth, and health. The processes for data collection and analysis, including population and recruitment, data collection procedures, and analysis method are then described, as part of the nine-step process outlined by Wang (2006). This chapter will then conclude with a discussion of ethical considerations. A discussion of quality and rigour, strengths and limitations, and ongoing knowledge translation is found in Chapter 7. This study addresses the following research objectives:

- To explore how girls' perceptions of health, and the associated behaviours such as PA and nutrition, take up and contend with social, political, and cultural contexts.

- To explore how gender intersects with adolescent girls' perceptions of health, with a focus on PA and nutrition.

- To explore how the bodies of girls and young women are produced through the social, political, and cultural influences on health.

It should be noted, that, for the purposes of these research objectives, the term "physical activity" is considered broadly to include all forms of PA, including, but not limited to, sport, recreation, active play, and exercise. Similarly, the term "nutrition" is also being considered broadly to include all forms of food, dieting, and nourishment.

Connecting Feminist Poststructural Approaches and Visual Methodologies

As discussed in Chapter 3, this project employed a feminist poststructural approach. While feminist theory considers gender to be political and is used to explore

issues of power and patriarchal influences for health, poststructural approaches

emphasize the importance of social and historical context to consider how knowledge is

produced (Doucet & Mauthner, 2006; Hesse-Biber, 2012; Weedon, 1987). Feminist

poststructural approaches therefore combine elements of feminist and poststructural

thought to consider how gender norms are produced and maintained. The previous theory

chapter analyzed the existing literature applying feminist poststructural approaches to

girls' health, emphasizing the importance of how the body is constructed and how that

relates to nutrition and PA.

　　　　We live in "a world of bodily visibility", where media and popular culture

constantly provide messaging about the body (Azzarito, 2009). The body is a site for

political, cultural, and social discourse, and young bodies, in particular, are often the site

of conflict around norms and ideals related to health (Azzarito, 2009; Azzarito &

Sterling, 2010). Healthy behaviours for youth, such as PA, are therefore linked to the

meanings they construct for their bodies (Azzarito, 2009). Azzarito and Sterling (2010)

introduced us to the concept of "physical culture", where pressures and discourses

surrounding health dictate bodies be perceived as active and healthy but note the ability

to be perceived as such is tied up in issues of power, history, opportunity, and culture

(Azzarito & Sterling, 2010).

　　　　These complexities arise when considering opportunity for adolescent girls'

health. Public spaces for PA, for example, are often constructed for the dominant group,

resulting in those who do not identify as white, heterosexual men, potentially feeling

unwelcome, anxious, or uncomfortable (Azzarito & Sterling, 2010). PE, as an additional

example, acts as a site where the bodies of youth are managed (Azzarito & Katzew,

2010). We need to consider the complex ways in which young people pick up, interpret,

disrupt, negotiate, produce, and reproduce gender norms and inequities in these spaces, in relation to health, and challenge ideas of public spaces being for male bodies (Azzarito & Katzew, 2010; Azzarito & Sterling, 2010).

Azzarito's work, drawing on feminist poststructural approaches, frequently employs visual or photographic methods. She presented youth with images from health and fitness magazines as a discussion of ideal bodies and found that girls' ideal bodies centered on fashion and slenderness, while boys' bodies were constructed as muscular, strong, and athletic (Azzarito, 2009). In a similar project, Azzarito et al. (2010) determined that youth identify with fluid ideas around gender, exhibit a range of masculinities and femininities, and that young bodies can be sites for resistance to gender discourse (Azzarito & Katzew, 2010). Using visual diaries with youth to explore PA, Azzarito and Sterling (2010) found that, while boys highlighted sport and public performances, girls highlighted recreational activity in "gender-segregated, shielded spaces" (Azzarito & Sterling, 2010). While Azzarito's work is PA-focused, the same concepts can be extended to nutrition, particularly in considering the construction of girls' bodies.

In a study exploring "bodies-at-risk in physical culture" Azzarito (2012) highlights the importance of visual methodologies, as having potential to illustrate the resources youth draw upon in their lives (Azzarito, 2012). She highlights how youth can use visual methods to promote reflection and express meanings attached to their experiences (Azzarito, 2012). Azzarito points out, that, given the public discourse surrounding obesity and health, which serves to objectify bodies, particularly those of young people, visual research can be used to reposition bodies, and provoke youth to consider relationships between themselves and society (Azzarito, 2012). Other authors

have explored the visual presentation of women's bodies in athletics (for example: Sailors et al., 2012; Weaving, 2012; Weaving, 2014). Further, a recent paper points out the overemphasis on clinical trials, behaviour change, and use of narrow individual interventions in health research, suggesting future public health research should incorporate more theory, and use less typical methods, including participatory action research (PAR) and photovoice (Rigg, Cook, & Murphy, 2014).

Methodology: Photovoice

This project employed photovoice as its methodology. Photovoice, originally described by Wang and Burris (1997), is a specific visual methodology where the participants take photos and engage in participatory forms of analysis and dissemination to address a variety of issues related to oppression and health (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang, Yi, Tao, & Carovano, 1998). The following section outlines photovoice as a methodology, beginning with a description of its theoretical underpinnings in critical pedagogies, feminist thought, and participatory methods, followed by a description of how photovoice has been previously applied with youth in a variety of health-related topics.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Photovoice is theoretically based on education for critical consciousness, feminist theory, and community or participatory approaches (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang & Pies, 2004). In regard to education, photovoice is based on the critical pedagogy work of Paulo Freire, which centres on oppression, class, and empowerment (Freire, 2000; Wang & Burris, 1997). Freire suggests that learners are not empty vessels to be filled, but that knowledge is co-created, such that by critically examining society, class, and culture, change can arise through a process of self-awareness (Freire, 2000). Wang and Burris

suggest that Freire's work begins with issues central to the lives of people, and that images enable people to think critically, consider social and political forces, and identify themes accordingly (Wang & Burris, 1997). Photovoice is one technique for achieving this process, which furthers the work of Freire by having participants create images themselves (Wang & Burris, 1997).

Photovoice is also underpinned by feminist theory (Catalani & Minkler, 2009; Wang & Burris, 1997). Similar to feminist approaches, photovoice can be used when there is a political interest; it facilitates the recognition of the importance of women's identities and permits the appreciation of women's experiences and perspectives (Wang, 1999). Photovoice enables oppressed groups to voice their concerns, and can additionally be used with youth, or young women, to incorporate their perspectives into policy or programs, which will be further discussed below (Wang, 2006). Finally, photovoice is appropriate for use with stigmatized groups and issues of oppression, including women and feminist issues (Wang & Burris, 1997).

Photovoice is also underpinned by participatory approaches and can be used for PAR (Catalani & Minkler, 2009; Wang & Burris, 1997). PAR allows a researcher to understand participant perspectives, acknowledges that objectivity is not often possible in research, enhances relevance and trustworthiness, facilitates mutual learning, and empowers people to act (Frisby, Reid, Millar, & Hoeber, 2005). Feminist PAR combines feminist thought with participatory approaches to consider gender as embedded in power structures and has previously been applied to consider women's access to PA, sport, and recreation (Frisby et al., 2005). In her paper describing photovoice's application to women's health, Wang highlights that communities should be included in policy and program planning, that photos can influence policy, and that photovoice emphasizes the

importance of action (Wang, 1999). Later, she also describes how photovoice can be used as a participatory method to engage youth in policy advocacy and community change (Wang, 2006).

Overview of Photovoice and its Applications

Photovoice is a research methodology with three primary goals: (1) to enable people of a community to record and reflect on strengths and concerns, (2) to promote knowledge and critical dialogue through group consideration of photos, and (3) to reach decision makers (Wang, 1999; Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang et al., 1998). It is a flexible methodology, applicable for many groups and public health concerns, including the health of women, families, mothers, and children, examples of which will be discussed below (Wang, 1999; Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang & Pies, 2004; Wang et al., 1998). Participants represent community issues through photos and are therefore able to act as agents of change (Wang & Burris, 1997). Photovoice is based on several key concepts, including that images teach us about social, economic, and political conditions, that photos can influence policy, and that its participatory nature can lead to community action (Wang, 1999). A key element of photovoice involves building capacity for action and advocating for policy change (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang et al., 1998).

Using photovoice as a research methodology has several strengths. By allowing participants to take photographs and engage in the participatory process of analysis, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers are allowed see the world as it is perceived by participants (Wang & Burris, 1997). Using photovoice confronts common research issues, as there is no requirement to read or write, and it forces the researcher to consider the perspective of participants (Wang & Burris, 1997). Further, photos can be powerful, and offer a rich form of data collection (Wang & Burris, 1997). To participants and

researchers photovoice can facilitate valuing the work of others and enhance humanity; it can promote self-esteem, offer the opportunity to be heard, and facilitate exchanges related to power (Wang et al., 1998). Finally, with its participatory nature, photovoice can stimulate action and may therefore result in direct benefits to communities (Wang & Burris, 1997).

Because photovoice is often applied in issues related to health, with the developers of the methodology employed it to directly to influence women's health and reproductive issues (Wang, 1999; Wang et al., 1998). Belon et al. (2014) employed photovoice as a methodology alongside an ecological approach, to explore people's perceptions of how their community environments contributed to health, specifically access to PA (Belon, Nieuwendyk, Vallianatos, & Nykiforuk, 2014). It has also been used to explore women's engagement in sport, as Leipert et al. (2011) employed photovoice to analyze women's experience with curling (Leipert et al., 2011). Finally, it has been applied to explore other elements of oppression and health, for example, through an analysis of Nigerian immigrants' perspectives on healthy eating and PA in the United States (Turk, Fapohunda, & Zoucha, 2015).

Wang also discussed the applicability of using photovoice as a methodology with youth (Wang, 2006). She noted photovoice offers youth the opportunity to record strengths and concerns with their community, enables critical discussion, can be used to engage youth in policy advocacy, harnesses youth's desire to act autonomously, and permits them to document their lives in a creative fashion (Wang, 2006). Wang also described several relevant examples of youth photovoice projects, including those related to violence prevention, tobacco control, food, stress, alcohol, and sexual health (Wang, 2006). Other authors have employed photovoice with youth, noting its value, as it

facilitates development of social identities and engagement with community issues, and offers the rare opportunity for youth to influence that which governs their lives (Royce, Parra-Medina, & Messias, 2006; Strack, Magill, & McDonagh, 2004). These authors also found that photovoice offered opportunity for youth to develop a collective voice, inspire each other, feel empowered, be creative, and that youth enjoyed taking photos (Royce et al., 2006; Strack et al., 2004).

Finally, photovoice has been employed with youth and health in combination. Brazg et al. (2012) engaged youth in a photovoice project about substance abuse and health promotion and found it to provide a creative way to engage community members across multiple levels (Brazg, Bekemeier, Spigner, & Huebner, 2011). Vaughan et al. (2008) used photovoice with young Latina girls to raise critical discussion regarding their health and immediate concerns for their community (Vaughn, Rojas-Guyler, & Howell, 2008). Relevant to this proposed research, Findholt et al. (2011) engaged youth in a photovoice project exploring levers and barriers for PA and nutrition that concluded with a presentation to stakeholders, and Heidelberger et al. (2015) conducted a photovoice study with youth exploring their food environment, noting they received positive feedback about the use of photovoice (Findholt, Michael, & Davis, 2011; Heidelberger & Smith, 2015).

I intended to advance the photovoice methodology by acknowledging and incorporating the above theoretical underpinnings alongside a feminist poststructural approach, as discussed above and in the previous theory chapter. As photovoice is grounded in feminist theory, its tendency to be value-laden, focused on equity, and used with historically marginalized groups made it a natural fit for this study. Photovoice's underpinnings in Freire's pedagogical work in education for critical consciousness,

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however, warrants discussion and advancement. While Freire posits that knowledge is co-constructed and occurs through raising self-awareness and critical consideration of society and policy, Wang and Burris suggest that photovoice advances Freire's work by having participants create their own images, central to their lives, for consideration (Freire, 2000; Wang & Burris, 1997). Further, participatory methods often rely on ideas of co-construction or co-creation (Enright & O'Sullivan, 2012). In this study, I continued that advancement, moving beyond construction or creation of knowledge, to explore how available discourses are taken up, perpetuated, and reproduced.

Given photovoice's theoretical underpinnings related to critical pedagogies, feminist thought, and participatory approaches, its applicability for health, women, and youth, and its previous applications in nutrition and PA, it is appropriate for this study. With the objective of exploring perceptions of gender and health in adolescent girls, and the associated construction of their bodies in the context of social, political, and cultural influences, photovoice was applied to engage adolescent girls, demonstrate their perceptions, and critically consider influences on their health. While the above summarizes previous studies employing photovoice in this area, the below will describe how photovoice was used in this research. In each section, or 'step' outlined below, considerations, best, and promising practices from the literature are applied and referenced throughout.

Data Collection, Management, and Analysis

Wang et al. have described photovoice as being theoretically-grounded, as a methodology for participatory health promotion research, and as applicable for use with women and youth (Wang, 1999, 2006; Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang et al., 1998). This project closely followed the nine-step process outlined by Wang (2006) in her article

describing the use of photovoice to mobilize change with youth (Wang, 2006). That

steps-based process, and how it was applied in this study are outlined in Table 1 and

described in the following section.

Table 1: Outline of Photovoice Steps Process

Step	Traditional Methods Component	Component of Photovoice Methods
Step 1	Establishing population of interest and recruitment	Formation of an advisory committee
Step 2		Recruitment of participants
Step 3		Introduction to the photovoice process
Step 4	Data collection procedures	Establishing informed consent
Step 5		Brainstorming themes for photo-taking
Step 6		Distribution of cameras
Step 7		Photo-taking
Step 8	Data management and analysis	Participatory analysis process using SHOWeD
Step 9	Knowledge translation	Sharing photos

Steps One and Two: Population and Recruitment

The first and second steps for conducting photovoice typically involve identifying

and recruiting an advisory committee and photovoice participants (Wang, 2006).

According to Wang (2006), these steps are interchangeable, and for the purposes of this

study used an iterative or concurrent process. The first step typically involves selecting a

target audience of policy makers or community leaders that might act as an advisory

committee (Wang, 2006). As this study occurred over a prolonged period of time, due to

its nature as a doctoral dissertation project, this step remained relatively informal. As will be described below, recruitment was done in conjunction with Girls Soar, the advisory committee for which I also presented my research proposal to in order to receive feedback. Also due to the nature of this being a student project, I received ongoing advice from my supervisory committee. My supervisory committee and members of the Girl Soar advisory committee provided feedback and advice, assisted with program identification and recruitment (as will be described below), and acted as an audience for knowledge translation, the process for which is further described below, in Step 9.

The second step of the process, recruiting photovoice participants, involved the Girls Soar network. I currently volunteer on the advisory committee for Girls Soar, a local initiative focused on PA and health for girls, and through that role helped them to conduct a survey, to determine the scope of girls' PA programming in the Halifax Regional Municipality. Anyone in the municipality who offers programming, training, funding, or resources for girls' PA, sport, recreation, health, or gender equity were eligible to participate in the survey, which gathered general information about program structure and participants. The survey was distributed widely, through the Girls Soar network, the Halifax Active Living Alliance, and social media. Additionally, Girls Soar advisory committee members, many of whom are provincially or municipally employed, are strategically distributing the survey through their networks.

That survey acted as a starting point for recruitment for this study. One question in particular asked survey participants to identify the primary focus of their program, with options including recreation, sport, health promotion, healthy skills/behaviours, promotion of PA, or issues of gender/gender equity. While Girls Soar does specifically focus on PA, I consider health more broadly, and as such used this question to identify

programs focused on health or gender. The survey also asked questions related to frequency and duration of program meetings, as well as typical number of participants and ages. As my previous work has identified older adolescent girls (ages 16-19) as a gap in the literature, I also used the survey to identify groups or programs targeting that age group (Spencer, Rehman, & Kirk, 2015). Finally, the survey mentioned a doctoral student would be conducting a study in relation to girls' health, and asked participants to indicate if they would agree to be contacted for this purpose.

I therefore used purposeful sampling techniques to identify existing groups or programs with specific characteristics (Patton, 2002). These characteristics included the program having a primary identified focus on health, health promotion, or gender equity (as opposed to being sport-specific, for example), and older adolescent girls as participants. I also looked for programs that held regular meetings, to facilitate the study take place in conjunction with their regular programming. As a review of photovoice studies in public health noted the importance of study duration and community engagement, I planned to engage with the selected group over a period of 2-3 months (Catalani & Minkler, 2009). Once a few programs were identified as potential participant groups, I contacted the leaders of groups to gauge interest, fit, and potential for scheduling in conjunction with their programming. One community group was identified and expressed interest, however a change in staff resulted in shifts in scheduling and programming that eventually resulted in that original group not taking part.

A second group was therefore selected, and following a phone conversation with their leader, I was invited to visit their programming. The organization offers a regular variety of leadership and environmental programming for youth, and while they typically engage with all genders, they occasionally take on gender-specific programming as well.

I was invited to attend an evening program they had regarding mental health, where I got to take part and get to know potential participants. At the end of the session, they asked girl and girl-identified participants to stay a little later such that I could introduce the project and leave information and informed consent packages (please see Appendix A for the study brochure, and Appendix B for information and informed consent documents). There was a great deal of interest from the participants, so I worked with their leader to schedule follow up steps, described below. Inclusion criteria comprised only being girl- or young women-identified, enrolled in the selected program, and willing to commit to taking photographs and attending the sessions for data collection and analysis procedures. In all, 7 girls and young women took part, ranging in age from 13-26, with an average age of 19.2 years. The wide range in ages is due to the fact that, in commitment to participatory methods, the girls who took part in the selected program were invited to take part, in addition to the young women who act as leaders and facilitators for the program. This group size is aligned with and consistent with both Wang's suggestions and other photovoice literature (Catalani & Minkler, 2009; Wang, 2006).

Steps Three through Seven: Data Collection Procedures

The third step in conducting photovoice involves introducing the process, and discussing the use of cameras, ethics, and power, while the fourth step involves establishing informed consent (Wang, 2006). Some of the third step was performed as part of Step 2, during the recruitment process, in which my visit to potential participants allowed the opportunity to describe the study and its requirements and distribute information and informed consent packages. Informed consent (Step 4) was therefore established prior to the remainder of Step 3, as it is described by Wang (2006).

The remainder of Step 3 took place at the first official session with the participants, which took place in the form of a workshop. Informed consent was achieved prior to or at the beginning of this session. During this all-day workshop (outlined in Appendix C), the process for data collection was explained in greater detail, along with ethical concerns, methods for minimizing potential risks, and establishing photo consent (Wang, 2006). Given the potential for ethical concerns with a photovoice study, a section below is devoted to its discussion. The workshop session also included Step 5 and 6. Step 5 involved brainstorming potential themes through an audio-recorded focus group style session with participants which covered a variety of topics relating to health, PA, nutrition, and gender norms. Please see Appendix D for the focus group brainstorming guide. The workshop also included activities to present the girls with general information about the study's purpose, posing associated questions, and presenting example images (Belon et al., 2014; Brazg et al., 2011; Findholt et al., 2011; Heidelberger & Smith, 2015; Royce et al., 2006; Wang, 2006).

Step 6 involves distributing cameras and reviewing their use (Wang, 2006). For this study, participants were provided with the option of using digital or disposable cameras. One youth chose to borrow a digital camera, while all others used their own or a mobile phone. No one opted to use a disposable camera. Training, at the workshop, involved practical skills for using cameras and taking photos, as well as tips in photography. For additional training on effectively capturing photos, I hired a photographer to join us for the workshop, as has been recommended in the literature (Catalani & Minkler, 2009; Strack et al., 2004). Training also involved reviewing ethics surrounding taking photos, including acceptable ways of requesting taking someone's photo, and potential implications of photos (Wang, 2006). As mentioned, ethical

considerations are further detailed in a below section. To conclude the workshop, participants were given folders that included ethical information and consent/photo release forms, study brochures and contact information, tips for taking photos, worksheets to record information about the photos taken, and a list of additional relevant resources (Royce et al., 2006; Wang, 2006). Please see Appendix E for photographs of the folders and their contents (except for consent documents which are included as separate appendices).

The final part of data collection (Step 7) involved providing the girls with time to take photos (Wang, 2006). Following the original workshop session, the girls were given about 2 weeks to take photos, and an additional week to submit them online using a secure file exchange platform. This length of time is congruent with Wang's methodology (Wang, 2006). At this point, the participatory and iterative process of analysis (detailed below), began.

Step Eight: Data Management and Analysis

The eighth step in conducting a photovoice study involves meeting with the participants to discuss their photos (Wang, 2006). For the purposes of this study, this involved holding a second session after the girls had time to take and submit their photos electronically. I arranged to have the photos printed prior to the analysis session. At this session, the participatory and critical process of analysis began, which includes three parts: selecting, contextualizing, and codifying (Wang, 2006; Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang et al., 1998).

The selection of photos was done by the individual girls who took them, by allowing participants time at the beginning of the analysis session to review their printed photos. Each girl selected a small number of photos based on what they felt most

accurately represented their experiences, those they felt were most significant, or those they considered their favorites or that they liked the most (Wang, 2006; Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang et al., 1998). Following selecting their photos, group discussion took place, called contextualizing by Wang et al., as a process of storytelling, which gave meaning to the selected photographs (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang et al., 1998).

The process of contextualization permits participants to think critically about their selected photos, to consider their roots, and consider potential strategies for change (Wang, 2006; Wang et al., 1998). Wang et al. (1998) employ the acronym "SHOWeD" during the contextualizing process, to ask participants what they **s**ee, what they think is really **h**appening, how what is happening relates to **o**ur lives, **w**hy the issue/problem/strength exists, and what can be **d**one about it (Wang et al., 1998). This acronym and participatory process of analysis is commonly used by those conducting photovoice projects with youth and in relation to health (Brazg et al., 2011; Findholt et al., 2011; Royce et al., 2006; Strack et al., 2004; Turk et al., 2015; Vaughn et al., 2008). These discussions occurred as a group at the analysis session, were treated as standard qualitative focus groups, and were audio recorded.

After contextualizing their photos, the girls engaged in the process of codifying (Wang, 2006; Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang et al., 1998). Codifying involves exploring issues arising from the data, and looking for themes through discussion (Wang, 2006; Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang et al., 1998). This involved a continuation of the group discussion, where participants were asked to consider their photos as a broader group, and to consider how images might be grouped together based on similarities or trends, to conduct a participatory form of thematic analysis. The discussion also continued and expanded from the contextualizing process to discuss how the photos and emergent

themes contribute to addressing the purpose of the research, critically considering girls'

health and the construction of their bodies in broader social and political contexts.

The first session of analysis resulted in the continuation of data collection,

something that is common in photovoice projects where Steps 5-8 are often repeated to

gain additional depth (Wang, 2006). In this case, I asked the girls at the end of the first

session if they would like to take more photos and meet again, and they responded

enthusiastically. The girls were given three additional weeks for photo taking and

submitting, prior to a second analysis session taking place, at which the process of

selecting, contextualizing, and codifying was repeated. These iterative sessions also

allowed for two of the young women who were not available for each date to still be

included in the project. In addition to the participatory and critical process of analysis

with the participants, the audio files were transcribed verbatim such that direct quotes

could be used to support the emergent themes. The process of codifying, including how

themes were developed, is described in more detail through Chapter 5.

The ninth and final step outlined in Wang's process for conducting a photovoice

is sharing the photos. This step is discussed in Chapter 8, in the Knowledge Translation

section.

Ethical Considerations

Using photographs as a primary form of data collection presents several ethical

concerns and challenges. Photos are an inherently biased form of data collection, full of

personal influence, values, and judgement, and photo-taking can be perceived as a

political act, resulting in self-censorship of photographers (Wang & Burris, 1997).

Photovoice, as a method, raises several ethical issues including related to recruiting

historically stigmatized or marginalized groups, issues of representation, issues in

suggesting themes for photo-taking, and issues related to advocacy (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). These issues can be mediated by recruiting groups rather than targeting individuals, asking participants to not select photos they feel show anomalies or are not representative, having participants brainstorm for photo-taking themes, and clarifying that photovoice is not intended to completely shift power, but to influence or change dominant discourses, enabling and facilitating relationships between communities and stakeholders (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). Ethical approval was achieved through the Dalhousie Research Ethics Board prior to beginning data collection.

Considering ethics and including ethical training as part of the photovoice process are imperative (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001; Wang et al., 1998). Photovoice studies, including this one, should therefore always begin with a discussion of ethics; I began the photovoice training/workshop session with discussion with the girls about avoiding taking photos that may cause harm or embarrassment, considering when they need someone's permission to take a photo, and how to establish that permission (Wang, 2006; Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). We also discussed the situations in which permission for photo-taking is not required, situations in which photo-taking is not appropriate, and the various implications of taking photos (Wang, 2006).

To mediate the ethical concerns in conducting a photovoice study, Wang and Redwood-Jones (2001) published best practices, which were followed by this study. The first relates to consent, of which there are three types (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). The first is the standard informed consent for participants (Appendix B), which was collected before the first workshop by providing potential participants with information and consent packages upon visiting to explain the project; these packages also required parental consent for those who were minors (Wang, 2006; Wang & Redwood-Jones,

2001). The second type of consent was obtained from individuals who had their photos taken and could be identified from those photos (Wang, 2006; Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). This consent was established by the girls taking part in the photovoice study at the time the photos were taken; as part of their workbooks, girls were provided with the appropriate consent and photo release forms (please see Appendix F) for those who were identifiable in photos and trained on asking for permission and establishing consent (including parental consent if the person photographed is a minor) (Wang, 2006; Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). The final type of consent was the photographer's consent for publication and use of photos (please see Appendix G), which was established after the photographs had been discussed (Wang, 2006; Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001).

Wang and Redwood-Jones (2001) offered several other recommendations to ensure a photovoice study is conducted ethically that were embraced by this project. The first, as noted, is a discussion of camera use, power, and ethics, emphasizing consent and responsibility, which occurred during the first photovoice training workshop (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). Next, it is recommended that photovoice participants/ photographers are provided with materials such as brochures and letters explaining the study's purpose and planned use of photographs that can be given to those who might be photographed, school teachers, employers, and interested community members to explain the project and the photographer's use of a camera; all of these materials were provided to the girls as part of their folders, along with my contact information (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). Finally, it is recommended that the photographer owns her taken photographs, and should be given a copy, which I also did, by printing two copies of each photo, one for the study, and one for the participant photographer (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001).

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS 1 – (BREAKING) STEREOTYPES

While the previous chapter outlined the study methodology and methods, these next two chapters will present the findings of this project. Based on the participatory nature of photovoice methodology, these chapters are grounded in the discussions, meetings with, and photos taken by, the participants, and emphasizes their perspectives by highlighting quotations and photos. Chapter 5 begins with a brief summary of how each of the themes emerged and were selected and then presents and discusses one of the primary themes of this project: *(Breaking) Stereotypes*. Following this chapter, Chapter 6 will present two other themes, *Emotional Safety*, and *Being Outside in Nature.* In both chapters, the themes are discussed and supported by subthemes, photos, and quotations. Chapter 6 will conclude with some recommendations that emerged from discussions with the participants. While these two chapters will present the findings, emphasizing the voices of the girls and young women who took part, Chapter 7 will present a more thorough analysis and discussion of the results, placing them in broader context and current literature.

Codifying: Participatory Thematic Analysis

One of the key components of photovoice methodology is the process of codifying. Codifying allows the typical qualitative analysis protocol of thematic analysis to be elevated by including the participants in this phase of the research. Including participants in all aspects of the research is well aligned with the participatory and engaged underpinnings of photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang & Pies, 2004). Codifying is therefore a participatory form of thematic analysis, which allows issues, themes, and key points to emerge from the data through discussion with participants (Wang, 2006; Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang, Yi, Tao, & Carovano, 1998). As described in

the previous chapter, this process took place at the two follow up sessions in which the participants had the opportunity to discuss and analyze their photos together.

Through the process of codifying, the participants discussed trends, and placed their photos into groups. This process began at the first session with evident and relatively simple groupings that were superficial and apparent, grouping like-photos together. These groupings included such things as 'sports', 'pets', 'food', and 'siblings', and are illustrated through examples as Figure 1.1 and 1.2. As discussions continued, however, more photos were taken, and the group met again, higher level, more critical, and analytical themes emerged. Some of the original groupings were identified to be part of a larger theme, while others became themes of their own. In all, the participants identified five original themes: (1) (Breaking) Stereotypes; (2) Conflict and Contradictions; (3) Emotional Safety; (4) Practice, Confidence, and Pride; and (5) Being Outside in Nature. These will be further discussed below.

Figure 1.1 and 1.2. Photos demonstrating the preliminary photo groupings.

Figure 2.1 and 2.2. Photo groupings illustrating overlap in photos between emergent themes, as evidence to support identification of major themes and associated subthemes.

Through my own analysis, reflection, and examination of the photo groupings, original themes, audio recordings, and notes, I decided to present only three themes. In two cases, it appeared that there was actually a major theme and a subtheme. For example, discussion and photos associated with the theme of *(Breaking) Stereotypes* were explored extensively with the participants. This theme dominated the discussion, had many associated photos, and will be the focus of this first results chapter. The originally-identified theme relating to conflicts and contradictions, however, appeared smaller, and overlapped significantly with the theme relating to stereotypes. For example, many of the contradictions discussed or photographed actually related to a stereotype, or to breaking a stereotype. This was also demonstrated through the photo groupings, in which the participants placed similar photos in both groups, as exemplified in Figure 2.1 and 2.2.

As a result, I have chosen to present *(Breaking) Stereotypes* as a major theme, with *Conflict and Contradictions* as a subtheme. Similarly, it became clear that *Emotional Safety,* was a major theme, which will be presented in Chapter 6, while data related to *Practice, Confidence, and Pride*, are actually a subtheme of emotional safety. The final theme that will be presented in Chapter 6 will be *Being Outside in Nature*, which will be presented as a visual theme.

In sum, the findings chapters (Chapter 5 and Chapter 6) will present three themes explored and identified with the participants through the codifying process. Two of those themes will be presented as major themes with subthemes through a combination of photos, quotations, and analysis, and the third will be presented primarily visually through photos taken by the participants. Those three themes will be presented as follows:

- Chapter 5 - Theme One: *(Breaking) Stereotypes*
  - o Subtheme: Conflict and contradictions
- Chapter 6 - Theme Two: *Emotional Safety*
  - o Subtheme: Practice, confidence, and pride
- Chapter 6 - Visual Theme: *Being Outside in Nature*

As mentioned, these themes and subthemes were identified, explored, and named by the participants. The first theme, *(Breaking) Stereotypes*, and its subtheme, which will be discussed below, have been further divided into several subheadings for the purposes of clarity and organization. For a visual representation of the organization of the findings, including chapters, themes, subthemes, and subheadings, please refer to Table 2.

Table 2: Chart demonstrating findings by chapter, major themes, subthemes, and subheadings.

Findings		
Chapter 5	Chapter 6	
Major Theme One: (Breaking) Stereotypes Subheadings: - Stereotypes, Norms, and Roles: "Everything is Gendered" - Breaking, Challenging, and Conforming to Stereotypes - Appearance and the "Ideal Body"	**Major Theme Two: Emotional Safety**	**Visual Theme: Being Outside in Nature**
Major Subtheme: Conflict & Contradictions Subheadings: - Complexities around clothing and makeup - Performing, showing emotion, and attracting attention - Complexities in nutrition and PA	*Subtheme: Practice, confidence, and pride*	

Major Theme One: (Breaking) Stereotypes

The first major theme identified by the participants is that of *(Breaking) Stereotypes*. This is the major primary theme for the project, and emerged importantly and persistently, through much of the conversation and photos. This theme included discussion of the common stereotypes and expectations faced by girls and young women, their grounding in history, and their relationship to the way tasks and roles are delegated.

This theme also includes how the girls and young women in this study discussed ways to challenge and 'break' those stereotypes, by doing the unexpected, or things they are not *"supposed to"*. This is followed by discussion of the challenges arising when girls want to belong or conform, or when they feel like they are perpetuating existing stereotypes, giving meaning to the brackets around the word 'breaking' in the theme title. Additionally, this section includes discussion of the *"ideal"* body, appearances, and expectations around male partners. Finally, this theme also includes a major subtheme, titled, *Conflict and Contradictions*, exploring the complexities faced by girls and young women regarding their health.

Stereotypes, Norms, and Roles: "Everything is Gendered"

The participants in this study recognized and discussed the existence of common stereotypes, norms, and roles for girls and women. One said, for example, *"there's a lot of stigma around what girls are supposed to be"*. They recognized that certain traits, including weakness, would be identified as feminine, with one saying, for example, *"I always felt like, you know, this is feminine, this is not feminine […] there's a lot of guidelines of what a girl is supposed to do, what a girl is not supposed to do"*. This was perpetuated through environments, with girls describing shopping, for example, and how sections of stores are often obviously pink or blue. This was also connected to health and recreation, with one girl saying, *"I think that there is like stereotypical girl sports and boy sports"* and another saying, *"you don't run with a skirt"*. The participants also discussed the idea of performing any behaviour, by questioning what it means to be a boy or a girl, and that these presumptions are often not faced by men: *"you wouldn't ask a man if they know what they're doing"*. Unreservedly, one simply said, *"everything is*

gendered". These ideas around performance and gender norms are analyzed and discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 7.

The participants acknowledged that many stereotypes have historical roots. One said, *"so you know, in like time prior to this, you know, women were expected to marry [...] they weren't allowed to run, they weren't allowed to do a lot of things"*, while another said, *"way back, women were always expected to stay at home, keep an eye on the kids, cook, clean, everything"*. They acknowledged that these historical or traditional gender roles are passed down generationally and make it difficult for them to be challenged. One participant summarized:

> *"I think that my parents based off of whatever my grandparents were like [...] my dad is going to be the one that works more and my mom's going to be the one that takes care of the kids more [...] they kind of like implanted that in my brain that that was kind of what life, like I don't know, kind of like what the tasks were for men and women but like as I got older, I like, I started to notice that I want to do both"*.

This quote also begins to suggest that the participants have interest in 'breaking' those stereotypes and eliminating typical role delegation.

Role and task delegation were also discussed by the participants as having gender influences. The participants discussed how stereotypes persist and dictate what they will and will not be expected or assigned to do. This was particularly evident regarding stereotypically male tasks requiring strengths or specific technical skills, such as heavy lifting or mechanical repairs. One participant questioned, *"sometimes tasks will come up and people will delegate them like to male and female tasks, like say like moving for example [...] like why is it just always passed over to just like be the men's job to do*

that?". Similarly, another questioned, *"they just will be like oh whatever this guy will have a look at it or my dad will have a look at it, my brother will have a look at it, it's like well why can't my mom have a look at it, why can't I have a look at it? Like what's the difference in, I guess, knowledge here?"* It is apparent through these quotes, that the participants perceived there to be tasks typically assigned to men that may not be assigned to women.

The idea of role or tasks delegation was also evident in discussing roles historically more typical of women. Participants also acknowledged some progress here, in that some roles traditionally or stereotypically assigned to women are more likely to be shared, or to at least cause controversy or discussion now. One participant said, for example, *"I feel like people are more sensitive now to trying to say like 'oh get the girls to cook' or something, cause they know that most women would probably snap at them now you know"*. Some traditional roles tended to persist, however, such as caregiving, as illustrated by a participant saying, *"but like even something as easy as like somebody being upset, I find like people will like turn, if I'm like the only woman around, they'll be like 'oh like you deal with that' kind of thing"*. The girls in this study also discussed how, though most of their parents engaged in traditional gender roles, they might like to challenge some of that, with one saying, *"some things that I think for myself for when I'm like raising a family or like role modelling for like younger people would be to not try to like delegate things as like male/female […] like I don't want to have that like split down the middle, I want it to be like you can ask either parent"*. These quotations acknowledge historical influences, but also shifting and changing discourses, that they identify as being part of.

Breaking, Challenging, and Conforming to Stereotypes

At both the brainstorming and analysis sessions, participants frequently discussed girls and young women challenging stereotypes. They discussed the significance of *"breaking"* free from stereotypes, and doing what may be unexpected of them, or what they may not be *"supposed to do"* as girls and women. One described this experience by saying *"growing up I always felt that I was not necessarily interested in those kinds of I don't know, certain games or Barbie dolls […] I always was the outdoor type, like up to my ears in mud […] on my bicycle, or in the water, like you know just swimming and not worrying about my make-up, not worrying about my hair"*. This quotation also connects to both the above-described traditional gendered roles for women, and the ideas of appearance and being outside, both of which are further discussed in more detail below. Another participant described her recreational pursuit of fire hooping by calling it, *"kind of dangerous I guess, and it's kind of like showing, I don't know, some people might think oh like that would maybe be something that like male performers do"*, showing her recognition both of traditional norms, and also her ability to challenge them, using PA as an example.

The girls also exemplified the idea of challenging stereotypes through photos. The photo in Figure 3.1, for example, is described by a participant saying, *"I just thought it was relevant because […] there are always like these stereotypes […] how we're supposed to sit and dress and here she's wearing a Batman t-shirt and she's got her tongue sticking out and she's sitting really slouchy"*. Similarly, the participants discussed playing video games as a recreational pursuit not typical for girls and young women, saying, *"it's always that thing where when women try to, when they […] say they like video games, guys are always like 'Really? Do you really like video games?' It's kind of*

like video games is a guy thing and it's not a girl thing". This quotation was associated with the photo in Figure 3.2 and was furthered by mentioning how when video games are intended or marketed for girls and women, they are often aligned with the above-discussed stereotypes, such as *"dress-up and stuff"*.

Figure 3.1 and 3.2. Examples of participants challenging traditional gender stereotypes.

The participants also discussed challenging stereotypes associated with health, PA and nutrition. Referring to a photo discussed by a participant (though, interestingly, not uploaded to be included as part of the study), one young woman said, *"it's funny because like my nails are painted in this photo, I have like rings on, and my eyelashes are long but I'm still like, mowing down on this big burger […] there's like stereotypes around the way a woman should like put her napkin on her lap […] I was just like enjoying it with my friends and not caring about what I looked like"*. Others discussed PA more specifically, using photos that illustrate girls and young women doing what might not be

expected of them. Referring to the photo in Figure 4.1, a participant said, *"we were playing outside and got this tree in our backyard […] It's cool that you managed it, climbing up in a skirt, which is why I picked it because climbing trees in skirts, and it's doable, it's very doable".* She goes on to state, *"just to challenge that delicate, 'they shouldn't climb trees, they're going to hurt themselves'".* Finally, describing the photo in Figure 4.2, a girl said, **"people think 'oh if girls can go down the slide' or something like that, 'they'll sit down'"**, implying again that girls may not be expected to take risks in PA. These examples tie closely to historically and socially reproduced gender norms and ideals, which will be more thoroughly discussed in Chapter 7.

Figure 4.1 and 4.2. Examples of girls challenging stereotypes in PA.

The theme *(Breaking) Stereotypes* was complicated by the fact that, while there are many situations in which girls and young woman challenge norms relating to their

health and associated behaviours, there are also many situations in which they choose not to do so. This is the primary reason for the brackets surrounding the word 'breaking' in this theme title, indicating that while girls and young women often do challenge norms, it is more complex than being able to do so all the time. Relating to the previously-described influence of history, one young woman said, *"it's kind of like a habit almost [...]in my relationship I'm usually the one cooking because my partner, he was never taught how to cook because I guess his mother assumed that because he's a boy or something"*. Similarly, the participants acknowledged that through these sorts of traditions, they also contributed to perpetuating stereotypes. One girl said, for example, *"like I'm not even going to lie, like if I'm at home and I'm trying to open a jar or something, I'll pass the jar to my dad before I'd pass it to my mom you know"*. The participants also described contexts in which they preferred to engage in what might be considered stereotypical behaviours for women, but noted that just because they do, does not mean they exclusively want to engage in those behaviours, or that they wish to not engage in behaviours that might typically be associated with masculinity. One girl said, for example, *"like carrying on stereotypes I guess, I also really like to bake, and I really like to sit quietly, and read books, but I also really like to play outside and get covered in mud"*. All of the girls discussed certain areas in which these types of tensions arose in their thinking and behaviour.

The participants also discussed how challenging stereotypes could be difficult, particularly regarding PA, and especially in the context of traditional sports. One girl described, *"growing up I loved to play soccer [...] but I never knew how to approach a group of boys who were playing soccer and I would just kind of stand there and watch them and they would never invite me [...] it's wonderful for those people who are*

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outgoing and just like go and enjoy but not everybody is like that". Another participant described how difficult these sorts of situations can be by saying, *"I think it's about not maybe partially not wanting to be the odd one out, not wanting to be that girl that's like playing, the only one playing with the boys, or you know or like being away from your friends who are doing something else"*. These complexities regarding conforming to or challenging stereotypes, are often constituted in relation to boys and men, result in internal conflict, and are discussed further below in the major subtheme surrounding conflict and contradictions. Many of these gendered norms and stereotypes, and associated complexities and challenges, relate to appearance and socially constructed body ideals.

Appearance and the "Ideal Body"

Many of the gender norms and stereotypes relating to girls' and young women's health also related to their appearance, and in particular, the construction of their bodies. The girls and young women in this study recognized the complex societal ideals placed on the bodies of women. The pervasive and persistent nature of gender stereotypes and expectations relating to the body were discussed by the participants regarding beauty, body size, gender presentation and nonconformity, media influence, PA, and nutrition. Each of these are discussed below.

The girls and young women in this study highlighted he significance of beauty norms and ideals. One said, *"I think everybody at one point like definitely looked in the mirror and been like 'oh I wish that I took just one size smaller' or something like that, you know what I mean? […] and it's like really if you're comfortable in it what else matters? Like what are we worried about?"* Similarly, another said, *"I think that sometimes people might not want to wear certain things, like maybe you're like 'oh I*

really like that t-shirt' and then you put it on [...] or people might think in their head like *'oh I look, like, fat in this' or something so they don't get what they wanted from that* *because of like the way that society is"*. While the participants recognized social pressures revolved around unrealistic ideals, they also noted how difficult they can be to challenge, and how entrenched in norms they are.

The participants frequently discussed expectations for girls and young women to align with societal pressures to look a certain way, particularly around thinness. One said, *"I could definitely see like girls in my high school that wanted to be like that perfect* *girlfriend that was like you know skinny and had all the friends, blond, like I don't know,* *I don't even know where that came from"*. Another participant discussed how deeply rooted these expectations are by describing the pervasiveness of the 'ideal' body across age groups and connected these ideals to nutrition. She said, *"young girls, like women in* *general like even friends' parents [...] they're all like doing these crazy diets [...] I think* *it's getting like more and more a thing, like [...] they're going vegan or vegetarian for* *not like animals' purpose, like they're doing it because they're like 'oh you lose a bunch* *of weight if you do this'"*. These examples illustrate the ubiquitous nature of body ideals, especially those related to thinness.

Relating to body ideals, the girls and young women also discussed expectations surrounding gender, performance, and presentation. One girl discussed this in relation to her younger brother who does not always appear aligned with traditional gender norms, *"he used to have like, you know, long hair and a dress, so you know, like it doesn't* *matter, but some people like couldn't get that he was a boy"*. Another discussed her own experience with gender nonconformity, saying, *"I used to have my hair like really short,* *like a buzz cut and it was interesting because like [...] if I was walking like in the girls'*

change room, somebody would be like 'why are you in the girls' change room?' […] Just because I had short hair". Finally, one young woman discussed her intersectional experience as an immigrant, and associated objectification, by saying, *"being an immigrant […] some people think that my accent is a bit Russian sounding so there is a stereotype of Russian woman, like I don't know, there's a stigma […] I think that a lot of people approach me with as like this object, as in like that foreign, exotic object, maybe somebody who's ignorant although I've lived here for 13 years now".* These examples illustrate how idealized bodies are connected to gender nonconformity, in that these examples show the violation of traditional norms and associated perceived consequences.

These discussions regarding gender norms, appearance, and body ideals often related to the influence of media. Frequently, the girls and young women described the media as a primary source of where gender norms, stereotypes, and body ideals are reproduced and perpetuated. One girl summarized, saying, *"I think one of the biggest things about media is like they, always like portray this image of what women are supposed to look like".* Another added, *"And in posters often, if it's women they don't show the face, it just shows a sexualized perfect body".* Indicating girls and young women recognize these expectations and objectifications often do not stem in reality, one participant said, *"like have you ever seen the commercials… of like girls when they're on their period? It's like they do all of these things… and it's like… kind of like unrealistic looking".* Though they recognize these influences, they are also not immune to it, however, and can recall instances in which they are or were impacted by media-portrayed body ideals. One young woman described, *"I think about back to when I was a kid, it was like Barbie, and that was the first thing that I was like 'oh, pretty' you know? Like the shape or whatever, and then like Barbie has make-up and like blond hair and then when I*

got older [...] like celebrities in magazines that I would see and be like, 'why do they look so good?' I have so many pimples.'' In this instance, the participant was not only able to identify the ideal through Barbie, but associated that example with her own imperfections, showing how media, through illustrating what is beautiful, can also highlight what could be perceived as the opposite.

The participants also connected media's portrayal of girls and young women more concretely to nutrition. As alluded to above, a variety of dieting and weight restricting behaviours are popular with girls and young women, and this is seen and perpetuated through media, particularly through social media. One participant described, *"like on Instagram [...] there's always pictures and it's like 'try this tea' or whatever, it's like always like this girl in a bikini who looks unrealistically tanned and flawless and stuff and then like young girls [...] would think like 'oh I need to look like that' [...] she looks flawless and perfect, cause she's drinking this tea"*. The same participant continued by saying, *"they're like trying to advertise products and using these like unrealistic models [...] and it's kind of like sexualizing women too. It's like 'look at how hot this girl is because she drinks this tea'"*. This quote also illustrates the pervasive influence of industry in women's health, which was also recognized by the participants.

Similarly, the participants connected media influence to the PA of girls and young women. They discussed media's portrayal of women as athletes, highlighting the significant double-standard in expectations around attire and uniforms. This is more thoroughly discussed below in the section on conflicts and contradictions. The girls and young women in this study also highlighted their perceived lack of representation of women as athletic in the media, discussing the frequency with which major sports emphasize only male teams on television, for example. One girl also said, *"there aren't*

that many ads that show girls and physical contact sports", demonstrating their

recognition that a lack of representation might relate to participate in activities

traditionally dominated by men.

Closely related to body ideals and appearance norms are heteronormative

stereotypes that indicate women should aim to impress men, and young girls should work

toward finding a male partner. The participants in this study felt those stereotypes and

gave many examples that connected closely to their appearance and bodies. One said,

when she was younger, *"people started asking 'oh when are you getting a boyfriend?',*

it's like we're not allowed to function without a boyfriend" while another echoed, *"my*

grandparents like constantly are reminding me like 'when are you going to get a

boyfriend? You've got to find yourself like a nice rich man'", again illustrating the

previously-discussed influence of historical context. These quotes and examples also

illustrate the objectification and commodification of women, their historical treatment as

property, and the fact that they would be perceived as not being capable of being

independently wealthy.

The girls and young women also connected similar examples to their bodies and

to the objectification of women. One young woman said, *"certain members of my family,*

I get the sense that the women, it's something that's passed like from the father to the

husband or boyfriend […] like it's not set but it's implied". These ideals are perpetuated

even to very young girls; one participant described, *"my brother and sister's friend, she*

was 9, in school, and these other girls said, 'you've got to swing your hips more if you

want the boys to notice you'". Comparably, this was associated with the complex

relationships between young women, with one girl describing, *"trying to look good for*

guys too… it's like yah girls are competing with each other in high school, but they're

also like trying to be what like every guy wants". Again, the historical objectification and commodification of women is visible here, and while we would not expect women to be treated as property in 2018, these historical influences are still felt by the girls and young women in this study.

Major Subtheme: Conflict and Contradictions

Within the first major theme of *(Breaking) Stereotypes* emerged a significant subtheme, titled, *Conflict and Contradictions*. As mentioned in the preceding sections, girls and young women are confronted and challenged, in many ways, when it comes to gender stereotypes and norms relating to their health. This subtheme will explore those conflicts and contradictions experienced by girls in more depth and includes presentation of findings showing how complex it is to challenge stereotypes and norms. Also presented below will be the participants' perceptions of complexities surrounding expectations about clothing, makeup, performing, showing emotion, and attracting attention. This section will conclude by connecting these conflicts and contradictions more specifically to the health-related behaviours of PA and nutrition, as perceived by the girls and young women in this study. These findings are furthered with analysis and discussion in Chapter 7.

The participants expressed, generally, how difficult it can be to challenge gender stereotypes, connecting to the above-discussed complexities in conforming or perpetuating norms, and how this can result in internal conflict. One girl said, *"it's very hard sometimes because you don't want to be a stereotype girl, but sometimes some girls like stereotypical things, but they will not do it […] because it's a stereotypical thing for girls".* This suggests that girls may actually reject certain behaviours that they might find enjoyable, only to avoid potentially being perceived as perpetuating a stereotype or norm

and illustrating a rather circular predicament. Similarly another participant said, *"like they don't want to do things to seem like your typical girls even though they are girly"*, while another agreed, *"I feel like at one point it would have been like women would have tried to like do certain things to act girly and now I don't know [...] now it's like I don't want to act girly even though I sometimes want to, because I don't want to fit into that stereotype, it's almost like flipped a bit",* again suggesting the historical effects of stereotypes, notms, and expectations. Finally, one participant said, *"that's really hard too because if you do like things that are stereotypical for girls, people think you are a stereotypical girl, so it's really hard in that sense, cause you don't necessarily want to be thought of as that but you don't want to be doing stuff that you don't like either".* These examples highlight how difficult these internal conflicts can be for girls and young women's experiences.

Complexities related to clothing and makeup. Other complex contradictions and conflicts emerged as the participants discussed physical appearances, and the expectations they experience around clothing and makeup for girls and young women. One girl illustrated the complexities regarding clothing: *"It's so confusing to separate it. Because like if I put on a skirt [...] like sometimes I analyze, 'do I really want to wear this skirt?' or 'do I want to wear pants?' because pants is usually what I wear so I should wear pants. Like I want to, but why do I feel like this?".* Another responded, saying *"Well yah sometimes it's very hard [...] you're second-guessing yourself at every step, [...] should I wear a dress because I feel like it, or is it society [...] it's for everything really, like clothes, your hair, and your shoes and everything".* Another participant discussed how these dialogues differ across times and spaces, saying, *"like depending on the crowd I'm hanging out with I won't wear a skirt because I don't feel comfortable wearing a*

skirt because I don't usually wear them and then if I wear a skirt I don't want people to make a big deal, like 'oh my gosh you're wearing a skirt'". These examples illustrate how complex something that may be typically looked at as simple as getting dressed can be for girls and young women, as they navigate the extent to which they conform to gender stereotypes a multitude of times during the day. The last quotation also illustrates challenges around how girls feel when they attract unwanted attention, which will be further discussed below.

The participants also discussed complex internal conflict and dialogue experienced in decisions around wearing makeup. One of the girls suggested, *"I worry sometimes, I'm like, 'why is this connected to my happiness?' that I want to put on make-up [...] I worry like am I doing this because I want to? I feel like I am, but then I'm also like maybe I just want to because… society."* Regarding the photo in Figure 5, picturing a girl wearing makeup on only one half of her face, one participant said, *"sometimes it just feels like we're expected to wear make-up and we're not allowed to do it because that's what we want to do as people, but it's because if you wear too much 'oh why do you wear so much make-up? You shouldn't, you're so pretty.' Just a little bit of make-up, 'here, it looks true', no make-up, 'are you o.k.? You look tired'"*. These quotations illustrate how clothing and makeup are areas where complexities relating to the expectations to conform or challenge stereotypes are presented. Girls and young women are expected to wear makeup, but not too much, to be both pretty and strong, to conform to stereotypes, but also challenge them, and are responsible for navigating these contradictions, as experiences with their bodies, daily.

Figure 5. An example of a photo taken to illustrate the complex contradictions faced by girls and young women regarding makeup.

Performing, showing emotion, and attracting attention. The participants often described their actions, particularly those relating to gender norms, as *"performances"*. The idea of performance is significant for feminist poststructural analysis and will be further discussed in Chapter 7. One participant said, *"there are things like […] expected of women so it's almost like you had to act in a certain way, it's like your performance"*. Comparing the expectations of women to their performance at the dinner table, she discussed the expectation for women to *"use table manners"* and *"look presentable"* even while indulging in "*a big thing of chicken wings"*. Others discussed different examples of performances. One said, *"There are different kinds of performances like […] have you done something with your hair that day […] or are you putting on a show, like*

a [...] circus show or a ballet show where you're there for the audience?". This quote alludes not only to gender role performances related to appearance, but also to the fact that many PA and recreational pursuits require performances of young women. Describing Figures 6.1 and 6.2, one girl said, *"the contrast between [name] doing gymnastics and [name] reading is really interesting because that one she's performing but this one it was just like a quiet moment at home"*. This illustrates both the concept of performance, and the contrast between resisting and conforming to gender norms.

Figure 6.1 and 6.2. Examples illustrating contrasting gender performances.

The participants also deliberated about showing emotion. They described how they were contradictorily expected in some circumstances, to not show emotion, or risk being perceived as overly emotional, but in others to show more emotion than they felt necessary. One girl described herself saying, *"I cry when I'm frustrated so like if I get [...] overly frustrated and I start crying [...] I don't want people to think that I'm crying*

because I'm sad". While her, and others, were concerned about how crying is perceived, another said, *"the opposite kind of happens to me because like […] I'm very unemotional and like sometimes […] let's say I was at a skating competition and like it doesn't go well, my mom's like 'why aren't you upset?'"*. Demonstrating how intricately tied this is to gender, one of the young women said, *"I live with three boys and there's been times when I have felt like I'm being like annoying […] they're like 'oh she's being cranky because she's on her period' or whatever, and I'm like 'I literally am, o.k.?' like that's a stereotype"*. This quote ties together concepts of gender role expectations and showing emotion. The allusion to men here as well can be tied to the dominant masculine discourse associated with strength and not showing emotion, again illustrating how girls and women face contradictions regarding how much emotion they should show, including how and when they should show this emotion.

Tied to the concepts of performance and showing emotion are contradictions regarding attracting attention. The girls discussed their discomfort of people making a *"fuss"* over them, particularly relating to gender. Continuing the discussion on makeup, one said, *"we don't like people fussing over like the one little thing that changed […] So if one day you felt like wearing makeup, and you came out with makeup on, everyone would have a reaction"*. Similarly, and related to the contradictions around showing emotion, one said *"it's just like, if they ask if you're o.k., and you're not, you're going to say you're fine anyways because you don't need that"*. She advanced this by saying, *"so you don't have to deal with what they'd have to say because you know […] what their reactions would be, but you really want to like just maybe scream or sit down and cry"*, again illustrating the internal conflicts faced by girls and young women. In summary, one girl said, *"it's very hard to be the centre of attention when you don't want to"*. These

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examples illustrate the complex negotiations faced by young women in navigating the expression of their emotions and how this differs based on context.

Complexities in nutrition and physical activity. The participants also discussed conflicts and contradictions more specifically relating to their health-related behaviours of nutrition and PA. Regarding nutrition, complexities regarding portion size were frequently discussed. One girl discussed the contradictory messages received by girls and young women by saying, *"like eating, if you take a really small portion, if you don't take a second portion it's, 'oh you haven't eaten much, you must be on a diet'. Or you eat like a really big portion, and 'wow that was a lot of food'"*. Similarly, and also related to dieting and body ideals, a young woman said, *"they've always kind of commented on like […] 'she eats like a bird' […] and like yah I don't eat as much as they do but they'd always kind of like stab at that […] and I've seen […] people say no to certain foods because they're like 'oh I don't want to eat that cause I don't want to like get fat' or whatever" […] it's like you're either eating too much or eating too little"*. These examples illustrate the perception of the participants that they would be criticized for the amount of food they eat, regardless of the amount, a significant contradiction between eating too little and too much.

The girls discussed additional contradictions regarding their nutrition. First, they perceived there to be a contradiction between messaging relating to healthy food and how much it can cost to eat well. One said, *"I find I never eat out because I can't, first of all I can't find anything healthy, and if I can find, like the few places that I know that cook well, they are so expensive I can't afford that"*, demonstrating the contradiction between being told to eat well, and how it may not be feasible to do so. Finally, the girls and young women discussed how tied to gender these contradictions are, with one saying,

"when we talk about men's eating habits it always comes back to strength, so it's always like 'oh he's a growing boy, he needs to eat more'. No one ever said that about me when I was a little girl […] even today [men are] dieting for strength, they're trying to improve their health but […] we don't talk about girls' health […] we always talk about appearance". This quote shows the contradiction between discourse targeting how men and women should eat differently, with women often told to eat less and avoid weight based on appearance, and men often told to eat more to gain strength.

Further contradictions and gender role negotiations were discussed regarding PA. The girls discussed their perceptions of common activity-related gender stereotypes, such as performing activities *"like a girl"* or being perceived as good at something, but having that talent qualified with *"for a girl"*. One participant said, "*like if you want to do a sport that usually, like it's just a guy team or whatever, if you try it, it's just like 'oh you're really good for a girl'"*. The participants also discussed representation, noting, for example, that it seemed like schools had few opportunities for girls' sports and that there seem to be few women coaches. One participant also described how the boy participants seemed to be pushed ahead more willingly for competitive opportunities, saying, *"I noticed just like the boys in group C were like being put into group B faster than the girls even if […] like the girls were like better skaters, and so it was interesting. And then in group A, like I just got moved into group A, and I'm the only girl"*. These complex situations were discussed as causing both internal and external conflicts for the participants, who have to face these negotiations as part of PA participation.

Further complicating PA for girls and young women are perceived double-standards regarding attire. One girl described, *"like in volleyball or whatever, the girls, like part of their uniform is to wear, like really short shorts and the boys it's not, like it's*

like those shorts have nothing to do with how your performance is". This quote

demonstrates not only the participant's discomfort with the expectations around attire

expected of women athletes, but also the contradictions encountered when comparing that

attire to an equivalent *"boys"* team. Furthering that idea, another participant said, *"in*

figure skating I know boys wear like pants and shirts, but girls have to wear [...] bare

legs and make-up right [...] it would be like, everybody just like saying it's not going to

be good unless we can see your legs sort of thing [...] but there's also the opposite. Like

schools that have...there's a dress code". This quote reiterates the contradictory

expectations regarding attire, but also ties athletic performance and value to body shape

and objectification, further perpetuating body ideals. Finally, this last quote also

demonstrates the contradictions faced by girls in that they are in many settings expected

to cover their bodies, but in others expected to expose them.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the first section of findings of the study, descriptively,

emphasizing the perspectives of the participants by relying primarily on the participatory

analysis process to develop themes. Following a brief description of that process, which

included two follow up focus-group style sessions, the derivations of primary themes

were described. The three themes were identified as: First, the major theme of *(Breaking)*

Stereotypes, with the subtheme *Conflict & Contradictions*; second, *Emotional Safety*,

with the subtheme of *Practice, Confidence, and Pride*; and finally, a visual theme, titled,

Being Outside in Nature. This findings chapter focused exclusively on the first theme,

(Breaking) Stereotypes, and presented it using supportive quotations and photographs.

(Breaking) Stereotypes, represents the major or primary theme of this research.

Within this theme, the girls discussed the wide variety of stereotypes, norms, and

expectations of girls and young women, saying *"everything is gendered",* and recognizing that they are expected to act in certain ways. They also acknowledged and discussed the historical and cultural underpinnings of these gender roles, and analyzed their persistent relation to task delegation, even in present times. The girls also discussed breaking and challenging stereotypes and gave many examples and photos that illustrated them confronting norms and expectations. That said, they also discussed many contexts in which challenging norms is difficult and when they feel as though they are contributing to or perpetuating stereotypes. Also emergent as part of this theme were the girls' recognition of the *"ideal body",* and societal pressures and privileging of thinness. While the girls acknowledged that these ideals are typically unrealistic, they were not immune to their influence, and discussed media's important role in both highlighting unrealistic bodies, and in connections to the girls' health, PA, and nutrition. Chapter 6, to follow, will present the remaining findings through two additional themes.

The *(Breaking) Stereotypes* theme also resulted in an emergent major subtheme of *Conflict and Contradictions*. The participants discussed how many of the gender roles, expectations, stereotypes, and norms surrounding their health and health behaviours often contradict one another and result in conflict for the girls and young women. They discussed, at length, how it can be very difficult to challenge norms and ideals, and how simultaneously, if they want to engage in a behaviour that might be perceived as *"stereotypically girly",* they experience inner turmoil about why they want to engage in the behaviour or if they should continue to perpetuate norms. This resulted in many contradictions and conflicts around clothing and makeup, such as when they should and should not wear makeup or wear a skirt. Relatedly, they also discussed complexities regarding performing gender, showing emotion, and attracting attention, expressing

discomfort with attracting unwanted attention, and perceiving that they might attract said attention both if they confront norms, or if they are perceived as dressing up or wearing too much makeup. Finally, the participants related these ideas to nutrition and PA. Regarding nutrition, they discuss how no matter the portion size they select, they are critiqued for eating not enough or too much, and how men are perceived as eating for strength while women are perceived as eating for size. Regarding PA, they discussed notions of performing activities *"like a girl"* or being talented *"for a girl"*, they also perceived that boys and men received more support, encouragement and opportunities, and that there were double-standards regarding athletic attire. The findings chapter to follow will present two additional themes, as well as recommendations and ideas shared by the participants.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS 2 – EMOTIONAL SAFETY AND BEING OUTSIDE IN

NATURE

The previous chapter presented the first major theme: *(Breaking) Stereotypes*, and its associated subtheme, conflict and contradictions. This chapter will present the remaining findings, using two additional themes. The second major theme, *Emotional Safety*, will be presented alongside its subtheme: Practice, confidence, and pride. The other theme that will be discussed in this chapter will be a visual theme, titled, *Being Outside in Nature*. Similar to the previous chapter, each of these themes is supported by participant photos and quotations. Finally, this chapter will conclude with ideas and recommendations that were suggested by the participants as potential solutions or steps forward.

Major Theme Two: Emotional Safety

The second major theme to emerge from the participatory analysis is that of *Emotional Safety*, a label that was developed by the participants. While the term is typically used in the field of psychology regarding couples' relationships (Catherall, 2006), the participants used it more broadly, to describe the circumstances and facilitators that made them feel comfortable, safe, loved, appreciated, protected, expressive, assured, and confident. Having emotional safety supported the girls' resilience in order to be able to navigate the previously explored gender stereotypes, norms, and expectations, the associated conflicts and contradictions. Aspects of *Emotional Safety* include first, friends, family, and pets. Secondly, participants discussed aspects and experiences related to that of physical safety and potential harassment. Finally, the subtheme of *Practice, Confidence, and Pride* developed as part of this theme, where examples highlighting the strength and resilience of the participants are discussed.

Friends and family emerged as a significant part of this theme. Beginning with friends, these social relationships were highlighted as an integral part of emotional safety. The participants discussed, however, that there are many types of friendships, having varying degrees of familiarity, closeness, and trust. One participant described, *"You know you've had people that you know forever, so you trust them a lot, and you have friends that you haven't known for as long but you still trust them, and then you have other friends that […] You can't trust them with some things"*. This alluded to trust as an important part of emotional safety, and also connected to the above ideas about attracting attention, as explained by one of the participants: *"they make a big deal out of some stuff so you don't want to tell them the things that they would make fuss over and make you feel even more uncomfortable than you have to"*. The participants therefore discussed the importance of *"feeling comfortable around people enough to tell them something"*, illustrating the necessity of meaningful relationships in which girls and young women feel supported.

The participants frequently discussed the support received from their friends and connected this both to aspects of gender and to elements of health. One participant described this support by saying*, "like when you're down in the dumps they're going to pick you up, they're going to pick you up and say, 'o.k. what can we do to make you feel better?'"*. While this is likely a non-gender specific important component of friendship in general, this aspect of friendship is connected to the emotional safety described by the participants in that good friends can help girls and young women feel safe and confident. Describing the photo in Figure 7, one participant said, *"these are two of my best friends and they both live away and this is like a really special memory […] one of our favorite pastimes when we were in high school was all going surfing together"*, indicating the

connection between social support and PA. The girls and young women also connected this form of social support to gender and to the previously discussed concept of appearance. One young woman explained, *"when you get older, you have closer friends and your friends don't care what you look like because they want the person and not the idea"*. Comparably, another said, "*I'm lucky to have that group and it makes me forget what other young women probably face out there who don't have a similar group where they can like, be silly"*, indicating the importance of friend groups supporting girls to be authentic and expressive. These examples show how friendship, particularly that between girls, can be a facilitator for emotional safety, helping the girls navigate and transcend all of the previously described conflicts and tensions.

Figure 7. An example of a photo friends providing emotional safety and encouraging PA.

In addition, the participants included their families as part of the emotional safety theme. Though there are examples in previous sections that reference family members, thus far, they have been discussed primarily negatively. This negative association is due

to adults often being associated with those who tend to perpetuate or reinforce gender norms through historical and generational influences. That said, family were also discussed positively, in many additional ways, and were featured frequently in their photos. Participants discussed their parents also as important role models, and sometimes as people who encouraged them to disrupt traditional gender norms. The girls also highlighted the importance of their siblings, who they valued as motivators and as people with whom to participate in healthy behaviours, like PA. One participant said, *"like I find them really annoying sometimes but then when I'm away […] I realize they're like the main thing I talk about".* Figure 8.1 highlights a photo of siblings together, while Figure 8.2 illustrates a group of siblings being active together.

Figure 8.1. A photo highlighting the importance of family, or siblings, for emotional safety.

Figure 8.2. An example of siblings being physically active together.

A final aspect relating to friends and family as part of emotional safety included pets. Most of the girls and young women in this study included pets as members of their family, talked about them contributing to their feeling emotionally safe, and sometimes as encouragers of PA, for example, walking a dog. Pets were highlighted frequently in the photos taken by the participants, examples of which are visible in Figure 9.1 and 9.2.

Figure 9.1 and 9.2. Examples of photos of pets taken by the participants.

While families and friends were discussed primarily as facilitators for emotional safety, the girls and young women in this study also discussed things that challenged their emotional safety. Though most of the participants in this study were quite young, they all discussed their physical safety as relating to gender and health, and many described experiences of potential harassment or where they had been made to feel uncomfortable. The girls and young women frequently made statements like, *"we feel like we have to be more careful when we're alone"* and *"we have to prepare ourselves"*. One girl described, *"you know walking on a quiet street especially like if there's nobody there it's really hard to feel safe because it's a real problem"*. These quotes demonstrate the girls' perception that women are often threatened with harassment and danger, and this clearly connected to the girls' emotional safety in that they limit their time alone and feel as though they have to have to be careful, particularly while traveling alone.

Some girls described having had unfortunate experiences; one girl said, for example, *"I was just sitting down, waiting for the bus and this guy he comes up to me and he sits down, and he starts asking me all these questions and it wasn't until much later that it clicked that he had made me extremely uncomfortable"*. Another suggested, *"I think it can change the dynamics of trust between men and women"*. This perceived potential caution or distrust of or around men was connected to the girls' and young women's emotional safety. Likely as a result of this trust, another young woman said, *"whenever I have to go to the doctor or the dentist I always like prefer to have a female"*, suggesting that they may feel more emotionally safe in girls-only spaces. Comparatively, one young woman said, *"you don't really hear about like boys' drinks getting drugged"*, suggesting the participants' recognition of the current culture and discourse surrounding sexual assault, and the growing #MeToo movement.

While these examples were rarely overtly connected to PA or nutrition by the participants, it's not difficult to see the possible connections. As girls and young women feel challenged by traveling alone, simply getting to or from opportunities for PA, or pursuing independent forms of activity like walking or hiking could be limited. Additionally, as the above discussion points to distrust between women and men, and the perceived absence of women as coaches and mentors has been previously discussed, it is understandable that girls and young women may lack emotional safety and support in many contexts where PA might typically be encouraged. Many of these complex issues of safety relating to the girls' understanding of emotional safety and associated ongoing discourse, warrant further analysis and discussion that is presented in Chapter 7.

One related example discussed by the participants could also connect to the complex intersectionality points of race, immigration, or religion. A young woman described a situation by saying, *"like a couple of girls that had like the scarves on their faces and they were just like talking about how they couldn't play soccer and stuff like that because they couldn't take it off, and there was no guarantee that when they were practicing that there would only be like women in the room".* She continued by saying, *"I'm like, that sucks […] that's very unfair. It could be totally avoided if the school would have been more cooperative".* One girl concluded, *"it shouldn't be like that, that to feel safe some women have to not be around men".* These quotes begin to explore some complex intersectionality points relating to immigration and religion. While the participants of this study did not have these specific experiences, they were aware of them, showing their understanding of intersectionality, and pointing to additional opportunity for future research.

Subtheme: Practice, Confidence, and Pride

A significant subtheme emerged as part of the major *Emotional Safety* theme: *Practice, Confidence, and Pride*. As part of this subtheme, the participants discussed and grouped their photos around activities that required practice, how this relates to self-discovery, and the importance of familiarity in engaging in certain behaviours. The girls and young women also discussed and brought photos that illustrated the importance of confidence, and moments in which they feel proud, and how those feelings and moments contribute to their emotional safety, support their health, and help build their resilience to negotiate complex stereotypes.

The girls and young women in this study gave several examples indicating the importance of practice. Referring to the four images in Figure 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, and 10.4, a participant said, *"I think I'm seeing a theme in these […] we're practicing something".* Interestingly, all of these, or similar, photos are discussed elsewhere as well, indicating their significance. The girls discussed the importance of *"feeling familiar",* and *"training",* especially in overcoming fears. Referring to the same group of photos, one of the participants said, *"It's cool that these photos are all of us […] being alone, but we look fearless".* This shows how practicing and developing familiarity contributes to emotional safety, and through PA, actually helps to transcend and overcome some of the above-discussed issues and challenges around fear, as well as gender role contradictions.

Figure 10.1 and 10.2. Photos demonstrating the importance of practice.

Another participant further connected these images to emotional safety saying, *"another theme that I see here is self-discovery and not just on the physical level but also on the emotional level and the idea that the physical and emotional are connected"*. This quote shows the importance of connecting emotional and physical safety, and how significant practice is for facilitating emotional safety. In sum, referring to the image in Figure 10.4, a participant said, *"so this day [..] I was outside hooping, feeling free, and I like tried to do this move [...] I had never done it before and it worked, so I was like cool I can do this now [...] it's like doing something that I love".* In these cases, the connection between emotional safety and PA is particularly clear. In moments where girls and young women feel emotionally safe, they are able to overcome challenges, and some of the previously-discussed conflicts and contradictions. While they use the term "self-discovery", post-structural analysis might posit that when feeling emotionally safe,

the girls are able to explore available subject positions, permitting them to subvert or challenge the dominant discourse.

Figure 10.3 and 10.4. Additional photos demonstrating the importance of practice.

Confidence and pride also emerged as closely connected to emotional safety. Through practice, and the above Figures 10.1-10.4, the participants found confidence and pride which enabled them to negotiate challenges related to femininity and what women can accomplish through PA. One talked about what is expected of women and *"just proving that we can do things and not just sit around"*. This quote suggests their recognition of historical norms where women might be presented as delicate, fragile, or sedentary, instead of strong and active, and how "proving" they can subvert these norms facilitates confidence and pride. Another described an example requiring confidence, saying, *"you know you have the vision of going skiing and you're like I'm going to pick the coolest skiing outfit and I'm going to like take all these pictures for Instagram and*

then like I had to borrow a friend's jacket because I'd lost mine and I had to steal my lab

goggles from my lab because I didn't have skiing goggles and so like what I pictured to

be my like great skiing outfit was like this mish-mash". This quote, illustrating a girl

challenging the constructed image of an ideal *"skiing outfit"* connects the requirement of

confidence to attire, PA, and social media.

The girls and young women also described examples in which they felt confident

and proud, and often used photos to illustrate these examples, predominantly regarding

PA. In describing the photo in Figure 11, a participant connected the requirement for

confidence to the aspect of fears, saying, *"this one kind of shows a bit of a fearlessness*

because if her hands let go she's not really held up by anything else […] I wouldn't be

able to do that because heights terrify me but she just got herself up there and did that

without any problem". Similarly, two participants described examples illustrating their

own pride. Regarding the photo in figure 12.1, taken after a long hike, a young woman

said, *"I was like feeling on top of the world I guess after it, I was like wow I can do*

anything and ah was like taking some time […] I felt really relaxed and like

accomplished after I made it up there". Relatedly, another girl described the photo in

12.2, saying, *"This is a tree fort that my siblings and I built and o.k. so there's this book*

that had instructions for how to build a tree house […] our tree fort didn't turn out as

nicely as the one in the book but it's still pretty nice if I do say so myself". This photo

connects pride to *Emotional Safety* through feelings of accomplishment and creating

something. These aspects of *Emotional Safety* are further connected to family, another

important aspect of the theme, and relates to PA, both through playing outside and

building a tree fort.

Figure 11. A photo example showing confidence and *"fearlessness"*.

Figure 12.1 and 12.2. Examples of photos illustrating confidence and pride in PA.

Summary of Major Theme Two

The second major theme to emerge from this study is the concept of *Emotional Safety*. The girls and young women used this term more broadly than the traditionally used psychological definitions, to describe the situations, contexts, and facilitators for them feeling safe, comfortable, and confident. Having emotional safety, or feeling emotionally safe, supported the girls' resilience in order to be able to confront or

negotiate the previously explored gender norms and expectations. Aspects of this theme included friends, family, and pets, all of which were discussed and photographed frequently. This theme also included circumstances surrounding physical safety and unfortunate experiences. Finally, this theme included the subtheme of *Practice, Confidence, and Pride*, which explored and presented examples of practice and self-discovery, and the importance of familiarity and overcoming fear. Confidence was discussed as something that was necessary to negotiate and challenge norms, but also pictured in photo examples where the participants exhibited pride in their accomplishments, often relating to PA.

Visual Theme: Being Outside in Nature

The final theme that emerged from the discussions, photos, and analysis with the girls and young women is *Being Outside in Nature*. Interestingly, the importance of being outside was only occasionally overtly discussed by the participants; one said, for example, *"growing up I loved to play soccer and I don't think it was about the soccer, I think it was about me wanting to be outside and wanting to be active".* This importance of being outside, was something that emerged significantly, however, visually, through the photos taken and discussed by the girls and young women. This is demonstrated in Figure 13, which shows a growing pile of 'outdoor' photos being grouped by the participants. As such, I have decided to present this theme primarily visually. This is also evidenced by the photos that have already been presented, many of which were taken outside, including Figures 4.1, 4.2, 6.2, 7, 8.2, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 12.1, and 12.2. Through those photos, and those that will be presented below, it the importance of this theme emerges. It is clear that nature often provides the context in which girls are able to find

emotional safety, such that they can negotiate complex gender stereotypes, conflicts, and contradictions.

Figure 13. An image of the photo grouping created by the participants, indicating the large number of photos taken outside.

In many cases, participants took photos of natural elements and selected them for discussion. A participant discussed the photos in Figure 14.1 and 14.2 saying, *"our yard outside is really gorgeous because there are always, you know, there's some sort of flowering bloom"*. Similarly, a participant described the photo in Figure 15, saying, *"I like the like contrast, there's a grey sky and the dark branches"*. Other images that depict nature are visible in Figure 16.1 and 16.2. While these images were not always overtly connected to health, gender, or health behaviours, they held significance for the participants, and illustrate the importance of nature to the girls and young women. This is

further illustrated by the photo in Figure 17, about which the participant said, *"I feel like I've always been really like attracted to water"*.
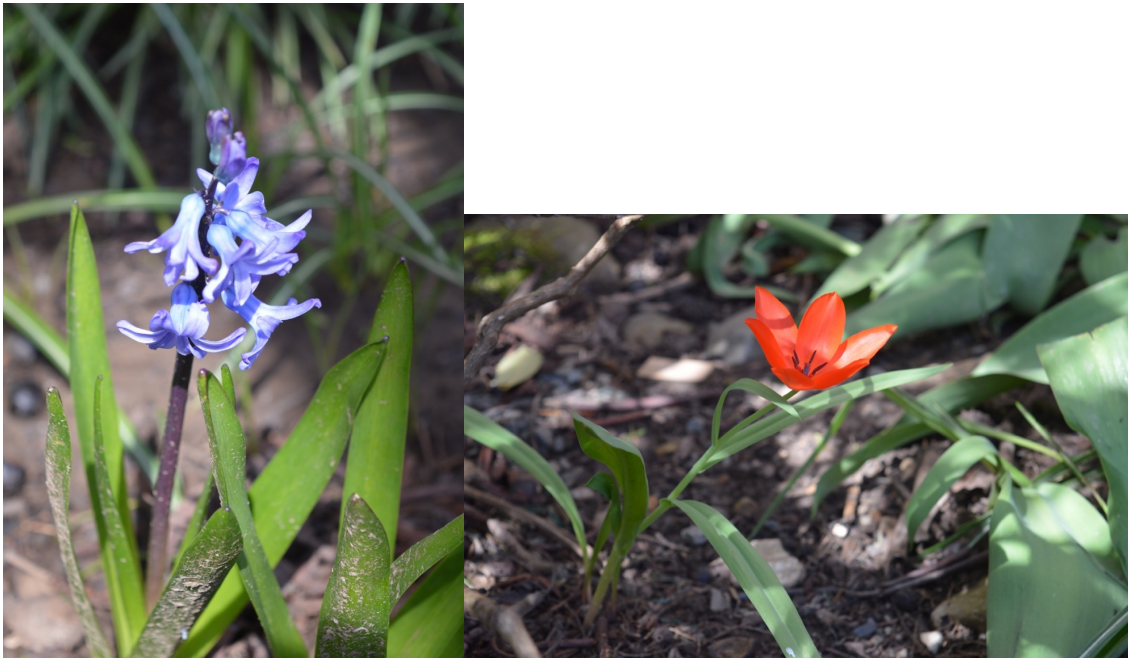
Figure 14.1 and 14.2. Examples of photographed natural elements.

Figure 15. An example of a photo taken in nature that was described by a participant.

Figure 16.1 and 16.2. Further examples showing natural elements taken by the participants.

Figure 17. An example showing a participant near the water, which was identified as significant.

In several other cases, the participants connected being outside in nature directly to their health, particularly regarding PA. Describing the photo in Figure 18.1, a young woman said, *"yah it's just [...] being active [...] throwing snowballs at each other [...] just being outside"*. Similarly, another participant said, *"we live on 25 acres of forest, so*

we made this, mostly me and my sister, we made this path in the woods” about the photo in Figure 18.2, connecting not only the outdoors and PA, but also the previously discussed importance of family. Finally, some participants also drew connections between nature, PA, and ideas around confidence and pride. About the photo in Figure 19.1, one said, *“it's like a long hiking trail and I had like just finished the hike [...] so it was like really, really long [...] it was a really pretty view”*. Correspondingly, another girl described the photo in Figure 19.2, saying, *“we got a badminton net [...] so we were playing a lot of that [...] I have to say I'm clumsy and I rarely ever actually look this cool”*. These quotations highlight how being outside often acts as the context in which girls are able to feel emotionally safe, negotiate conflicts and contradictions, and engage in healthy behaviours.
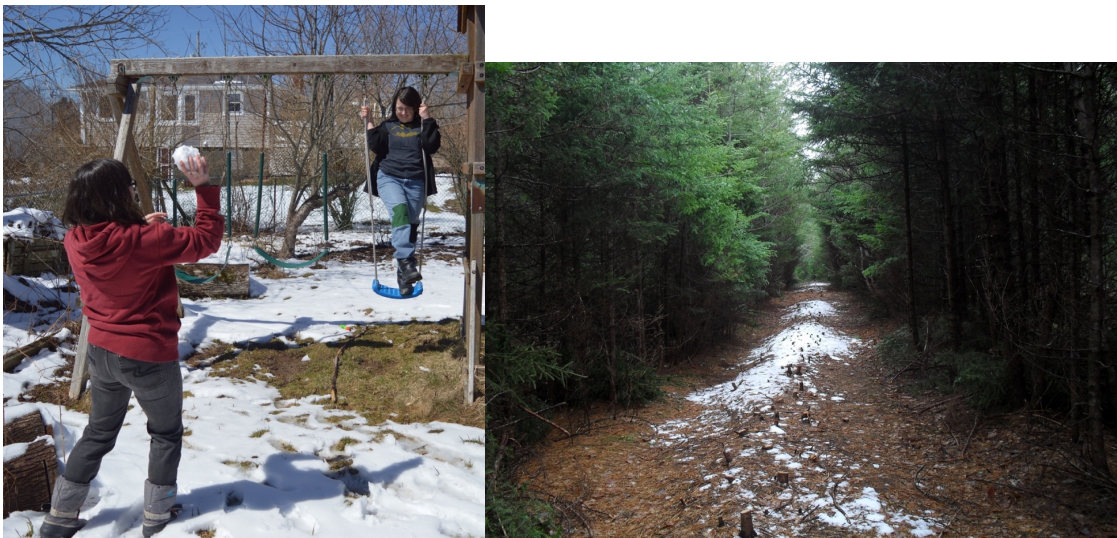
Figure 18.1 and 18.2. Examples of photos connecting being outside and PA.

Figure 19.1 and 19.2. Examples of photos connecting nature, PA, and confidence.

Summary of Visual Theme

As a final emergent theme, *Being Outside in Nature,* developed as significant to the participants in this research. Though the outdoors, being outside, nature, or natural elements were only sometimes overtly discussed, they were widely visible in photos, including many that have already been presented throughout earlier parts of this chapter. Photos of natural elements, trees, flowers, and water, for example, were identified as having particular significance to the girls and young women, who often selected these photos for discussion. In other cases, photos of nature and being outside were more concretely connected to health, particularly regarding PA. For these participants, being outside in nature was significant, and often acted as a safe and comfortable context, especially for active and recreational pursuits.

Ideas and Recommendations

Through the photos and discussions with the girls and young women, several ideas and recommendations emerged that might help move this research into action, or inspire future research, policy, or practice. First, the participants acknowledged a couple

of ways in which they perceived progress had occurred or was occurring. They then reinforced the above-described concept of breaking stereotypes, and the importance of confidence in this. Finally, they identified some areas for potential change, action, and recommendations.

First, the participants, as previously explored, acknowledged that some change or progress has been made over time, through shifting historical contexts, regarding gender roles, norms, and expectations. One girl noted this by saying that more and more, *"men are doing the things that women used to do, like they are staying home with the baby […] or they're like going to yoga, they're doing dance and stuff"*, indicating that some progress has been noted. The girls also noted that it is progressively becoming less acceptable to make stereotypical jokes regarding gender roles. As one young woman described, *"I feel like I've like heard people even within the last two years, make like kitchen jokes […] and I'm just like 'it's not funny' and they just feel bad, you know, cause they realize that they just sounded super uneducated and not like funny at all"*. This idea of drawing attention to, *"calling out"*, and challenging stereotypes offers an opportunity for girls and young woman to change the current discourse, and also relates to the major emergent theme regarding breaking stereotypes.

The major theme of *(Breaking) Stereotypes* was really reinforced as the girls discussed ideas and recommendations. Supporting the idea that we need to draw attention to negative stereotypes, one young woman said, *"just keep like breaking stereotypes is what I think is the best thing and […] correcting when they say something".* Another said, *"it's just important to keep like living the way that we're living and then showing that women are in power and that we can do anything"*. Finally, indicating the importance of continuing to challenge expectations, and also to support and lift up other

young women in doing so, one said, *"like continue like breaking those stereotypes [...] like maybe tell other people, like wow like look at that woman over there doing that thing that I didn't think she would do like climb a tree in a skirt or like eat a burger like with no shame in a restaurant"*.

Further reinforcing the *Emotional Safety* theme were ideas and recommendations that related to the need for confidence. One of the participants alluded to the challenges around internal conflicts by saying, *"I might not ever be able to figure out, like to be almost separated from society, what I would have been like if I was born in a different society, I probably could never tell"*. Others insisted that acting authentically and confidently was key to overcoming gender stereotypes and norms. One said, "*like you just have to like do whatever you're going to do with confidence and just like if you feel like you want to wear a lot of make-up one day you just go for it"*, while another added, *"make sure that you're doing it for yourself [...] and then just like do it with [...] keep breaking the stereotypes but not doing it just for the sake of breaking stereotypes"*. These quotes again point to the resiliency required to negotiate the complex contradictions and expectations faced by girls and young women.

Finally, the participants gave a few additional suggestions that may help in supporting future interventions, programs, policy, or research. The first drew on the idea of body positivity. One girl said, *"If more people could be body positive [...] then that would help. If you're just you with no exceptions"*, indicating the importance of this concept in confronting those previously discussed body ideals, and also connecting to the theme of emotional safety by way of requiring the confidence to be *"you"*. The second recommendations connected to the previously discussed issues around representation and barriers for girls participating. One young woman suggested, *"I feel like maybe it takes*

you know girls joining in, boys inviting girls to play […] or girls starting their own game […] and the stakes become maybe less gendered you know", suggesting that more representation and participation may help eliminate barriers, segregation, and dichotomies. Finally, the participants often touched on the experience of engaging in this project, which offered them the time and space to discuss these issues, as helpful. One said, for example, *"I see a lot of those photos about bringing to the surface things that are there but not spoken of"*, suggesting the value in supporting spaces and places to discuss and confront the complex issues experienced by girls and young women regarding their health.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the remaining findings of the study. Following a chapter presenting the primary theme of this research, *(Breaking) Stereotypes*, this chapter presented the two final themes: First, *Emotional Safety*, with the subtheme of *Practice, Confidence, and Pride*; and finally, a visual theme, titled, *Being Outside in Nature*. Each of these themes were supported by quotations and photographs produced by the participants and were discussed in the context of girls' and young women's health.

The second major theme emergent from this project was that of *Emotional Safety*. While the term is derived from psychology, the girls and young women in this study used it to describe facilitators and contexts in which they felt comfortable, secure, and confident. They used this theme to exemplify the resilience required to engage in negotiating and confronting the above-described stereotypes, conflicts, and contradictions. Included in this theme were photos and discussion of friends, family, and pets, who often provided social support, company, and safe spaces to act freely and confidently. Also, as part of this theme, the participants touched on their physical safety,

describing the perception that they needed to be careful, and some unfortunate situations in which they had experienced harassment or situations in which they were made to feel uncomfortable. This theme also included a subtheme, *Practice, Confidence, and Pride*, which exhibited the importance of practice, self-discovery, familiarity and overcoming fear. The girls also discussed the requirement for confidence in negotiating gender roles and confronting stereotypes, and gave many examples, supported through photos, of when they felt confident and proud, often through accomplishing a skill, and usually connected to PA.

The final theme emergent from this project is *Being Outside in Nature*. While nature and the importance of the outdoors was only sometimes discussed overtly by the participants, being outside was featured importantly in their photos. This is exhibited in the previously summarized other two major themes, which are supported by photos, many of which take place in nature. The girls and young women also photographed many elements of nature, such as flowers, trees, and water, and selected these photos for discussion, supporting their significance. The participants also connected being outside and nature to their health, specifically their PA, as it provided the context for many recreational, sport, and physically active photos and discussions.

In conclusion, this chapter describes the final themes emergent from the participatory analysis of the photovoice project, *Emotional Safety*, with the subtheme of *Practice, Confidence, and Pride*, and the visual theme of *Being Outside in Nature*. The girls and young women also made several recommendations, acknowledging that progress is being made but that more work is necessary, and reinforcing the need to continue challenging stereotypes, the requirement for body positivity and confidence, the need for more representation, and the benefit of offering spaces and places to discuss the

complex issues faced by girls and young women. Each of the themes is intertwined and interrelated in the ways they relate to the health of girls' and young women. Nature often provides the context and acts as significant for the girls' experiences, while emotional safety contributes to their resiliency to confront and negotiate the pervasive stereotypes and contradictions encountered by girls and young women relating to gender, their bodies, PA, and nutrition.

CHAPTER 7: ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

The three themes found in this project have now been described, presented, and illustrated using the participant perspectives, discussion, quotations, and photographs. As a reminder, the broad purpose of this study was to use a feminist poststructural approach to comprehensively explore perceptions, around adolescent girls' PA and nutrition, how those perceptions contend with social and cultural relations and intersect with gender, and how the body is constructed in these contexts. While the previous two chapters introduced and described the themes relying primarily on the participant perspective, below I provide my own analysis and interpretation of the findings, in the context of the broader literature and using a feminist poststructural approach. Each of the three themes: *(Breaking) Stereotypes*, *Emotional Safety*, and *Being Outside in Nature*, are discussed.

(Breaking) Stereotypes

(Breaking) Stereotypes was a major theme of this project. Analysis of this major theme is presented in several sections. First, the participants' conceptualization and understanding of gender stereotypes and norms is discussed. Second, the challenges in confronting those stereotypes and the decisions to break or conform to norms is examined. This is followed by my analysis of the participants' perspectives on media, appearance, and expectations. Finally, this section concludes with consideration of the *conflict and contradictions* subtheme, focusing on competing discourses and how those contradictions are navigated by girls and young women.

Conceptualizing Stereotypes and Norms

To explore complexities, contradictions, and conflicts around gender norms, expectations, and stereotypes regarding their health, we need to understand how the participants conceptualize and understand those norms. The participants in this study

expressed acknowledgement, recognition, and comprehension that "*everything is gendered*". They discussed their perceptions that there are expectations around how they should act, as young women, recognizing common discourse relating to women's health and discussing *"stigma"* and what they feel they are *"supposed"* to do. They described how retail stores are often organized into *"girl"* and *"boy"* sections, and how there have traditionally been *"girl"* sports and *"boy"* sports. These conceptualizations of gender and gender norms are consistent with previous literature (Azzarito, Solmon, & Harrison, 2006; Cockburn & Clarke, 2002; B. Evans, 2006; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). While they recognized these trends as problematic and offered their critique, they also noted their persistence.

The participants' awareness of gender norms and stereotypes is also well aligned with the use of photovoice methodology. As discussed in the methodology chapter, photovoice is underpinned by Paulo Freire's education for critical consciousness (Freire, 2000; Wang & Burris, 1997). This idea of critical consciousness or consciousness raising dictates that people can, through critical examination of contexts and society, and a process of self-awareness, advocate for and use their agency to make change in their environments (Freire, 2000). Connecting this to feminist poststructuralism, the idea of self-awareness might be translated as the awareness of social forces or power relations that produce subject experiences. The idea of persistence is also important, and significant for this project because it became evident that the girls and young women consider gender norms and gendered discourse continuously. While her exemplary analogy, relating to gay bathhouses, relates to a quite different topic, this can be related to the critical theory work of Joan Scott, who has analyzed the concept of experience and how it is constantly reshaped by context and discourse (Scott, 1991). Girls and young

women are required to constantly navigate complex dimensions of gender. Additional recent research has also highlighted the persistence of gender norms, using the examples of male preference in leadership positions and gendered violence (Chandrashekarappa, Kadiyala, Nagendra, & R, 2017; Weissbourd, 2015).

In discussing gender norms and stereotypes, the participants in many ways acknowledged their social, historical, and cultural productions. The girls and young women frequently referred to historical context, discussing at length, their understanding of what women were historically expected to do (or not allowed to do), and how girls and young women have been expected to act throughout history. They noted changes in these expectations, roles, and norms through time, and often used examples relating to marriage, women conceptualized as property, and expectations around attire and appearance. Many of these thoughts are also consistent with previous literature (Weitz, 2002). The concept of history is significant from a feminist poststructural perspective. Foucault was known to call history into question, suggesting history should not be looked at as one account of long period, but as an interpretation, with multiple truths, interpreted always through any given time and context (Downing, 2008; Felluga, 2015; Foucault, 1995). Similarly, Scott discusses history as an analysis or production of discourse, saying, "It is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience" (Scott, 1991, p. 779), acknowledging that history is always interpreted in the present context.

The participants also acknowledged that many norms and stereotypes are passed generationally and therefore difficult to overcome. Exemplified by the quote, "*my parents based off of whatever my grandparents were like*", most of the girls in this study came from traditional heteronormative families where a father was primarily responsible for

employment and income generation, and a mother was primarily responsible for childcare. That said, the girls' recognition and acknowledgement of these generationally passed traditions also seemed to generate some critique, and they hinted at some of the conflict and contradictions that will be further discussed below by saying, *"I want to do both"*.

The girls and young women discussed gendered expectations more specifically regarding task delegation. They discussed their perception of tasks traditionally designated for men and women, and their perception that they would be unlikely to be offered or assigned tasks traditionally assigned to men, such as those requiring heavy lifting, or vehicle maintenance. They acknowledged cultural and societal shifts over time here as well, but primarily in how women are treated, and not in expectations about masculinity. They noted progress in that there is currently more sensitivity in language about women, and that young women are more likely to speak up or to challenge traditional discourse around a women's expectation to cook, for example. That said, they suggested that discourse around masculinity seems more persistent, and that several roles traditional of women, such as caregiving, tend to persist, even beyond that to motherhood extending to young girls being expected to support a friend who is upset, for instance. This is congruent with recent literature, indicating that a division of household labour persists (Horne, Johnson, Galambos, & Krahn, 2018; Yavorsky, Dush, & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2015). The participants in this study also alluded to their own intention to continue challenging this discourse, by intending to raise their own children differently, without such division in tasks.

Breaking or Conforming? Challenges in Confronting Stereotypes

Feminist poststructural analyses of power are important for continuing this discussion. Foucault questions knowledge and history, suggesting that human ability to reason or analyze are depending on social context, and that none of this can be separated from power (Downing, 2008). Foucault suggests power is multidirectional and relational, rather than something that can be possessed (Bordo, 2003; Downing, 2008; Foucault, 1980, 1995). Power, or rather, the effects of power, then play a role in how bodies are controlled, such that we go about our daily actions, our performances, generally, trying to not be disruptive of norms. Foucault's discussion of the panopticon (presented more thoroughly in the chapter devoted to theory) suggests that, like in a prison with a central tower for surveillance, we have an impersonal or disembodied relationship with power, and a constant sense of being evaluated or facing disciplinary power (Azzarito, 2009; Downing, 2008; Duncan, 1994; Foucault, 1995). Foucault suggests that we are disciplined according to standard conduct, and that acting outside of acceptable discourse or standard behaviour results in micropenalties or micropunishments (Foucault, 1995; The-Philosophy.com, 2012). Evaluative gaze is constantly perceived by girls and young women, who are constantly evaluating their presentation and behaviour in terms of gender norms.

The girls and young women in this study frequently discussed feminist poststructural ideas (without specifically naming them as such) related to the subversion of dominant gender discourses. They took pride in, and recognized the important significance doing what they may not be *"expected"* to as women. Examples of this, shared by the participants, included being active, getting messy, playing outside, disregarding their physical appearance, and engaging in alternative physical activities that

might be considered more dangerous than traditional physical activities. These examples were also often shared through the participant photos. In one illustrative example, the girls shared a photograph of them playing video games and discussed its perception not only as an atypical leisure activity for young women, but how complex the associated discourse is. In addition to video games being perceived as a "*boy*" activity, the participants mentioned how they were actually questioned by boys and young men, *"do you really like video games?"*, as though they might only be engaging in that behaviour to impress men or disrupt the status quo. Further, they discussed how, when video games are marketed toward women, they are generally related to caretaking, relationships, fashion, or lifestyle. Further still are the additional complexities of video games being demonized as a form of sedentary activity that conflicts with fitness ideals.

As discussed, feminist poststructural theory considers power as something that is always relational and in flux. Dominant discourse can only achieve dominance in comparison to alternative discourses; dominant discourse about or associated with femininity often exist in relation to discourse about masculinity. Dominant discourse, combined with evaluative gaze, serve to police behaviour, and pushing back against norms results in micropenalties. Whether the girls play video games where they can be questioned by men or not, they feel those questions, and the question itself acts as a micropenalty. This brings to focus the perceived gaze, and how girls and young women are constantly regulating their own behaviour as a result.

The girls and young women who took part in this research embraced these complex gender negotiations through their photos. In many cases, the girls discussed their enjoyment of the juxtaposition of feminine ideals and their experiences as explored through photography. They took photos of themselves wearing comic book t-shirts

instead of dresses and sitting *"slouchy"* instead of daintily, as might historically be expected. They discussed the significance of a photo of one of them climbing a tree in a skirt, noting how high she was able to climb, and how the skirt did not limit her ability. One young woman showed a photo (on her cell phone) of her biting into a burger at a restaurant, noting she enjoyed the contrast of the large burger and her small hands, wearing nail polish and rings, though interestingly, she chose not to submit this photo as part of the study (to protect her confidentiality, I did not ask why). The participants frequently connected these examples to health, most often to PA, with many examples of them playing outside, challenging norms around being polite or *"delicate"*.

Complicating their enjoyment of the subversion of dominant gender discourse, the participants also discussed ideas around their own perpetuation of or conforming to gender norms, ideals, and stereotypes. It is due to this complexity, and the participants acknowledgement of their own reproduction of gender norms that the brackets were placed in the name of the theme, *(Breaking) Stereotypes*, signifying that, while these girls and young women embraced the challenging of norms, it is not always easy, or even possible. These complexities have also been highlighted by previous literature (Richman & Shaffer, 2000; Spencer, Rehman, & Kirk, 2015). While the girls and young women from this project discussed the many above examples where they appreciate their ability and the significance of challenging norms, they also discussed examples of situations in which they chose not to, or in which it was difficult or complicated for them to subvert the dominant discourse. It is also important to note that we should not fault girls and young women with being complicit in gender norms around femininity, particularly those that do not, on their own, serve to subjugate women. The girls and young women in this

study show that some elements of gender norms can be celebrated, while others can be rejected, and that this depends greatly on context.

The participants discussed examples where common stereotypes sometimes hold true, and where they may not warrant challenging. These girls and young women enjoyed cooking, baking, reading, and quiet time, and sometimes embraced the femininity associated therewith; they just do not wish to be expected to engage in those aspects of their lives all of the time. While the complexities of categorization of behaviours and bodies has been previously explored, it warrants further research and analysis (Azzarito, 2010). Again, it is not problematic to engage in what might be considered feminine norms or behaviours; It only becomes oppressive when behaviours are called into question, or power relations dictate their control. One young woman discussed her love of cooking, for example, which, when coupled with the fact that her male partner had not been taught to cook, resulted in her being primarily responsible for that relatively gender normative task. Similarly, another girl commented that she was more likely to ask her father than her mother for help opening a jar that was difficult to open. These examples illustrate how girls and young women are aware of gender norms and while the often enjoy subverting dominant discourse, they also sometimes choose that which is feminine, and celebrate their femininity. The awareness of those subjectivities illustrates their agency and again aligns with Freire's ideas around raising consciousness (Freire, 2000).

The girls and young women also discussed complications with challenging gendered discourse in relation to their health and noted it can be especially difficult to challenge norms in PA. The girls discussed this, first, from a standpoint of simple representation; they had difficulty finding teams that were appropriate, noting schools often only had *"boy"* teams for many sports, and few equivalent *"girl"* teams. Similarly,

they noted how women as coaches and mentors were few. Some girls had been offered the opportunity to play a sport they liked, such as football, but would likely be the only girl on the team, and felt they would be treated differently or unfairly, adding it just was not what they were looking for, or would likely not be very enjoyable. They also discussed how difficult it can be for a girl to join a group of boys playing, noting they would be likely to feel unwelcome and unsafe. Much of this discomfort also stemmed from not wanting to be *"the odd one out".* but in these examples, girls discussed not wanting to be the only girl playing, and the simultaneous sacrifice of missing out on socializing with other girls and young women if they were to take a potentially uncomfortable opportunity to be active with boys or young men. These perspectives relate not only to Foucault's idea of the panopticon and evaluative gaze, but also to the generational influence of discourse, and how previous generations were unable to challenge the discursive production of women's place in sport (Azzarito, 2009; Downing, 2008; Duncan, 1994; Foucault, 1995). The associated concept of avoiding unwanted attention is further discussed in the below section exploring these conflicts and contradictions in more depth.

Ideal Bodies? Appearance, Media, and Expectations

The girls and young women who took part in this project drew several connections between the above concepts of gender norms and expectations for appearance, usually in relation to the construction and production of their bodies. Girls and young women face many regulatory discourses concerning their body, related to femininity, slenderness, their physical abilities, and strength (Azzarito, 2009; Azzarito & Solomon, 2005; J. Evans, Evans, Evans, & Evans, 2002; Gerbensky-Kerber, 2011; Mansfield & Rich, 2013; Rich & Evans, 2013). Body ideals have become incredibly

accepted, and based on their negotiations of these discourses, reflective of societal, cultural, and historical power relations, girls construct meanings of "normal" or "good" bodies, and comparatively deviant or abnormal bodies (Azzarito, 2010; Bordo, 2003; Gerbensky-Kerber, 2011; Mansfield & Rich, 2013; Wright, O'Flynn, & Macdonald, 2006). Resultingly, women experience body discipline, which acts as a form of social control (Bordo, 2003; Duncan, 1994; Mansfield & Rich, 2013; Wright et al., 2006).

Similar to the above, the girls and young women in this study recognize societal pressures, noting that some bodies are privileged in certain circumstances, and acknowledging the relational concept of power. This is aligned with other theory and literature, like that of Butler, who introduced "abject" or excluded bodies, and others who have previously noted that some bodies are given power and privilege over others in many contexts (Butler, 1993; Lloyd, 2007; Mansfield & Rich, 2013; Wright et al., 2006). The participants noted that typically, body ideals revolve around thinness, but other aspects of appearance are privileged, such as being blonde, or having clear skin. They acknowledge that the *"ideal body"* is generally unrealistic, but also how difficult it can be to resist societal pressures. The girls who took part in this study noted that most girls and young women have at some point been unhappy with some aspect of their body or appearance and gave examples of where they felt they *"looked fat"* in certain articles of clothing.

Critically, the participants in this study also discussed how these ideals are not only faced by adolescents, but are taken up, contended with, and perpetuated by their young siblings and their friends, as well as their parents and their friends. Interestingly, the girls in this study also referred to the discourse around dieting, and how men are also targeted nutritionally; however, they discussed how men's diet and nutrition is usually

examined in the context of strength, while women's nutrition is almost exclusively considered in the context of weight management. This is also congruent with current literature, which tends to focus on dieting and unhealthy weight control in women instead of emphasizing healthy nutrition, as discussed in my scoping review (Spencer et al., 2015).

Much of the conversation around bodies was connected to the production and reproduction of ideal bodies through media. The participants in this project expressed their understanding that unrealistic ideal bodies are created and perpetuated through media in all forms, by illustrating *"what women are supposed to look like"*. The girls and young women gave many examples that indicated they recognize and acknowledge the unrealistic nature of the images they are so frequently exposed to referring often to the sexualization and objectification of women. They described, for example, how they have noticed women's faces are rarely shown in advertising, leaving only their bodies emphasized, and viewers therefore incapable of identifying a human being, or establishing an emotional connection or even consent. In contrast to this often-critical lens, however, the girls and young women also acknowledged that they are not immune to media influence. The participants described examples in which they had been influenced by media, especially as children, such as through images of Barbie dolls and celebrities, and some discussed how this is further carried on by social media. The constant messaging from media can also be related to the idea of persistence; while overt demand for compliance with gender norms is rare, persistent messaging and resultant micropenalties serve to internalize the surveillance of the body.

The participants connected unrealistic media ideals to additional resulting pressures that they face. First, they connected media ideals to social media, and

frequently connected these concepts to industry involvement and influence. They described examples related to dieting, fitness, and unhealthy weight control behaviours, and often connected these to items for sale, such as detox and tea products. The girls and young women acknowledged this as problematic and identified that these products typically target women exclusively. Similarly, social media was connected with a desire to impress peers; for young women, in particular, heteronormative expectations around how women should aim to impress are reproduced through media and social media, and the young women in this project described how they see this play out on social media. While recent literature has begun to explore the connection between media influence and gender, more work connecting gender, media (especially social media), and health is required (Andsager, 2014; Bragg, Miller, Elizee, Dighe, & Elbel, 2016; Hamm et al., 2014; Lopez, Corona, & Halfond, 2013; Perloff, 2014; Spurr, Berry, & Walker, 2013; Turner, 2014; Williams & Ricciardelli, 2014). Interestingly, the girls in this study also related the discourse around the requirement of adolescent girls to impress men back to historical and generational influences, by describing how they and/or their friends are often pressured by older relatives to *"find a boyfriend".* The socially and historically created discourses relating to feminine body ideals intersect with patriarchal notions requiring male partnership and are reproduced through media in all forms.

Navigating Conflict and Contradictions

As introduced in the above sections, discussing the girls' agency around breaking or conforming to stereotypes, the girls offered significant critical analysis around their daily experiences of complexities, contradictions, conflicts, and confrontations in challenging norms and stereotypes. Illustrated through the previously presented quote, one girl said, "*it's very hard sometimes because you don't want to be a stereotype girl,*

but sometimes some girls like stereotypical things, but they will not do it [...] because it's a stereotypical thing for girls". The connection to feminist poststructural approaches is clear here, where girls and young women acknowledge their own agency but question their subjectivity in relation to the subversion of those typical gender norms. This quote is representative of the ongoing internal conflict experienced by girls as a result of the socially, historically, and culturally reproduced gender norms and ideals, the requirement to engage in competing discourses, and the resultant micropenalties and repercussions.

While it might have been historically more common for girls to want to appear feminine, this is changing in a complex fashion. The discourse around gender norms and stereotypes has shifted such that girls now may want to make sure they do not appear feminine (or *too* feminine), leading to complex internal negotiations of behaviours and resulting in girls and young women avoiding what might be perceived as traditionally feminine behaviours to prevent being seen as a stereotype. The girls continuously challenge boundaries of gender discourses, and while they are persistently pressured to conform, through experiencing repeated micropenalties over time, they are contributing to a shift. Through their experiences, the girls are offering a counter discourse, which may benefit future generations who may experience fewer of these same conflicts but continue to push additional or new boundaries. While previous literature has started to explore these conflicts and contradictions, this project has advanced that literature through its use of photovoice and considering health comprehensively (Azzarito, 2010; Cockburn & Clarke, 2002; B. Evans, 2006; Lopez et al., 2013; Rich & Evans, 2013; Spencer et al., 2015). The participants in this study discussed several specific examples of conflicts and contradictions, including relating to their appearance, their performances, and their nutrition and PA, which will be discussed below.

The girls and young women in this study discussed the complex conflicts and contradictions that they face regarding clothing and makeup. Simply getting dressed and ready for the day resulted in a string of decisions that warranted complex negotiations of gender norms and roles. The participants in this study discussed this complexity in the decision whether to wear pants or a skirt, for example. Seemingly a small choice involved needing to respond to a series of really complex internal questions, such as why they were choosing that article of clothing and how others might react to their decision. They discussed whether they were choosing an article of clothing because they enjoyed it or liked the style, because they felt pressure by the fashion industry or other media, because they were trying to conform to societal ideals or gender expectations, or because they were trying to subvert that dominant discourse around gender roles. The contradiction between being perceived as too masculine or too feminine was apparent, and further complicated by people "*making a big deal"* if they wore something out of character or dressed fancier than they might normally. These internal conflicts again illustrate the Foucauldian concept of micropenalties, as the girls are challenged by whether to conform or to challenge the dominant discourse, and deal with the associated repercussions. The awareness of these internal conflicts is also an additional example of Freire's consciousness raising.

Similar conflicts and contradictions were experienced around makeup. The participants felt like they would be criticized both for wearing too much or too little, and again struggled with the decision around why they chose or chose not to wear makeup. This was illustrated significantly through Figure 5, the photo that shows a young woman wearing makeup on only half of her face, demonstrating the complexities and contradictions around deciding to wear makeup, and how they choose to present

themselves. This connects closely to the ideas of Judith Butler, who contends that gender is constructed through performance; her notion of performativity suggests that gender is performed through repetition of actions expected as part of the dominant conventions of gender (Butler, 2006). She relates gender performance to drag, suggesting all gender is performed as an imitation, such that even hegemonic gender is a constant imitation of its own ideals (Butler, 1993), and again relating to the concept of persistence. In this example, we can see the young woman highlighting those notions of performativity, applying makeup to only half of her face.

The girls and young women furthered this analysis through discussion about how they show emotion or attract attention, in which they actually borrow Butler's language (despite, to my knowledge, never having read her work) regarding performativity (Butler, 2006). Aligned with their agency in how they present themselves, the participants discussed additional conflicts and contradictions, often referring to their own actions as "*performances*", acknowledging gender as something that is performed (Butler, 2006). As discussed, they recognize that they are expected to act a certain, gendered, way, and perform accordingly. They discussed these performances in regard to their appearance, as above, with their agency in presenting their hair, makeup, and clothing. They also readily connected their performed gender to their health, and specifically to PA, where they not only identified being active as a form of performance but also discussed how many active and recreational pursuits traditionally adopted by women (such as dance or gymnastics), require actual performances. Further, the girls connected the concept of performativity to the gendered discourse around women being emotional: The participants discussed how this also raised contradictions, in that they felt expected or anticipated to act emotionally in some circumstances but were criticized for doing so in others. Once again illustrating

critical consciousness (Freire, 2000), and insisting that they do not want to attract attention to themselves or for people to make a "*fuss*" about them, the girls regulated their actions and emotions accordingly. While some of these conflicts around appearance do not overtly relate to health, they will be related more closely to nutrition and PA below.

Further conflicts and contradictions also played out through nutrition and PA. Regarding nutrition, the participants discussed a couple of key contradictions they face. First, the girls and young women discussed how they are either perceived as eating too much or too little. From their perspective, no portion size seemed to be perceived as appropriate, or more simply, they could eat no right amount of food. They also noted contradictory messaging regarding food, in that they are bombarded with media suggestions around thinness and diet products, but simultaneously advertisements for food and restaurants. Finally, the participants notably described a gendered contradiction regarding dieting; they perceived that women and girls face many pressures around dieting, specifically for weight management, and while boys and men may also be targeted with nutritional information, they are not targeted about weight, but rather for strength. They did not always discuss these perceptions as coming from anyone specific, but gave examples that included peers and family members, and discussed them more broadly as general societal and cultural perceptions. The discourse around the bodies of women and girls appears to focus on size and appearance, while that around the bodies of men is more focused on ability and strength. This is again illustrative of the relational nature of power: Certain bodies are privileged only in certain contexts, and it is the effects of that relational power that serve to control bodies through surveillance and evaluation (Azzarito, 2009; Butler, 1993; Downing, 2008; Duncan, 1994; Foucault, 1995).

Similar and additional conflicts and contradictions were discussed regarding PA. The girls and young women discussed common gendered discourse such as doing any PA or active skill *"like a girl"* or being perceived as talented or good at something, but having that sentiment qualified with *"for a girl".* These common tropes resulted in conflict and contradictions for the participants who recognize the gendered, unfounded, and unjust nature of this type of discourse, but have to contend with it regardless. The girls discussed the complexities associated with how to react to such comments, whether by disagreeing or arguing (and risk being labeled as overly emotional), embracing them, albeit sarcastically, (*"why thank you"*), or simply ignoring them. The participants also discussed double-standards and contradictions regarding athletic attire, in that many girl sport teams are expected to wear revealing uniforms under the guise that it is somehow connected to performance, but the equivalent men teams seem well-covered. Volleyball and figure skating were two examples discussed by the participants. This was furthered by an additional contradiction in that girls and young women are often told to cover their bodies, and regularly face dress codes, such as those in many schools, but then are expected to reveal their bodies in other contexts. Again, while previous literature has begun to touch on examples of these conflicts in specific contexts, it is advanced here through a participatory and comprehensive approach (Azzarito, 2010; Azzarito et al., 2006; Cockburn & Clarke, 2002; B. Evans, 2006; Rich & Evans, 2013; Spencer et al., 2015) All of these complex conflicts and contradictions illustrate how the bodies of girls and young women contend with broad social, political, and historical relations.

Emotional Safety

Emotional safety was a term developed by the participants to describe the contexts and facilitators that made them feel confident, safe, and comfortable, and is one

of the themes that emerged from the data. The participants discussed several barriers, facilitators, and contexts for their emotional safety, including their families, pets, and friend groups, and provided additional context for this theme by discussing the gendered aspects of physical safety. Each of these contexts, barriers, and facilitators is discussed and analyzed below, and furthered by discussion regarding the significance of self-discovery, practice, and confidence. These elements are then connected to the research objectives by relating the participant perspectives to health, and more specifically, through examples connecting to PA.

The girls and young women in this study discussed several barriers, facilitators, and contexts for their emotional safety, and how this connects to their health, and more specifically their PA and nutrition. The participants discussed their friends and family at length, both as barriers and facilitators to their emotional safety, and accordingly, to their health. Social influences are well explored in the literature, are well known to impact the health of youth, and emerged as important in my scoping review (Spencer et al., 2015). Previous literature has indicated that adolescent girls are strongly socially influenced, and that these influences relate closely to health, PA, nutrition, body image, and unhealthy weight control (Carey, Donaghue, & Broderick, 2014; Eisenberg & Neumark-Sztainer, 2010; Fitzgerald, Fitzgerald, & Aherne, 2012; Mackey & Greca, 2007; Rancourt, Choukas-Bradley, Cohen, & Prinstein, 2014; Slater & Tiggemann, 2011; Standiford, 2013; Witmer, Bocarro, & Henderson, 2011).

In this study, family were discussed occasionally as potential barriers to emotional safety in that older family members (parents, grandparents, aunts, for example) sometimes contributed to the historical or generational reproduction of gender norms, especially those around thinness, marriage, role delegation, and how women are expected

to act. This connects to nutrition and PA in that these behaviours are modeled

generationally, but also contribute to reproducing discourse around ideal bodies and how

they might be attained. That said, older family members were also spoken about

positively, in that they often acted as positive role models, sometimes offering examples

of subverting the dominant gender discourse and supporting the girls and young women

emotionally, financially, and logistically. This is a further example of how power is

relational and not absolute, in that family members can be the source of both oppression

and empowerment. Siblings were discussed primarily as contributing positively to

emotional safety, offering a strong system of social support, a secure social network, and

people with whom to encourage and engage in creative and active pursuits. Pets were

also discussed as an important part of a familial system of emotional safety, and like

siblings, were photographed often. Siblings and pets, providing peer support and

encouragement, also acted like friends in this way, which will be discussed next.

Peers and friends were also discussed by the girls and young women in this study

as relating to emotional safety. The girls discussed various depths of friendship, varying

from acquaintances to true close, well-established friendships. This seemed to relate to

gender in that girls and young women face so many challenges, contradictions, and

conflicts, especially regarding health, PA, and nutrition, that friends, especially close

ones, acted as a facilitator for their emotional safety, supporting the girls and young

women in navigating or negotiating those complexities. The girls and young women

discussed the significant value of their closest friends, as people they could trust and feel

comfortable around, contributing to their emotional safety. The importance of friendship

is well established in the literature, with benefits reaching from neurological and

hormonal to prosocial behaviours, and the unique importance of friendship between girls

and women being further explored (Eagly, 2009; Hung et al., 2017; Narr, Allen, Tan, & Loeb, 2017; Silk et al., 2009; Taylor et al., 2000). For the participants, close friendships were connected to appearance, in that the girls felt less concerned about how they would be perceived and more readily able to navigate complexities around makeup, clothing, and weight, with people with whom they felt safe. Close friends, in this way, instilled confidence in the girls and young women, which will also be discussed further below.

Additional context for emotional safety was discussed by the participants in relation to physical safety. The girls and young women in this study discussed their perceptions around the safety of young women and current societal trends. While most of the girls in this study were quite young, they were familiar and well-versed in gender-based harassment; all participants knew young women who had experienced some form of harassment, and many had experienced it themselves. The girls and young women discussed their perception that they need to be prepared, and their fears associated with settings like walking alone or waiting for public transportation. The participants analyzed and reflected upon how these considerations for their physical safety and associated fears impacted the dynamic between women and men, and likely creates a barrier of distrust. Given this context, physical safety can be connected to emotional safety, and therefore to nutrition and PA. Complex concepts like fear and harassment are intricately tied to the bodies of women, how they appear, and how they are presented. The participants also mentioned a perceived lack of representation, lack of coaches or role models, and lack of safe spaces for PA, tying together the concepts of emotional safety, physical safety, and health.

Self-Discovery, Practice, and Confidence

Emergent as a subtheme in the previous results chapter, practice, confidence, and pride were a significant part of the *Emotional Safety* theme. The girls and young women discussed several examples in which they were practicing skills, particularly those required for PA, and took many photos relating to this concept. The idea of practicing, training, and developing familiarity emerged as important for the girls and young women, and seemed to offer them an opportunity for creativity, exploration, and self-discovery. While the participants used the term self-discovery, a feminist poststructural analysis might suggest that, rather than discovering them, the participants are exploring possibilities as new subject positions and discourses become available to them. Practice helps them to navigate the many above-described conflicts and contradictions, as it helps the girls to build confidence and reduce fears. It seemed that developing familiarity, learning, and practicing, contributed to the development of confidence that was necessary to feel emotionally safe such that the girls and young women could negotiate the common competing discourses, and subvert gender norms. While some of these benefits and facilitators of healthy behaviours have been explored previously, they warrant further exploration on the context of complex gender norms (Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity, 2000; Conner, Brookie, Richardson, & Polak, 2015; Fairclough & Stratton, 2005; Javadi et al., 2016; Korn, Gonen, Shaked, & Golan, 2013; Stuckey & Nobel, 2010).

In many cases, these competing discourses surrounded being active and strong. Girls and young women have to choose between the dominant feminine discourse and challenging that discourse through presenting their bodies as strong and able. Feeling emotionally safe, through seeking emotionally safe contexts, surrounding themselves

with facilitators of emotional safety, and exploring skills through practice and self-discovery enabled the girls and young women to feel confident. It seemed that with confidence came the development of new skills and achievements from which the girls and young women gained a sense of accomplishment and pride. Much of this discussion also related to PA and emerged frequently in the photographs of the girls. They took photos of themselves accomplishing new tasks, for example, in gymnastics, in fire hooping, and in hiking. Interestingly, many of these physical activities are also associated with risk-taking, further contributing to challenging the common discourse around women's bodies as weak or fragile. Practice, confidence, and pride, important aspects of emotional safety, allowed the girls and young women to feel good about active accomplishments even in the context of competing discourses.

Being Outside in Nature

The concepts of being outside and experiencing nature were significant for the girls and young women in this study. While nature may not have been discussed or analyzed in the same way or at the same length as *(Breaking) Stereotypes* or *Emotional Safety*, *Being Outside in Nature* emerged as a meaningful theme in this study. It was primarily represented through photographs, however, and as such was presented in the previous results chapter as a visual theme, distinguishing it from the other two. In general, nature was something that was clearly important to, and meaningful in, the lives of the girls and young women who took part in this study. Further, nature provided the context for much of the above-discussed themes and examples.

While considered important and studied regularly in other disciplines, human impact on the environment, the resultant climate change, and the importance of nature, is an emergent trend in health promotion and population health (Hancock, 2015, 2017). In

fact, the importance of the environment will be highlighted in next year's 2019

International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) conference with the

theme: Promoting Planetary Health and Sustainable Development for All (IUHPE, 2018).

Recent literature has also connected health and nature, with studies finding associations

between green space, PA, and mental health, and a meta-analysis indicating nature is

associated with numerous health benefits (Dzhambov et al., 2018; Twohig-Bennett &

Jones, 2018).

The participants' love of nature was evident in this study, through their examples,

and frequently through their photographs. This might have been a function of the group

from which the participants were recruited, which emphasizes outdoor recreational

pursuits, but is emerging from the literature as a trend as well. Previous research by

others has highlighted the impact of nature on the health of girls and women, despite it

being a space traditionally dominated by men or masculine pursuits. Authors have noted

the importance and values of adventurous activities, including how outdoor time and

adventure-type programming has been associated with increased PA in adolescent girls,

and improved skill development, resilience, and mental health (Boniface, 2007; Cleland,

2005; Massa, 2015; Overholt & Ewert, 2015; REI, 2017). Other research has noted the

importance of women engaging with the outdoors for empowerment, and helping girls

challenge assumptions, conventional femininity, and beauty ideals (Massa, 2015;

Whittington, 2006). The girls and young women in this study frequently photographed

elements of nature, like flowers, trees, and water, and when asked to select photos that

they most enjoyed or were most impactful or meaningful, they often selected these

photos, suggesting their importance and significance. Additionally, the participants took

lots of other photos as part of this project that occurred in nature, including photos of

them playing outside, photos of them doing sports outside, and photos of them hiking, surfing, and exploring. These additional photos illustrate the important context that nature provides for some of the previously and above-discussed themes.

It is clear from the participants' photographic emphasis on nature that the outdoors provides significant context for this analysis. Literature has also described the challenges faced by girls in engaging in outdoor recreational activities including objectification, discrimination, feeling vulnerable, feelings of fear (including relating to physical safety), and feeling as though their pursuits are not taken as seriously as those of men (Boniface, 2007; Dooley, 2016; McNiel, Harris, & Fondren, 2012; REI, 2017; Wesely & Gaarder, 2004). These trends are similar to and reflective of those discussed by the participants in this study regarding their daily negotiations of stereotypes and the associated conflicts and contradictions. Additionally, an analysis of advertising related to wilderness recreation found that women are represented in only limited, passive, roles, often associated with vacationing or fashion, and are rarely shown alone or independently (McNiel et al., 2012), which also connects to the above analysis of the participants' perspectives on media influence.

Through many images, the participants also connected *Being Outside in Nature* to the theme of *Emotional Safety*. The girls and young women often gave examples of self-discovery, practice, and confidence in association with nature. These examples most often connected to health through PA. One was proud of a trail and treehouse she had helped create, for example, while another discussed the sense of accomplishment found at the end of long hike with a beautiful view. Connecting nature to the participant theme of *Emotional Safety* was also a trend noted in the literature. Authors have discussed the common pressures women feel to conform to gender norms, but how the outdoors offers

the space for women to feel peaceful and free (Boniface, 2007; REI, 2017). Research also highlighted the importance of social support, especially close friendships and how outdoor pursuits can help build those significant relationships (Boniface, 2007; Whittington, 2006). Further, the literature has presented examples similar to those shared by the participants in this study, in which girls and young women engaging with nature feel confidence, proud, and a sense of accomplishment (Boniface, 2007; Whittington, 2006).

Through this discussion, we can see how *Being Outside in Nature* emerged as so significant for the participants, how this theme fits with the broader literature, and how it relates to gender and the other two themes found in this research. It seems that nature often provides the background or setting for emotional safety, which is necessary in order for girls and young women to navigate those conflicting and contradictory norms and stereotypes. It is evident from all of the above, that nature provides important context for girls and young women to feel emotionally safe such that they may engage in the complex navigation of competing discourses surrounding their health, nutrition, and PA.

Interdisciplinary Nature of the Project

Now that the project is completed, and the primary findings and analysis have been explored, it is important to comment on the interdisciplinarity of this work, as it was undertaken as part of an interdisciplinary PhD program. Interdisciplinary research is defined as research undertaken from the perspective of two or more distinct scientific disciplines, based on a model that links those disciplines, using a study design that is not limited to any one field (Aboelela et al., 2007). For this project, while I relied heavily on the field of health promotion, health and health promotion are inherently interdisciplinary. Health promotion is still a new and developing field, one that pulls

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together elements of disciplines like education, psychology, medicine, epidemiology, sociology, anthropology, and community development (Cottrell, Girvan, & McKenzie, 2009; Rootman, Pederson, Frohlich, & Dupere, 2017). As discussed in introducing this project, complex problems require complex solutions, that include multifaceted, comprehensive, and intersectoral collaboration.

This project embraced that nature of complexity and comprehensiveness. By exploring the concept of girls' health using a comprehensive lens, rather than one focused on any one specific behaviour or outcome, this work allows us to see a broader picture of adolescent girls' experiences. In addition to the comprehensive topic, interdisciplinary theory and research methods were employed. As previously discussed, use of feminist and poststructural theory does not belong to any one discipline, and neither offers a prescriptive method, but rather a set of tools that can be used in interdisciplinary and diverse contexts. Finally, photovoice methodology, while often employed to study health, is appropriate for a wide range of social, political, and cultural explorations, making it ideal for this interdisciplinary work.

Finally, this work is interdisciplinary as it reflects both my own interdisciplinary background and that of my supervisory committee. While each of my supervisory committee members has a primary academic appointment in the School of Health and Human Performance, their specific fields and areas of expertise differ widely and contribute to the interdisciplinarity of this work. My supervisor, Dr. Sara Kirk is a Professor of Health Promotion, who has a background in both nutrition and dietetics and health systems and health services research. She is an expert in comprehensive, ecological, and systems approaches, and her own interdisciplinary lens has contributed to mine greatly. Dr. Laurene Rehman is a Professor in Leisure Studies, whose work

emphasizes opportunity for youth PA and recreation. The addition of her perspective to this work is valuable, given the emphasis with which the participants focused on recreation and PA. Dr. Matthew Numer is an Assistant Professor in Health Promotion, with a cross-appointment in Gender and Women's Studies. His expertise in gender theory, coupled with his own interdisciplinary background (including an interdisciplinary PhD) contributed to the interdisciplinary nature of this work greatly. Finally, my own background, which includes a science-focused international baccalaureate high school diploma, a BSc Kinesiology, and a MA Health promotion, is quite interdisciplinary, contributing to my overall interdisciplinary focus.

CHAPTER 8: QUALITY, KNOWLEDGE SHARING, AND CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has explored how the perceptions of adolescent girls and young women, and the constructions of their bodies, relate to their health, PA, and nutrition, and take up and contend social and cultural relations. This was accomplished using a comprehensive health promotion lens, a feminist poststructural approach, and photovoice methodology. The project began with a published scoping review exploring the relationship between adolescent girls' PA, nutrition, and gender norms, which identified several themes and gaps in the literature, initiating and justifying this project. Following an exploration of those gaps in the literature, a feminist poststructural approach and photovoice methodology were used to engage with a group of adolescent girls and young women regarding their health, PA, and nutrition. The findings of this project identified three themes, that were developed with the participants: *(Breaking) Stereotypes*, *Emotional Safety*, and *Being Outside in Nature*. Each theme was supported by quotations and photographs, and then further analyzed using a feminist poststructural approaches and situating the findings in current literature. Below, the quality of this work, including its strengths and limitations, is explored, followed by a discussion of knowledge sharing and, finally, a summary and conclusion for this project.

Quality, Strengths, and Limitations

Many features of photovoice contribute to its quality. Photos provide a rich, powerful form of data that are usable by a wide variety of people, beyond standard forms of data collection such as surveys and statistics (Wang & Burris, 1997). Credibility is a form of establishing consistency and congruency between participant perspectives and how the research is presented by the researcher, and is achieved by engagement in the field, member checking, and peer review (Creswell, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1989;

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Morrow, 2005). Photovoice, as a methodology, facilitates credibility, given its participatory nature. Having the participants so engaged in the research process, including analysis and presentation of results, enhances relevance to communities, authenticity, and trustworthiness of data (Frisby et al., 2005).

Photovoice does have limitations, as well, in regard to quality, as photos are inherently value-laden and judgement-based, and photovoice studies can result in large, complex data sets that are difficult to analyze (Wang & Burris, 1997). This was mediated in this study by brainstorming with the participants as a group about what they wanted to try and capture in their photos; additionally, to limit the size of the data set, the number of participants was kept relatively small, to facilitate analysis. There are further challenges with involving youth in photovoice studies, as there are complications with establishing informed consent, as discussed above, in addition to youth having likely varying abilities to understand the study's purpose and take photos accordingly (Strack et al., 2004). These were mediated by closely following the recommendations of Wang et al. for establishing consent, adhering to ethical guidelines, and thoroughly training the participants on camera use and photo taking. Strengths and limitations are further described below.

Strengths

This study has several important strengths. First, it begins to address gaps identified in the literature. I began this project by conducting a scoping review that was published in the International Journal of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity (Spencer, Rehman, & Kirk, 2015), in which several themes were discussed, and gaps identified. Those gaps included that previous literature in this area has tended to focus on younger girls, and that, despite their known effectiveness, ecological, comprehensive, or multilevel perspectives are still rarely employed in health research (Spencer, Rehman, &

Kirk, 2015). Additional gaps indicated that PA is considered more frequently, and most often independent of, nutrition, rather than exploring the interconnectedness of those behaviours (Spencer, Rehman, & Kirk, 2015), (Spencer, Rehman, & Kirk, 2015). The scoping review also indicated that environments, particularly the school environment, social influences, and the media warranted further exploration.

This project has started to address several of those identified gaps. First, older adolescent girls were recruited to take part in this research, and while a couple of younger girls were included, the average age was 19.2 years. While this study did not formally employ an ecological model, it was unique in that it did employ a health promotion perspective and comprehensive approach, adding to the current literature which rarely examines context, or the social and political systems and structures that influence norms and stereotypes. Similarly, while the participants tended to focus on PA more than nutrition, the two behaviours were not considered independently of one another, and participants gave examples of both. Finally, while the school environment was not specifically considered, the participants did discuss examples relating to their understanding of the school context, and other previously identified concepts, such as the media and social influences emerged as important in this study, particularly as part of the *Emotional Safety* theme.

This study is also unique in that it addresses some of the previously identified gaps using a health promotion lens and a feminist poststructural approach as part of photovoice methodology. These approaches offer a novel perspective on the topic and allow critical theories to be coupled with a participatory approach, uniquely. Using visual research can allow girls and young women to take part in presenting bodies differently, acknowledging competing discourses. Traditional research methods regarding

health, PA, and nutrition, have narrowly focused on biomedical perspectives and individual behaviour change. This has been noted by others, who have suggested the need for novel methods including participatory approaches and photovoice (Rigg, Cook, & Murphy, 2014).

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, there were challenges regarding recruitment that delayed this work from taking place for an extended period of time. As I wanted to purposefully recruit an existing group of participants, I had identified a couple of options through Girls Soar. Unfortunately, the original group I had identified, while they had expressed significant interest in taking part in the study, underwent staff and structural changes that delayed their ability to take part. Eventually, I decided to recruit a second group instead, and told the other group I would still be happy to work with them as well, if they wanted to reach out when they were holding regular meetings again (they did not). This type of purposeful recruitment proved challenging, as I found it difficult to balance getting sufficient interest and not being overwhelmed with potential interest. There were also small logistical challenges throughout data collection, as anticipated. While the participants were very engaged during our meetings, the workshop, and conversations, they were also busy, so taking photos, and uploading them or arranging to have memory cards picked up often proved challenging and time consuming. While I do not believe these issues to have limited the data collected, they might have extended the timeline of the project.

Other participant characteristics might be considered limiting as well. First, there was a wide age range of girls and young women who took part. This might have limited the ability for them to discuss common experiences, as they may have had less in

common due to the age gap, though I believe this was mitigated by the fact that all participants were part of a cohesive group and would have shared similarities as a result. Additionally, several participants were siblings, which might have impacted the data in several ways. First, their voices are not distinguishable on any recording, contributing to the decision to remove any form of participant identification from the results and analysis. Second, this presented other logistical challenges, as it meant several participants traveled together. It also likely impacted the results, in that non-siblings might have brought a wider variety of perspectives, and we have no way of knowing how these participants might have acted in the absence of their siblings. Additionally, several participants were homeschooled, limiting their exposure to and understanding of the traditional public-school environment. This also likely limited the data in that their perspectives likely differ from youth who attend schools where societal and cultural discourse might be more present. This might also be considered a strength, however, and likely contributed to the participants' critical thinking and analytical abilities. Finally, the group were recruited from an organization that is focused on the outdoors and environmental sustainability. While this likely also contributed positively to the participants' critical thinking abilities, it might explain their emphasis on being outside in nature, which might not be true of all groups.

A final limitation of this study relates to combining a feminist poststructural approach and photovoice methodology. As photovoice methodology has its own theoretical underpinnings, combining it with feminist poststructural analysis can raise challenges. First, combining such a practical methodology with additional theory can be logistically challenging. Secondly, while the philosophical underpinnings of photovoice embrace feminism, Freire contends that knowledge is co-constructed, a suggestion that

would not fit well with poststructuralism, which would contend that knowledge is not constructed, but taken up based upon available subject positions (Freire, 2000; Wang & Burris, 1997). That said, both theories can be considered critical or transformative. Having participants take their own photos allows them to critically analyze context contributing to consciousness raising (Freire, 2000; Wang & Burris, 1997). I believe that I have combined and advanced the theories and methodologies by considering perhaps the coproduction of knowledge (rather than creation), through exploration of how a variety of discourse is taken up and reproduced.

Knowledge Sharing

The ninth and final step in Wang's photovoice process is sharing the photos (Wang, 2006). Given the participatory, political, and active nature of a photovoice study, sharing the photos, and associated themes or analysis is important, and acts as a form of integrated knowledge translation or exchange (Wang et al., 1998). Sharing as part of a photovoice study may include demonstrating the photos at events for community members, decision makers, and friends and families of participants, as well as accessing local arts theatres, newspaper, and media (Frisby et al., 2005; Royce et al., 2006; Strack et al., 2004; Vaughn et al., 2008; Wang & Pies, 2004). This participatory form of knowledge sharing has been found to creatively engage community members and address their concerns, resulting in engagement between youth and decision makers and offering the opportunity for community change (Catalani & Minkler, 2009; Strack et al., 2004; Wang, 2006; Wang & Pies, 2004). It is also important to note that the act of communicating results publicly and individual or small change can also be interpreted as action; policy change does not need to be an expectation (Frisby et al., 2005).

Given the participatory nature of photovoice, I discussed with the girls how they would like to share the photos. Overall, the general consensus was that they understood photos can be impactful and were happy to have their photos shared as part of the project, very open-mindedly. That said, in terms of organizing an event, the participants wanted something that would be casual such that they could choose if, when, and with whom, they would share their experiences. As such, we organized a gallery-style drop in event. Together, we discussed how this would give the opportunity for the photos to be shared publicly, in a low-pressure and low-burden manner for the participants. They wanted to prioritize inviting the broader group of youth from which they had been recruited, as well as their friends and family, but also suggested I share the event with a wider audience of stakeholders and decision makers as well. The poster for the event (visible as Appendix H) was therefore distributed through the community organization from which the participants had been recruited, through the Girls Soar advisory committee, and via social media.

The event offered the opportunity to share the results with the community. The girls each identified several photos they wanted to have printed and enlarged for the gallery, and I selected associated relevant quotations for printing alongside the photos. In all, 29 people attended the event, which was held at the university, including the participants, their friends and families, Dalhousie students and faculty, stakeholders in girls' health, and the general public. Several undergraduate students in health promotion attended to act as volunteers. The photographer who conducted the workshop training also attended to take photos, some of which are visible in Appendix I, and provided each participant with a professional headshot, as well. I gave each participant a button (visible in a photo in Appendix I) that they could choose to wear to identify themselves as one of

the photographers, and each excitedly chose several to wear. At the end of the evening, each participant chose a couple of their favorite photographs from the gallery, such that they could take home the enlarged version. Several others are hung in my office. I hope that these photos continue to spark conversation as an extended causal form of knowledge translation. The event also offered the opportunity to collect contact information of the attendees, who could express interest in receiving a summary of study results. This will be prepared and provided following completion of the written thesis.

Additional Knowledge Translation

In addition to engaging with the participants in the above-described participatory form of knowledge sharing, traditional academic dissemination of results is ongoing. The proposal for this project was presented at the World Congress on Public Health in Melbourne, Australia in April 2017. A PechaKucha-style photo sharing presentation was presented at the Qualitative Health Research conference in Halifax in October 2018. I have also submitted two associated abstracts, one presenting the results of this project and the other, a workshop on engaging youth through photovoice, to be considered for presentation at the International Union for Health Promotion and Education, taking place in Rotorua, New Zealand, in April 2019. I am also planning several academic publications, including at least one focused on method and the photovoice process, and another focused on the findings of this study. These would be submitted to journals with a health promotion or gender focus, such as Sex Roles, the Journal of Gender, Culture, and Health, or Gender and Society.

Additional dissemination is ongoing outside of academic contexts as well. As mentioned, a summary of results is being prepared to share widely, with the participants, their families, and those who have expressed interest in the project in conjunction with

the event or through email and social media. This document will be easy to read and suitable for a wide audience, likely in the form of an infographic. I also intend to share this document with the Girls Soar advisory committee and local stakeholders and decision makers relating to girls' health. Additionally, in conjunction with a separate photovoice project taking place with my supervisor, on which I am a co-investigator, we have been successful in the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation's Knowledge Sharing Support Award competition and are planning continued engagement with youth as a result.

Summary and Conclusions

Chapter 2 presents the literature relating to this topic. A scoping review highlighted the complex relationships girls have with PA and nutrition, specifically relating to unhealthy weight control, how concerns regarding peers and appearance are significant, as are feminine body ideals and body centered discourse (Spencer et al., 2015). That review also emphasized the importance of institutions and environments in shifting norms and challenging ideals, and noted several gaps in the literature: primarily, that it has tended to focus on younger girls and lacks comprehensive approaches (Spencer et al., 2015). This dissertation explored those gaps in the literature as well as additional factors like media, school environments, and social influence. The literature highlights the uniqueness of the older-adolescent and young women population regarding their healthy, PA, and nutrition, and suggests that research exploring their needs comprehensively is required. The literature also highlights a discourse of obesity and dieting, which problematizes the bodies of young people, and suggests research that engages and empowers adolescent girls and young women is required.

Feminist and poststructural theories were then examined, through Chapter 3, as an opportunity to explore gender as political and patriarchal influences on health, highlighting the importance of context, and how socially constructed gender norms are produced and maintained. Existing literature employing feminist poststructural approaches to girls' health emphasizes the importance of the construction of the body, and how that related to nutrition and PA (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005; Azzarito et al., 2006; Bordo, 2003; Rich & Evans, 2005). As much of this work emphasized the value of visual methods, and a recent review highlighted public health's tendency to focus on narrow, individual, biomedical approaches, suggesting researchers explore more theoretical methods including photovoice and PAR, I chose to use photovoice methodology for this study (Rigg, Cook, & Murphy, 2014).

Photovoice methodology, based on theories of education for critical consciousness, feminist thought, and participatory approaches, is used to actively engage participants through photo-taking, in order to enable reflection, promote discussion, and facilitate change (Wang, 1999; Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang, Yi, Tao, & Carovano, 1998). This project followed the nine-step process outlined by Wang (2006), the process for which is described in Chapter 4. For this project, a group of girls and young women was purposefully recruited following a survey conducted in conjunction with Girls Soar. The girls engaged in a training workshop, followed by two periods of time for taking photos and two analysis sessions, win which they critically examined their photos through selection, contextualization, and codifying, or participatory thematic analysis. The participants were also engaged through knowledge translation and shared some of their photos publicly at a gallery event.

The findings of this work were presented in Chapters 5 and 6. Each of these chapters explored the findings as they were discussed with the participants, relying primarily on the participatory analysis process to allow themes to be established. These chapters emphasized participant voice and perspective through the use of frequent quotations and photos. Chapter 5 presented the first major theme, *(Breaking) Stereotypes*. In this theme, the participants discussed their perceptions relating to stereotypes and norms for girls and women, acknowledging their historical and cultural foundations. The girls and young women also emphasized their recognition of societal pressures relating to thinness and ideal bodies, and how this relate to their health. Chapter 5 also presented the subtheme of *Conflict and Contradictions*, in which the girls discussed the complex and often contradictory expectations they face regarding their health and health behaviours, and how challenging it can be to navigate the extent to which the subvert or conform to norms.

Chapter 6 presented two additional themes: *Emotional Safety* and *Being Outside in Nature*. This girls and young women in this study used the term *Emotional Safety* to describe contexts in which the felt confident and comfortable. As part of this theme, the girls and young women discussed their friends, family, and pets, as facilitators, but also discussed challenges to their physical safety, and the concept of harassment. Through this theme, it emerged that the girls and young women, when feeling emotionally safe, are better able to engage in the complex negotiations and confrontations of gender norms and associated contradictions. This theme also had a subtheme, *Practice, Confidence, and Pride*, which contributed to the girls' and young women's ability to subvert gender norms when they had the opportunity to practice, develop skill, express themselves, and feel confident.

The outdoors, and *Being Outside in Nature*, featured prominently in this work. This theme was presented as a visual theme, due to the frequency with which participants photographed elements of nature, such as flowers and trees, and themselves and each other engaging with nature, particularly in active pursuits like hiking and okaying outside. The girls and young women often identified these photos as important or significant. It was clear from these images and discussions that nature often provides the context in which girls and young women can gain confidence and feel emotionally safe, such that they can begin to navigate and potentially break norms and stereotypes.

In Chapter 7, I provided my own analysis and interpretation of the findings, using a feminist poststructural approach and placing the themes in the context of broader literature. The major theme of *(Breaking) Stereotypes* began with the participants' discussion and analysis of common and persistent discourse relating to expectations of and for women. The ideas of recognizing norms, and of persistence is significant, and connected to both feminist poststructural thought and Freire's ideas around critical consciousness (Freire, 2000). The findings were also connected to how history is interpreted, taken up, and challenged through the bodies of girls and young women. Ideas around breaking or conforming to norms, disrupting discourse, and challenging expectations connect to concepts of relational power, evaluative gaze, and the micropenalties associated with disruption (Azzarito, 2009; Downing, 2008; Duncan, 1994; Foucault, 1995).

Without training in feminist poststructuralism, the girls and young women often overtly connected to these theories. In many cases, they gave examples where they embraced subverting dominant discourses, through their appearance, their bodies, and their PA and nutrition. That said, they also discussed the complexity associated with

challenging norms, how it is not always easy or possible, and contexts in which they wish not to challenge stereotypes, and their femininity can be celebrated. Challenges here were often related to PA, which is commonly associated with a rigid gender binary, and was closely related to ideas around gaze, and generational influence of discourse, particularly regarding women's place in sport (Azzarito, 2009; Downing, 2008; Duncan, 1994; Foucault, 1995). The findings also relate to the construction and production of their bodies, where girls are challenged by regulatory discourse relating to thinness and physical ability, relating greatly to subject positions associated with nutrition and PA. The girls and young women in this study also recognize the relational nature of power, noting certain bodies are privileged in certain contexts, and the unrealistic nature of the ideal body. The participants emphasized the importance of media here, highlighting its perpetuation of unrealistic ideals, industry involvement, and emerging challenges around social media.

Regarding the complex conflicts and contradictions, the girls and young women tended to acknowledge their agency in deciding what to wear and how to act but questioned their subjectivity and the subject positions available. They experienced regular internal conflict relating to their appearance and engaged in competing discourses that result in complex negotiations and experiences of micropenalties. A shifting dominant discourse surrounding girls and young women had led to girls having to determine whether to conform or reject common stereotypes. They are constantly challenging gender boundaries, offering a counter discourse, and contributing to this shift. Examples here related to getting dressed, wearing makeup, attracting attention, eating too much versus too little, dieting, and challenging norms regarding strength, or 'throwing like a girl'.

The emergent theme of *Emotional Safety* tied the above challenges, conflicts, and negotiations more concretely to health, PA, and nutrition. The girls and young women discussed their friends, families, and pets as facilitators for emotional safety. They discussed examples of social support for engaging in PA, and for navigating complex challenges around dieting. Gender-based harassment and physical safety were discussed as threats to emotional safety and challenging to health and wellbeing. The concept of role modelling and representation was identified as important here, particularly regarding PA. Finally, ideas around confidence, practice, and price emerged as important here, suggesting the participants' exploration of available subject positions and discourses. Practicing and developing confidence helped participants remove fear, which helped them to feel emotionally safe, and better able to navigate complex challenges. This was often photographed in terms of PA, where new skills, accomplishments, and sources of pride were featured prominently.

Finally, *Being Outside in Nature* was identified as significant. A timely concern for many fields, health promotion included, the participants' love of nature was evident through their photographs. The girls were pictured outside challenging norms and taking part in practice and confidence-development, connecting to emotional safety. It is evident, that being outside in nature often provides the setting for girls and young women to negotiate conflicting and contradictory gender norms. In order to engage in navigating competing discourses about health, PA, and nutrition, girls and young women need to feel emotionally safe, and nature can provide this important context.

This study addressed several identified gaps in the literature through engaging older adolescent girls and young women, and comprehensively exploring aspects of their health, nutrition, and PA. The girls and young women who took part in this project

frequently expressed their gratitude for having the time and space to discuss these important issues. They also made several recommendations for future practitioners. While they acknowledge that discourse is shifting, they suggest more work needs to be done in challenging dominant discourse, reinforcing the need to continue challenging stereotypes. They highlighted the value of body positivity movements in promoting confidence and suggest this should be a goal. They also noted the importance of safe spaces to discuss the complex issues faced by girls and young women, suggesting future work should continue to engage and empower girls and young women. To conclude, and in the words of one participant, *"you can't have [an] ideal girl because that person does not exist"*.

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Picture Perfect?

Gazing into Girls' Health, Physical Activity & Nutrition Through Photovoice

A study by Becky Spencer, Interdisciplinary PhD Candidate at Dalhousie University funded by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research Doctoral Research Award.

Supervisory Committee:
- Dr. Sara Kirk
- Dr. Laurene Rehman
- Dr. Matt Numer

CIHR IRSC
Canadian Institutes of Health Research   Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

Background & Purpose

Adolescent girls are faced with challenges related to health and their bodies. They face pressures to be perceived as feminine, pretty, and thin, but also athletic. Media promotes unrealistic body ideals for girls and young women, but also permits them to be targeted by the food industry; these complex issues, relate to the health and well-being of girls and young women, and more specifically, their physical activity (PA) and nutrition.

The goal of this study is to explore girls' health through photos. We'll explore perceptions of bodies, physical activity, and nutrition, and how they are influenced by social, political, historical, and gender norms. We'll use photovoice, a method of engaged photo-taking. Photovoice is used to enable reflection, promote dialogue, and reach decision makers.

Methods

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to take part in a 3-4 hour workshop with other adolescent girls to brainstorm ideas about girls' health, physical activity, and nutrition, and how it is influenced by social, political, and historical influences.

You will also be asked to take photos over 1-2 weeks before getting back together to discuss them. This is an ongoing and participatory process where you will critically consider the photos as part of the larger group. We'll repeat this process 2 or 3 times.

You will then be asked help to find themes from the photos, and we will decide together how and where the findings and photos will be shared with decision makers (such as teachers, policymakers, or group leaders) and the general public.

*Please note: choosing to take part (or not take part), in this project will not impact your ability to take part in your regular programming.

Significance

This study will contribute to the current literature on adolescent girls health. It is unique in its use of a comprehensive and health promotion perspective.

Photovoice studies also often result in action and advocacy, so there is opportunity for you to make change in your community. Photovoice studies also often result in increased community engagement, leadership, and improved self-esteem.

Contact

To learn more about this study, please contact us:

Becky Spencer
Interdisciplinary PhD Candidate, Dalhousie University

Becky.Spencer@dal.ca
902 494 1171

Appendix B: Information & Informed Consent Documents

Project title: Picture Perfect? Gazing into Girls' Health, Physical Activity, and Nutrition Through Photovoice
Researcher: Becky Spencer, PhD Candidate, Dalhousie University, becky.spencer@dal.ca, (902)494-1171
Other researchers
Supervisor: Dr. Sara Kirk, Canada Research Chair in Health Services Research, School of Health and Human Performance, Dalhousie University, Sara.Kirk@dal.ca, (902)494-8440
Funding provided by: Canadian Institutes for Health Research Doctoral Research Award

Introduction
We invite you to take part in a study being conducted by Becky Spencer, an Interdisciplinary PhD student at Dalhousie University. Choosing whether or not to take part in the study is entirely your choice. There will be no negative impact if you decide not to take part. The below tells you what is involved in the study, what you will be asked to do and about any benefit or risk you might experience. You should discuss any questions you have about this study with Becky Spencer. Please ask as many questions as you like, and contact us anytime.

Purpose and Outline of the Research Study
Adolescent girls face complex challenges regarding their bodies. Media promotes unrealistic ideals for girls, and permits us to be targeted by industry. These complex issues are often related to health, physical activity, and nutrition. The goal of this study is to explore girls' health through photos. We'll explore perceptions of bodies, physical activity, and nutrition, and how they are influenced by social, political, historical, and gender norms. With a small group of girls (i.e. less than 20) as participants, we'll use photovoice, a method of engaged photo-taking. Photovoice is often used to enable reflection, promote dialogue, and reach decision makers (like teachers, policymakers, or group leaders).

Who Can Take Part in the Research Study
You may take part in this study if you are a participant in [PROGRAM NAME], and are interested in engaging in the data collection and analysis plans described below.

What You Will Be Asked to Do
If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to take part in a workshop of 3-4 hours with other girls from your program. At the workshop, you will learn more about the study, taking photos for its purpose, and brainstorm themes for taking photos. You will then be asked to take photos for 1-2 weeks, using your own camera or one from the study. You will be asked to seek consent, where needed, to take someone's photo.

After taking photos, you will be asked to turn them in to the researcher, by dropping them off at an agreed upon location or by her picking them up from you (if you use a disposable or borrowed camera), or by electronically transferring them using a Dalhousie system that the researcher will provide you instructions for (if you take electronic

photos). The original group will then meet again for 1-2 hours to discuss the photos as a group. We will repeat the process of taking photos and getting together to discuss them 1-3 more times. Group discussions will be audio-recorded. The total estimated time commitment will be approximately up to 15 hours, over a period of approximately 2-3 months. When this process is finished, you may be asked to engage in activities or events to share your photos, though these activities will be optional.

Possible Benefits, Risks and Discomforts
Participating in the study might not benefit you, but we might learn things that will benefit others related to girls' health. Photovoice studies sometimes result in advocacy and action, and participants have the chance to work with stakeholders in their communities and enhance self-esteem.

The risks associated with this study are minimal. Photos, however, can be seen as political, personal, or private, and you may feel uncomfortable in taking them, seeking consent when needed, or discussing them in a group. You can choose the photos you take, and do not have to take any photos which would make you uncomfortable. You can also choose to not respond to any question you wish not to during group discussion of photos.

Compensation
To thank you for your time, we will give you a $10 gift card each time you turn in photos and engage in an analysis session, to a maximum of $30. We will determine the location of gift cards in conjunction with those who take part. You will also be given a copy of all photos you take (for which consent has been established).

How Your Information Will Be Protected
Given the nature of the study (group discussions), other participants will know that you are taking part, and we cannot guarantee confidentiality. Given that the data will be photos, if you choose to take photos of yourself, your image cannot be kept confidential, though we will not publish names of people in photos. We will also not report or publish photographer's names, though you may be offered the opportunity to engage in sharing your photos publicly, and you could be identified in that process.

Participants who take photos will have the opportunity to decide which photos are shared publicly, and give their permission for sharing photos after analysis has taken place. Direct quotes from group discussions may be used, but will not be associated with individual names. We will not disclose any information about your participation in this research to anyone unless compelled to do so by law. That is, in the unlikely event that we witness child abuse, or suspect it, we are required to contact authorities.

Only the researcher and her supervisory committee will have access to all study data. Electronic files will be password protected, and paper data will be stored in a locked cabinet in a locked office at Dalhousie University. All data will be kept for 5 years following publication, after which time it will be destroyed.

If You Decide to Stop Participating
You are free to leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating at any point

in the study, you can also decide whether you want any of the photos you've taken to that point removed. As group discussions will be audio-recorded, it will not be possible to remove your individual comments from the group data. After analysis is complete, you will be offered another opportunity to consent to the use of your photos for knowledge sharing and translation. If you decide to consent to the use of your photos at that point, it will no longer be possible to remove them at a later date. Your participation in this study will not influence your ability to take part in [PROGRAM NAME].

How to Obtain Results
We can provide you with a short summary of results when the study is finished, or include you on future updates regarding publications, etc. You can obtain these results or sign up for updates by including your contact information at the end of the signature page.

Questions
We are happy to talk with you about any questions or concerns you may have about your participation in this research study. Please contact Becky Spencer at 902 494-1171, becky.spencer@dal.ca, or her supervisor, Dr. Sara Kirk at 902 494-8440, Sara.Kirk@dal.ca at any time with questions, comments, or concerns about the research study. We will also tell you if any new information comes up that could affect your decision to participate. If you have any ethical concerns about your participation in this research, you may also contact Research Ethics, Dalhousie University at (902) 494-1462, or email: ethics@dal.ca.

Signature Page

Project Title: Picture Perfect? Gazing into Girls' Health, Physical Activity, and Nutrition Through Photovoice

Researcher: Becky Spencer, Interdisciplinary PhD Candidate, Dalhousie University, becky.spencer@dal.ca, (902)494-1171

I have read the explanation about this study. I have been given the opportunity to discuss it and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I have been asked to take part in a workshop, take photos, and engage in group discussion of those photos. I understand that group discussion will be audio recorded, and direct quotes of things I say may be used without identifying me. I agree to take part in this study. My participation is voluntary and I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, but that my individual voice cannot be removed from audio-recorded group discussion. I understand that I will be given another opportunity in the future to consent to the use of my photos publicly.

_____   _____   _____
Name   Signature   Date

___ I am over the age of 18.

If participant is under the age of 18, parent/guardian consent is also required:

_____   _____   _____
Parent/Guardian Name   Signature   Date

Provision of Results
___ I would like to receive a copy of a summary of this study's results.
___ I would like to be updated (via email) regarding publications, events, or presentations associated with this study.

If you checked either of the above boxes, please complete:
Name: _____
Email address: _____

Time	Purpose	Activities	Notes
10:30-10:40am	Leaving time for youth to arrive and get settled	Ensuring everyone has signed consent (add age to form) and makes a nametag	Need extra consent forms, nametags, markers Hand out folders
10:40-10:55am	Getting to know everyone and making sure we all feel supported	Icebreaker, intros, and community standards Introduce project and timeline	Photo check-in Community standards Visual timeline
10:55-11:20am	Beginning to brainstorm	Discuss the following: How is girls' health unique? What special concerns do we face? What do we think about girls' physical activity? What do we think about girls' nutrition? What stereotypes or norms are related to girls' health? Physical activity? Nutrition? Where do these stereotypes or norms come from?	*audio record this part Need to print questions on coloured paper, bring post-its, magazines, etc.
11:20-11:40am	Photo ethics – clarifying our commitment to ethics, ensuring informed consent	What do we mean by ethics? When do you like/not like having your photo taken? Photography and Power Consent form - this is how we make sure people are okay with being in the study. Review form. When do we use these forms? Whenever there is a person as the main focus. Examples. Situations for blurring. What constitutes a sensitive/identifiable photo. Strategies for consent: Ask friends & take posed shots, take self-portraits, plan the photos	

		you want to take and approach people early.	
11:40am – 12pm	Lunch Break		
12-12:30pm	Photo skills – providing basic skills in composition and building confidence in taking photos	Led by Photographer: Basic skills in composition, framing, telling stories with photos	
12:30-1pm	Applying learned skills	Role playing by practicing achieving ethical informed consent and taking photos	
1-1:40pm	Remaining brainstorming questions – to get the youth talking about their experiences and thinking about what they might like to take photos of	How is our health (physical activity, nutrition, other factors) influenced by institutions and environments? Schools? Communities? Work environments? Religious institutions? Clubs, programs, or recreation centres? Health care institutions? How does industry impact girls' health? Food? Fitness? Fashion, etc.? How does media impact girls' health? Physical activity? Nutrition? How do social influences impact girls' health? Physical activity? Nutrition? How does policy impact girl's health? Physical activity? Nutrition? How does culture and history impact girls' health? Physical activity? Nutrition?	*audio record again

		How are girl's bodies portrayed by the institutions and environments we've talked about? How do these things impact our body image or how we feel about our bodies?	
1:40-1:55pm	Distributing cameras and establishing process	Determining what works best for everyone. Explaining file exchange and giving passwords	Determine next meeting & where to buy gift cards
1:55-2pm	Wrapping up	Check-out – one word about how you're feeling about the project	

Appendix D: Focus Group Guide

Focus Group/Brainstorming Guide

o How is girls' health unique? What special concerns do we face?
- o What do we think about girls' physical activity?
- o What do we think about girls' nutrition?

o What stereotypes or norms are related to girls' health?
- o Physical activity?
- o Nutrition?

o Where do these stereotypes or norms come from?

o How is our health (physical activity, nutrition, other factors) influenced by institutions and environments?
- o Schools?
- o Communities?
- o Work environments?
- o Religious institutions?
- o Clubs, programs, or recreation centres?
- o Health care institutions?

o How does industry impact girls' health?
- o Food? Fitness? Fashion, etc.?

o How does media impact girls' health?
- o Physical activity?
- o Nutrition?

o How do social influences impact girls' health?
- o Physical activity?
- o Nutrition?

o How does policy impact girl's health?
- o Physical activity?
- o Nutrition?

o How does culture and history impact girls' health?
- o Physical activity?
- o Nutrition?

o How are girl's bodies portrayed by the institutions and environments we've talked about?
- o How do these things impact our body image or how we feel about our bodies?

Appendix E: Folder Materials (other than consent documents)

Becky Spencer, PhD Candidate
School of Health and Human Performance
Dalhousie University
Becky.spencer@dal.ca
(902)494-1171

Dear teachers, employers, or whom it may concern:

Your student, employee, colleague, or peer is taking part in a research study titled: Picture Perfect? Gazing into Girls' Health, Physical Activity, and Nutrition Through Photovoice, conducted by Becky Spencer at Dalhousie University, and funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research Doctoral Research Award.

The goal of the study is to explore girls' health through photos. We'll explore perceptions of bodies, physical activity, and nutrition, and how they are influenced by social, political, historical, and gender norms. As part of the study, the participants are asked to take photos of their every lives, and the people and things that are part them, based on themes that we will brainstorm together.

As such, you can expect that the participant will be carrying and using a camera regularly for 1-2 week intervals, up to 3 times. We appreciate if you are able to accommodate their taking photos, but understand that it may be inappropriate or inconvenient at times, and have asked the participants to respect the wishes of teachers, employers, etc.

When taking photos of identifiable people, informed consent must be established, and the participants have been provided with the materials to do so. They will only use photos with permission and where consent has been established.

No specific action is required of you; we are just informing you of their participation. I am happy to discuss this study with you at any time, please feel free to reach me at the contact details above.

Thank you in advance for your understanding,

Becky Spencer

Photo Notes Worksheet Example

Use this to document every photo you take! Remember, you may take many photos, and it may become difficult to remember when or why you took them. Filling out this sheet will be helpful for our discussions.

Remember – we're going to use the SHOWeD acronym when we discuss photos: What do you **S**ee? What is really **H**appening? How does it relate to **O**ur lives? **W**hy does it exist? What can be **D**one about it?

Date: _____
Briefly describe the photo:

_____

Why did you take the photo?

_____

Critical or reflective thoughts:

_____

Consent:
Required ___   N/A___   Youth Consent ___   Parent/Guardian Consent ___   N/A___

Photo-Taking Tips

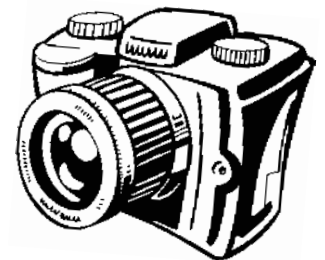Use these tips and tricks to take photos that capture what you're intending!
- o Try to get active rather than static photos:
  - o Try to capture people engaged in doing something rather than stopping what they are doing to pose unnaturally for a photo.
  - o Try to be candid or real with your photos, rather than staging them.

- o Try different camera angles:
  - o Consider how to best capture whatever it is you are trying to capture.
  - o Is a photo more interesting if shot from above or below?
  - o Remember photos of individual people are best when shot from their eye-level.

- o Look for ways to show results or impact:
  - o What is the impact of what is happening? Can you capture that impact?
  - o Consider why the photo is important or how it helps to tell a story or may have an emotional impact.

- o When you have to stage a photo, don't completely pose it:
  - o Allow the subject(s) to become immersed in their action first, then take the photo.

- o Avoid dark, blurry, or overexposed photos:
  - o Use different angles to see how the light influences your photo.
  - o Play with shadows and light.

- o Make sure the photo has a focal point to draw the viewer's eye:
  - o Remember the key element does not need to be in the centre of the shot, and may be more interesting if off-centered

Do try:
- o To take action shots
- o To take photos of places and people as they naturally are
- o To find unexpected or surprising angles

Try to avoid:
- o Taking static group shots
- o Zooming in on only people without a purpose – capture background for context
- o Forcing posed, unnatural photos

Adsum House
Adsum offers a range of services and support to women, families, youth and trans*
persons during periods of homelessness.
2421 Brunswick Street
902.423.5049
902.423.9336
adsum@adsumforwomen.org

Avalon Sexual Assault Centre Crisis Line
(902) 425-0122

Canadian Mental Health Association
A nation-wide voluntary organization promoting the mental health of all and supporting
the resilience and recovery of people experiencing mental illness.
Halifax/Dartmouth Branch 455-5445
www.cmhahaldart.ca

Eating Disorders Action Group
Dedicated to promoting healthy body image and self esteem and to supporting
individuals who experience disordered eating.
443-9944
www.edag.ca

Feed NS Help Line
24 hour help line from Feed Nova Scotia
1-877-521-1188

Halifax Sexual Health Centre
Promotes sexual and reproductive health within an environment respecting and
supporting individual choice.
455-9656
www.halifaxsexualhealth.ca/

Kid's Help Phone (24-hour)
1-800-668-6868

Laing House
Youth between ages 17 and 24 years who are living with serious mental illness like
psychosis or mood disorders can get the support they need to prepare for a healthier
future.
473-7743
www.lainghouse.org

Phoenix Centre for Youth Health Program
A walk-in health and counselling facility which offers a first exit from street life.
420-0676
www.phoenixyouth.ca/programs/youthcenter

Youth Help Line (24-hour)
(902)420-8336

Youth Project
Supporting youth around issues of sexual orientation and gender identity since 1993.
2281 Brunswick St.
(902) 429-5429
youthproject@youthproject.ns.ca

YWCA Halifax
(902)423-6162
We are for, by and about women and girls. We transform lives by providing a continuum of critical services and programs that build capacity for lasting positive change. We strive to change the underlying causes and issues that are root causes of inequality, violence, poverty and homelessness.

Project title: Picture Perfect? Gazing into Girls' Health, Physical Activity, and Nutrition Through Photovoice

Lead researcher: Becky Spencer, Interdisciplinary PhD Candidate, Dalhousie University, becky.spencer@dal.ca, (902)494-1171

Other researchers
Supervisor: Dr. Sara Kirk, Canada Research Chair in Health Services Research, School of Health and Human Performance, Dalhousie University, Sara.Kirk@dal.ca, (902)494-8440

Funding provided by: Canadian Institutes for Health Research Doctoral Research Award

Introduction
You have been asked to have your photo taken as part of a research study being conducted by Becky Spencer, a student at Dalhousie University, as part of the Interdisciplinary PhD program. Choosing whether or not to have your photo taken is entirely your choice. There will be no negative impact if you decide not to take part. You should discuss any questions you have about this study with Becky Spencer. Please ask as many questions as you like, and contact us anytime.

Purpose and Outline of the Research Study
Adolescent girls face complex challenges regarding their bodies. Media promotes unrealistic ideals for girls and young women, and permits us to be targeted by industry. These complex issues are often related to health, physical activity, and nutrition. The goal of this study is to explore girls' health through photos. We'll explore perceptions of bodies, physical activity, and nutrition, and how they are influenced by social, political, historical, and gender norms. With a small group of girls (i.e. less than 20) as participants, we'll use photovoice, a method of engaged photo-taking. Photovoice is often used to enable reflection, promote dialogue, and reach decision makers.

What You Will Be Asked to Do
You have been asked by a study participant to have your photo taken. Having your photo taken and used as part of this project is all you will be asked to do. If your photo is taken, it may become part of a group discussion and analysis, and may be used publically in sharing the results of the study.

Possible Benefits, Risks and Discomforts
Participating in the study might not benefit you, but we might learn things that will benefit others related to girls' health. The risks associated with this study are minimal. Photos, however, can be seen as political, and you may feel uncomfortable having your photo taken. You can choose to not have your photo taken with no negative consequences.
Compensation / Reimbursement
You will not be compensated for having your photo taken, though the photographer will

be given a printed copy of all of their photos, and may decide to give you a copy.

How your information will be protected:
Your name will not be printed or published in association with your photo, but your photo will be used in the study's group discussion analysis process and potentially in publication and knowledge sharing activities, so confidentiality is not possible. We will not be able to prevent others from knowing you took part in the study by having your photo taken, as you could be identified by your image or likeness.

Electronic copies of images will be password-protected. This signed form, and hard copies of photos, will be stored separately from each other, in locked filing cabinets. Data will be kept for a period of 5 years following publication, after which time it will be destroyed. We will not disclose any information about your participation in this research to anyone unless compelled to do so by law. That is, in the unlikely event that we witness child abuse, or suspect it, we are required to contact authorities.

If You Decide to Stop Participating
You are free to decide to not have your photo taken at any time. Once you have had your photo taken and provided this form to the photographer, it will not be possible to remove your photo from the rest of the data.

How to Obtain Results
We can provide you with a short summary of results when the study is finished. You can obtain these results or sign up for updates by including your contact information at the end of the signature page.

Questions
We are happy to talk with you about any questions or concerns you may have about your participation in this research study. Please contact Becky Spencer at 902 494-1171, becky.spencer@dal.ca, or her supervisor, Dr. Sara Kirk at 902 494-8440, Sara.Kirk@dal.ca at any time with questions, comments, or concerns about the research study. We will also tell you if any new information comes up that could affect your decision to participate. If you have any ethical concerns about your participation in this research, you may also contact Research Ethics, Dalhousie University at (902) 494-1462, or email: ethics@dal.ca.

Signature Page

Project Title: Picture Perfect? Gazing into Girls' Health, Physical Activity, and Nutrition Through Photovoice

Researcher: Becky Spencer, Interdisciplinary PhD Candidate, Dalhousie University, becky.spencer@dal.ca, (902)494-1171

I have read the explanation about this study. I have been given the opportunity to discuss it and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I have been asked to have my photo taken and that my image and likeness will be used for the purposes of this study's analysis and sharing of results. I give permission to Becky Spencer and Dalhousie University to use my photograph for the purpose of sharing the results of this study with stakeholders and the general public. I grant Becky Spencer and Dalhousie University rights to use my photo without compensation.

_____   _____   _____
Name   Signature   Date

If participant is under the age of 18, parent/guardian consent is also required:

_____   _____   _____
Parent/Guardian Name   Signature   Date

If you would like to be emailed a short summary of this study's results, please complete:
Name: _____
Email address: _____

Appendix G: Photographer Consent

Photographer's Consent and Media Release

Project Title: Picture Perfect? Gazing into Girls' Health, Physical Activity, and Nutrition Through Photovoice

Researcher: Becky Spencer, Interdisciplinary PhD Candidate, Dalhousie University, becky.spencer@dal.ca, (902)494-1171

I have taken part in the photovoice study, taken and selected photos, and taken part in their analysis. I have been given the opportunity to discuss the use of the photos I have taken and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that the photos I have taken may be used in a variety of formats for publication and presentations to share knowledge gained in this study with academic and non-academic audiences, including but not limited to in publications, presentations, social media, public events, and webinars.

My participation is voluntary and I understand that once I have signed below I will no longer be able to have the photos I have taken removed from the research study or the presentation of its results. I give permission to Becky Spencer and Dalhousie University to use my photographs for the purpose of sharing the results of this study with stakeholders and the general public. I grant Becky Spencer and Dalhousie University rights to use my photo without compensation.

_____   _____   _____
Name   Signature   Date

If participant is under the age of 18, parent/guardian consent is also required:

_____   _____   _____
Parent/Guardian Name   Signature   Date

Appendix H: Gallery Event Poster

Appendix I: Photos from Gallery Event