

Introduction

...[her] lack of physical power leads to a more general timidity: she has no faith in a force she has not experienced in her body; she does not dare to be enterprising, to revolt, to invent; doomed to docility, to resignation, she can take in society only a place already made for her. (de Beauvoir, 1952, p.330)

The quotation above provides an example of the gendered nature of corporeality illustrating the perceived alienation and feelings of powerlessness [1] associated with women's bodily experiences. This has been extensively explored from multiple perspectives: phenomenologically (Allen-Collinson, 2011; Chisholm, 2008; de Beauvoir, 1952; Young, 1980); sociologically, drawing upon Foucault (Markula, 2003); and Bourdieu (Liimakka, 2011 & 2013); and from a physical feminist perspective (Blinde, Taub & Han, 1993; McCaughey, 1997; Vertinsky, 1987). It has also received attention from leisure scholars, who have become increasingly interested in how participation in active leisure as a source of individual agency may impact upon women's bodily experiences within a range of activities, for example swimming (Evans & Allen-Collinson, 2016), Yoga (Humberstone & Cutler-Riddick, 2015), and the martial arts (Velija, Mierzwinski, & Fortune, 2013), for example. This paper contributes to the small yet emerging body of literature that provides an embodied analysis of active leisure, specifically that related to sport and physical activity. By drawing on life world philosophy (Galvin & Todres, 2011) and exploring power relations, this paper proposes how such activity may provide existential possibilities for wellbeing and empowerment for women.

We begin with an overview of the literature on the female body, focussing on phenomenological (lived body experience), sociological (collective body experience) and combined (embedded-lived body experience) research (including feminist phenomenology).

We then add to existing feminist research in sport as leisure by adopting a life world approach . We achieve this by introducing a practical framework for understanding and developing pathways to wellbeing, Dwelling-Mobility Theory (Todres & Galvin, 2010; Galvin & Todres, 2011) as a theoretical model for exploring women's relationships with their bodies. Finally, we provide examples of how active leisure may offer a path towards more positive body experiences by facilitating wellbeing and empowerment for women [2].

The lived body experience of sport and active leisure

An emerging body of theorists have argued that phenomenology provides opportunities for the study of bodies within a sporting context (Aalten, 2007; Allen-Collinson, 2009; Allen-Collinson, 2011; Allen Collinson & Owton, 2015; Kerry & Armour, 2000). Researchers call for phenomenological research which addresses the fleshy, sensory dimensions of embodiment (Allen Collinson & Owton, 2015; Hockey & Allen Collinson, 2009). These theorists draw upon Merleau-Ponty (1962) in order to provide a framework for understanding the body as a subject of perception. Merleau-Ponty (1962) submits that we both live in and experience the world through our bodies. This approach emphasising the vital role of the body within experience, demonstrates a departure from traditional disembodied dualistic analyses of body and mind referring to the body as the 'lived body' (p.281) accepting the body as the medium through which individuals may experience the world. Todres et al. (2007) draw on Merleau-Ponty (1962, p.57) to define embodiment as referring to 'the concrete "here" of ourselves' as opposed to the Cartesian notion of bodies as objects. Therefore, in a phenomenological sense, the term embodiment refers to the experience of the body as an essential part of ourself through which we experience the world, as opposed to valuing it as an object, which exists outside who we are.

Grimshaw (1999) uses Merleau-Ponty (1962) to explain that the body is bound in a constant process of learning new meanings in order to adopt skills that can then be stored. In other words, the way that humans experience their bodies is constantly shifting as they acquire new physical skills and abilities. This approach supports the notion that experiences such as sport can help promote changes in embodied experience, which can promote feelings of meaningful embodiment. Therefore, to Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology suggests a framework for understanding how women may experience embodiment by the acquisition of new, skilful and habitual knowledge that demonstrates the full physical potential of their bodies allowing them to be in the world in a way that facilitates a more positive form of embodiment and a sense of wellbeing through the experience of skill competence.

The phenomenological approach to exploring embodiment makes a contribution to understanding how individuals experience their bodies in a meaningful way. It has the potential to address the politics of women's bodies by 'giving voice', and recognising and honouring their physical experiences as described by women themselves. Furthermore, practical phenomenological frameworks can enlighten explicit pathways to wellbeing through positive embodiment, which can help achieve critical change as prioritised by social enquiry. However, unlike more collective sociological inquiry, the approach fails to entirely address the issue of inequitable access to the experience of embodiment (Yarnal, Hutchinson & Chow, 2006), or shared body experience. Furthermore, phenomenology is often viewed as essentialist, abstract, theory-bound, neglectful of socio-political discourse, and criticised for failing to acknowledge women's specific experiences (Fisher, 2000). Therefore used in isolation, it has limited utility in exploring the gendered experience of positive embodiment. In order to adequately explore women's lived experiences, the collective body experience must be considered.

The collective body experience of sport and active leisure

In contrast to phenomenologically informed research on the lived-body experience, the 'collective body experience' of sport and active leisure locates women's body experiences, and possibilities of embodiment within a socio-cultural context (Aaltonen, 2013; Block & Kissell, 2001; Liimakka, 2011; Liimakka, 2011; Liimakka, 2013; Theberge, 2003; Young, 1990). This embedded approach to exploring embodiment sees our social self, including our gender, as framing how we experience our bodies. This has particular utility as it helps identify social groups, who are more likely to experience physical alienation and marginalisation- such as women, and emphasises the need to explore pathways to more positive experiences [3].

The collective body approach also highlights that whilst activities such as sport may hold a pathway to more positive body experiences for social groups who are more likely to experience their bodies in negative ways (such as women), in reality participation reflects society in privileging the groups and individuals who are more likely to experience their bodies positively (such as men). For example, women are still less likely to participate in sport than their male counterparts (WSFF, 2013). Therefore, whilst physical activity holds potential to allow women to experience their bodies in a more positive way, this is not realised.

Furthermore, the differences between the way men and women experience their bodies has prompted much of the theoretical work on the potential of empowerment within a sporting context to adopt a critical (feminist) framework, drawing upon the work of Foucault (Aaltonen, 2013; Markula, 2003) and, in some cases, Bourdieu (Liimakka, 2011) to focus on

the shared, gendered aspect of embodiment and collective empowerment. Critical feminist scholars exploring the facilitation of empowering body experiences have suggested that activities that allow women to challenge traditional female ideologies by displaying strength, aggression and power (such as boxing or martial arts) provide greater opportunities for empowering forms of embodiment (Velija, Mierzwinski et al., 2013). Similarly, scholars advocating physical feminism as an approach to explore positive embodiment (McCaughey, 1997; Roth & Basow, 2004) have also emphasised the importance of the role of physical strength as a pathway to positive body experiences for females. Whilst research that emphasises the gendered aspect of how women experience their bodies through physical activity and its relationship to dynamics of power is imperative, critics suggest that social approaches are often theoretically driven, and have a tendency to bracket out individual experience, therefore frequently ignore the practical experiences of embodiment (Turner, 1996; Wacquant, 1995; Wainwright & Turner, 2006; Watson, 2000) [4]. The theoretically driven nature of social approaches often fails to provide practical frameworks to understanding/ actively promoting wellbeing through more positive forms of embodiment. Furthermore, Aalten (2007) argues that sociological scholarship has previously tended to treat the body as an object, increasingly a more corporal, fleshy approach is sought. It is on this basis that there is a need for complementary research that brings back the individual and their lived experiences of empowering forms of embodiment through sport, and utilises theoretical frameworks to provide potential pathways towards wellbeing. Hence, the contribution of this paper is to explore how active leisure, in the form of physical activity, promotes the experience of embodiment in both an empowering and meaningful way for individuals, thus contributing to their own individual wellbeing.

An embedded lived experience of sport and active leisure

We argue that the social and phenomenological domains of what we term the 'Embedded Lived Experience' are inextricably bound. As agreed by Block & Kissell (2001), individuals are embedded within a particular society or culture, and so, it is important to consider how individuals may experience the world through their bodies in unique ways that allow them to negotiate power. It is also imperative to consider how the negotiation of power imbalances may impact the way individuals experience their bodies.

This acceptance of the value of phenomenological experience and sociological situation is also reflected in the term 'empowering embodiment' utilised within existing narratives (Impett, Daubenmier & Hirschman, 2006). In this sense, a body experience may be described as empowering if it allows individuals to negotiate power constraints imposed upon them by oppressive structures. Empowering embodiment may allow women to negotiate social ideology relating to female fragility and challenge the assumption that masterful or skilful behaviour is not for women.

Research into the relationship between empowering embodiment and wellbeing within a sporting context has also emphasised the role of empowering embodiment within the broader pursuit of wellbeing (Impett, Daubenmier et al., 2006; Impett, Henson, Breines, Schooler & Tolan, 2011; Liimakka, 2013). Hargreaves (1994) reflects on the positive, empowering potential of physical activity whilst drawing on conversations with hundreds of women. She explained that '...most of them talk about a sense of wellbeing and enrichment that comes to their lives' (p.289). In terms of the potential to promote positive body experiences, scholars have commented on the empowering capability of physical activity in terms of enhancing women's understanding of their bodily potential (Lenskyj, 1986; Mackinnon, 1987), providing a sense of 'my body can'. Yet despite the political rhetoric that such activities can

empower women, there is still a lack of academic literature that examines *how* women's participation can facilitate wellbeing through empowering experiences. Furthermore there is an over-emphasis on theorisation without consideration and application of practical philosophical frameworks for understanding and promoting women's wellbeing through positive embodied experiences.

Feminist phenomenology

Despite the legacy of phenomenological philosophy bound within a sociological context [5], advocates of feminism have been slow to acknowledge the complementarity of their philosophy and phenomenology. Many feminists have met phenomenology's absence of a gendered lens with cynicism, and have speculated about its merit in exploring women's lived body experience (Chisholm, 2008; Fisher, 2000). Furthermore, numerous feminists believe that phenomenology is masculinist and essentialist in nature (Fisher, 2000). Notwithstanding the widespread scepticism from feminists, academics have identified complementarity in the experiential and descriptive fundamentals of both feminism and phenomenology, and have subsequently explored the possibility of integration (Alcoff, 2000; Allen-Collinson, 2011, de Beauvoir 1952; De Roo, 2013 Chisholm, 2008; Fisher, 2000; Kalman, 2013; Moi, 1999; Simms & Starwarska, 2013; Stoller, 2013; Welsh, 2013; Young, 1980; Young, 1990;).

Feminists such as de Beauvoir (1952) and later Moi (1999) offer a form of feminism that considers the individual and collective experience of being a woman, and Alcoff (2000) advocates a phenomenologically informed feminism, arguing that while the critical elaborations of social meaning within feminism are valuable '... the pendulum has swung too far' (p.252) neglecting the valuable role of lived experience, calling for critical social approaches that also consider women's phenomenological experiences.

Within the field of physical feminism, Young (1980) offered a pioneering case that explored women's corporeality within a phenomenological framework, demonstrating that the way women experience spatiality within a sporting context is gendered. However, whilst Young's work has been extremely influential, it has also been scrutinised by feminists who believe that it compartmentalises women's embodied experience within a historical framework of oppression that fails to acknowledge the freedom offered to women within contemporary society (Chisholm, 2008). In contrast, Chisholm (2008) uses feminist phenomenology to emphasise how physical activity may provide a pathway for women to challenge physical oppression and allow them to experience their bodies in more meaningful ways. Such an approach privileges the lived body experience in addition to the role of gendered constraints and honours the role of human agency. Specifically, Chisholm's research uses the context of free climbing, and adopts a critical lens in order to emphasise the empowering potential that sport may offer women.

However, whilst the preceding literature has identified the empowering potential of such activities, there is a need for further theoretical scholarly inquiry that explores specifically 'how' they may provide a path to positive body experiences women by providing theoretical frameworks that can help promote individual wellbeing and empowerment. To that end, we present a life world approach grounded in phenomenological philosophy, which can offer explanations of how sport, active leisure and physical activity provides opportunities for positive identity and embodiment for women.

A phenomenological approach to women and active leisure: The life world

The concept of the life world is the foundation of all phenomenological philosophy. This humanly relational world comprises of everyday life as perceived by us, and our subjective

experiences of our self, body and relationships. This is a world full of individual, as opposed to objective meaning or measurement. Todres et al. (2007) explain that the nature of the life world means that there is no objective, inner or subjective world in itself; there merely exists a 'world-to-consciousness'. They explicate that this qualitative world is the basis for all meaningful knowledge relevant to all within this world. Whilst a rounded view of this concept is imperative, it is also possible to examine each of the intertwined constituents that combine to form this world. These constituents are the phenomenological domains of temporality, spatiality, inter-subjectivity, mood, identity, and embodiment.

In an earlier paper (authors, 2014), the authors adapted the life world approach first proposed by Todres et al. (2007) to explore how sport and physical activity may be experienced. Specifically, the research utilised *dwelling-mobility theory* (Galvin & Todres, 2011) to explore how sport could facilitate multiple kinds of wellbeing experiences. Psychological empowerment has been identified as a key facet of wellbeing (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2005), Dwelling-Mobility theory provides a theoretical framework for exploring how sports may facilitate wellbeing experiences through psychological empowerment. In viewing empowering embodiment as a positive experience that provides a pathway to wellbeing, such research demonstrates utility in the theory that sport provides opportunities for more positive experiences of the body for women. However, whilst this exemplifies how a life-world approach could be utilised to theorise each dimension of the lived experience in relation to sport, it does not acknowledge how lived experiences may be embedded in broader sociological contexts. This paper therefore builds on this existing research to examine the embedded nature of lived experience. In doing so, this research combines the strengths, and minimises the weaknesses of phenomenological and social approaches to exploring women's

embodiment. This is achieved by providing a life-world approach to explore how active leisure, through sport or physical activity, may provide opportunities for positive experiences for women, within a framework that acknowledges the role of the intertwined concepts of 'dwelling' and 'mobility'.

Dwelling-Mobility

In order to build on existing research adopting a life world approach to explore women's embodied experiences (see Allen-Collinson, 2011; Chisholm, 2008; Liimakka, 2011 & 2013 Young, 1980), this research uses Dwelling-Mobility theory as a specific theoretical framework in order to both explore 'how' women may experience wellbeing and positive forms of embodiment, and help encourage practical strategies for the promotion of wellbeing and positive physical experiences for women in this context.

Todres et al. (2007) and Dahlberg et al. (2009) conceptualise the experience of wellbeing as an existence characterised by vitality. This arises from the life world approach and the associated existential assumptions of vulnerability and freedom. Specifically, an understanding of vitality views the concept as a holistic experience, which incorporates possibilities of both movement (mobility) and peace (dwelling). Mayoh & Jones (2014) explain that sport can offer a pathway to wellbeing when a sporting experience provides an independent or intertwined sense of movement and peace, thus facilitating vitality. Such pathways are facilitated by experiences grounded in a sense of at-homeness or dwelling and/or mobility, action or movement. This approach draws heavily upon phenomenological philosophy (Heidegger, 1962; Merleau-Ponty, 1968/1948; Merleau-Ponty, 1987/60; Merleau-Ponty, 1995/1945) to emphasise both the movement quality of vitality that facilitates engagement with individuals, spaces, moods and times, as well as the peaceful dimension of

vitality, presented as a releasement towards things and an acceptance of what may come (Heidegger, 1959)[6]. Deepest experiences of vitality involve an intertwined experience of movement and peace. The simultaneous or intertwined relationship between movement and peace within vitality experiences can be exemplified using Heidegger's theory of releasement (Heidegger, 1975):

Releasement toward things and openness to the mystery belong together. They grant us the possibility of dwelling in the world in a totally different way (p. 55).

This demonstrates how possibilities of movement are offered through peacefulness, whilst movement facilitates the opportunity for peace. To further explicate the interplay between peace and movement, or dwelling and mobility (as referred to by Todres & Galvin 2010), one may also turn to Heidegger's (1959) concept of *Gegnet*, defined as: *...an abiding expanse which, gathering all, opens itself, so that in it openness is halted and held, letting everything merge in its own resting (p. 66).*

This illuminates how dwelling and mobility are intertwined to provide a simultaneous sense of openness and resting. Furthermore, such notions demonstrate how dwelling may offer a more authentic sense of mobility grounded in an alternative experience, whilst the experience of mobility allows dwelling to be felt in a more authentic way. In other words, without the sense of dwelling, mobility is less authentic than if one had experienced both dwelling and mobility. Table 1 illustrates how dwelling, mobility and dwelling-mobility may be felt within each of the life world dimensions within phenomenological philosophy. Drawing on this typology, Galvin & Todres (2011) highlight that there are multiple kinds of well-being possibilities.

Table 1. *Dwelling-Mobility lattice.* (Adapted from Galvin & Todres, 2011)

It is important to note that Galvin & Todres (2011) view the domains as implicated with each other, elucidating that wellbeing experiences can be grounded in multiple domains simultaneously. Using the example of women's embedded lived experiences of participation, we proposed that the life world dimensions of embodiment and identity provide a multi-dimensional framework for understanding how certain activities may provide opportunities for more positive, or empowering bodily experiences for women. The following section will provide an overview of the term 'embodied identity' to demonstrate how sport may offer a path to empowering embodiment for women by providing a sense of dwelling, mobility, and dwelling-mobility within the life world dimensions of embodiment and identity.

Embodied identity. Table 1 provides an overview of each of the dimensions of the life world. Identity is viewed as an experiential process of 'being' or 'becoming' one's self (Jenkins 1996, p.17) as an essential part of experience. Whilst Galvin & Todres (2011) treat identity as a distinct dimension of lived experience, they also explain that domains are implicated within each other. Based on this assumption, we argue that identity is inextricably linked with the dimension of embodiment to form *embodied identity*. Such an approach reflects the work of Merleau Ponty (1962) who see self-identity as being an embodied experience. Therefore the term *embodied identity* reflects the intertwining of life world dimensions, where an individual may experience the body as one's self. By exploring the domains of embodiment and identity simultaneously, we are able to explore the manner by which participation provides women with experiences grounded in empowering embodiment, where one experiences their self in a more empowering way.

Methodology

Empirical data has been utilized to provide some substantive evidence, and clearly demonstrate the utility of the proposed theoretical approach. Full ethical approval for the collection of this qualitative data was obtained from the institution's internal ethics committee prior to the study. Excerpts have been taken from a series of in-depth interviews and informal discussions conducted with a recreational woman power lifter (and professional coach) who has represented her country at an international level at the World Masters Powerlifting Championship. In doing so this research builds on the work of other studies that adopt a life world approach to explore women's sporting experience by offering insights from a novel context.

Amy (pseudonym) is a White British woman, now in her 40's and is still competing in both masters and mainstream powerlifting, and coaching male and female power lifters. We have used data used from sport as opposed to physical activity as the masculinized, competitive nature of sport may offer an alternative critical challenge to women's socialization than non-competitive (e.g. recreational running or yoga) or vocational style training (e.g. fire-fighting). Posing a critical challenge may allow women to negotiate oppressive social structures, and from a phenomenological perspective, experience their bodies in a more positive way. Therefore the data has been taken from interviews with a woman actively involved in high-level competition within a male-dominated sport in order to provide information rich experiential accounts of body experience within such a context.

The researchers drew upon phenomenological philosophy in order to explore experiential examples of empowering embodiment, however a full phenomenological methodological approach was not utilized as it would be inappropriate due to the integration of a sociological perspective within the research. This decision reflects the difference between phenomenology as a philosophy and as a research method. Interviews were conducted in a private room at a

public location convenient to the participant, and were recorded. The transcript was then transcribed by the lead researcher and analyzed using conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) by both researchers using Nvivo version 10 software. This allowed for the identification of a number of content themes and interpretation of meaning from the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The following section will provide theoretical and empirical examples from primary data and research from other authors of how sport facilitates empowering embodiment for women by providing a sense of dwelling, mobility, and dwelling-mobility within the life world dimensions of embodiment and identity.

Findings

Embodied identity dwelling

It's not I who touch [or move] it is my body (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:316).

Galvin & Todres (2011) identify experiences grounded in identity-dwelling as offering a sense of 'I am' where one feels at home with their self in a manner which provides continuity. Furthermore, experiences grounded in embodiment dwelling are identified as offering bodily comfort where one feels at home with their body. We propose that positive experiences facilitated through embodied identity dwelling are experiences which provide a sense of acceptance of the body as a part of one's self or 'I am my body'. Such lived experiences offer opportunities for empowerment within an embedded context, as women traditionally feel disembodied, and have a distant self-conscious relationship with their bodies (Liimakka, 2011) which may promote feelings of alienation and insecurity (Bartky, 1990; Young, 2005). Young (2005) explains that the embedded body experience for women is one by which they experience their bodies directly, as opposed to engaging with the world through them, thus acknowledging the body as the self. The research narrative exploring

female embodiment demonstrates that physical activity offers a path for women to achieve a sense of embodied identity dwelling, or experience the world through their body, therefore facilitating empowerment. In her 2011 study of empowering embodiment for women's studies students, Liimakka identified for women, realizing that 'I am my body' through sport was the key to a more positive experience of one's self. Critically aware qualitative accounts from women's studies students outlined how sport and exercise provided increased opportunities for acceptance of the body as an essential part of one's self, or feeling 'at home' with one's body. One such account described the feeling specifically of 'I am my body' gained after engaging in sport and exercise as a unifying over-all self identity in contrast to dichotomized Cartesian subjectivity. Therefore, embodied identity dwelling is experienced when one feels comfort and connected-ness in accepting the body as one's self. Our data also demonstrates examples of embodied identity dwelling as an acceptance of one's body as a part of the self or 'I am my body'. Amy contrasts how she feels about her body as an athlete to how she used to feel about it as a teenager, explaining that she used to feel 'fat' because she was larger than other girls; however participation allowed her to accept that 'it is just my stature, it is part of who I am'. Amy describes this as coming 'to peace' with her body type:

I am never going to become waif like, that's not my body type so having to come to peace with my body type. .. I'm at peace with my body now, god yeah, well I look back at the teenage me, and I don't recognise that person.

This reference to peace reflects Heidegger's work exploring the peaceful dimension of vitality, which he describes as a releasement towards things and an acceptance of what may come (Heidegger, 1959).

Experiences grounded in embodied identity-dwelling may offer opportunities for empowerment for women as they provide a contrast to experiences grounded in self-objectification, where women are disembodied, viewing their physical selves critically from a third person perspective. Further qualitative findings from Liimakka's study further demonstrate perceiving the development of body knowledge where the body both understands and remembers. This highlights another aspect of embodied identity dwelling, or body-self connectivity: the development of body knowledge, and the memory held within the habitual sporting body (Allen-Collinson, 2011). The view that knowledge may be experienced as embodied demonstrates a departure from the Cartesian notion of mind and body, and a move toward embodiment identity dwelling. Studies exploring women's embodied experiences of sport and physical activity highlight that activities may facilitate women in experiencing the body's natural intelligence (Block & Kissel, 2001; Chisholm, 2008). Amy also described when she experienced memory held within the habitual sporting body whilst kickboxing:

...everything was moving in slow motion and I could see everything what was happening, and then I knew what was happening, and I knew everything I wanted to do...and I was moving. You know it was the strangest experience but it was the best experience, I knew what she was going to do and I just could counteract anything, and I just glided throughout the fight. It was my body doing it and not my mind.

Such experiences may offer additional experiences of empowerment for women as their embedded experiences generally demonstrate a lack of habituation in regards to physical practices (Young, 2005).

Embodied identity mobility

I can do any of this (Yarnal et al., 2000,p.152)

Whilst Galvin & Todres (2011) identify wellbeing experiences grounded in identity-dwelling as offering an overall sense of 'I am', they conceptualize experiences grounded in identity-mobility as those providing a sense of 'I can'. Based on this framework we propose that positive experiences facilitated through embodied identity mobility are experiences, which provide an invigorating awareness of bodily potential or physical capabilities, or 'my body can'. Experiencing the body in a way that emphasises vitality and possibility has the potential to provide a path to empowerment for women whose traditional embedded experience may be one of perceived physical inability. Young (2005) explains that the belief of 'I cannot' depicts the bodily experiences of many women. Both Young (1990) and Coakley (2009) emphasise that males are more likely to have confidence in their body's ability to perform sport in a skilled way, thus reiterating the embedded nature of body experience.

Studies exploring women's experiences identified the potential of sport in providing a sense of physical vitality, and a belief in the body's potential and ability (Aaltonen, 2013; Velija et al. 2013; Yarnal et al. 2006). Yarnal et al.'s (2006) exploration into female's experiences during a physical firefighting training camp provides a clear example of engagement in physical training providing a sense of embodied identity mobility where the women reported feeling like they were able to do/achieve anything. Our data also reiterated this sentiment, with Amy stating that she felt like she could 'do anything' when it came to sport and physical activity. This buzzing vibrancy demonstrates a contrast to the 'general timidity' described by de Beauvoir (1952, p.330) as an inherent part of women's experiences of their bodies.

Experiences grounded in embodied identity mobility can be described as empowering embodiment as they demonstrate a confidence to take on challenges. This is empowering in terms of women's embedded experience as women generally face more negative perceptions of their own physical abilities (Coakley, 2009; Young, 1990; Young, 1995). Yarnal's paper provides clear examples of embodied identity mobility, focussing on physical training as opposed to sport. There are also clear examples from research within a sporting context. Velija et al.(2013) demonstrate that martial arts training allows women to realize their own strength and capabilities, and gain a sense of physical power, providing a sense of empowerment and Aaltonen (2013) explains that such practices allow women to subvert normative gender ideologies by learning that their bodies were capable of kicking, punching, or killing someone if necessary, thus offering a sense of 'my body can' and facilitating empowering body experiences. Our data provides examples of how such embodied experience may facilitate a sense of openness to physical challenges:

If someone said to me 'Amy I want you to do a triathlon' I'd think well OK ...I could do that. I would do it.... I did my world championship and then a week and a half later went out and ran an eight and a half mile run.

Amy felt faith in the ability of her body to perform physically, and was willing to take on physical challenges because of this. Amy also describes the sense of freedom that she achieved through physicality, and how her strength facilitates her being in the world in the ways that she chooses:

I know how strong I am and it's freedom. Freedom to do and chose the things I want to do. It feels good doesn't it?

By facilitating a sense of embodied identity mobility, women are able to transgress the embedded experience of their bodies, and feel the power and potential within their physical selves.

Embodied Identity Dwelling-Mobility. The excerpts demonstrate how more positive and potentially empowering body experiences can be promoted by providing women with a sense of body self-connectedness, allowing them a departure from the embedded experience of self-objectification, and by helping them to feel and experience their body's potential, thus freeing them of the gender specific experience of 'my body cannot'. We contend that whilst some forms of active leisure offer a distinct pathway to women's empowerment and wellbeing experiences through the provision of experiences grounded in embodiment identity dwelling and mobility, the greatest opportunities for empowerment embodiment lie in experiences that offer the potential for embodied identity dwelling-mobility (Galvin and Todres, 2011). Such experiences would facilitate a sense of 'I am my body' and 'my body can' simultaneously. According to Galvin & Todres (2011) these empowering experiences are grounded in a sense of complex grounded vibrancy where bodily comfort and vitality is felt simultaneously, and layered continuity or a sense of 'I am all this and more' (p.10). In the experience there is a concurrent sense of both 'being' and 'becoming' or a 'sense of fullness that anchors the body and with it, a 'humming' vibrancy that is attracted to unfinished horizons' (Galvin & Todres, 2011, p.11). The experience of layered continuity reflects a level of acceptance of one's identity, as well as a realization of the possibilities for one's self. To this end, experiences of embodied identity dwelling-mobility reflect a sense of being one's body whilst knowing the body's potential for becoming: or 'I am my body' and 'my body can'. Whilst much of the existing literature suggests that sport may offer opportunities for empowerment through

either bodily-self acceptance (Liimakka, 2011) or realising body-self potential (Aaltonen, 2013; Veljam et al., 2012; Yarnal et al., 2006) we feel that a range of active leisure provides experiences for women to experience the world through their bodies and experience the potential of their physicality concurrently.

Conclusion

This discussion contributes to the emerging body of literature that provides an embodied analysis of active leisure, sport and physical activity, drawing on life world philosophy (Galvin & Todres, 2011) in order to propose how such activity may provide existential possibilities for empowerment wellbeing for women. It has added to this research by utilising an explicit theoretical framework to suggest 'how' participation may provide pathways to wellbeing for women. Specifically we suggest that forms of active leisure have the potential for women to have empowering body experiences by developing an embodied identity that provides a sense of 'I am my body' or 'my body can'. Finally we propose that based on the theoretical work of Galvin & Todres (2011) and our findings that the most empowering of experiences are those grounded in a sense of embodied identity dwelling-mobility where these senses are felt simultaneously. However, further empirical evidence is needed to confirm the level of empowerment provided by experiences grounded in all three forms of embodied identity experience. In adopting this framework, potential pathways to wellbeing through sport for women are uncovered that can help inform policy and practice.

We feel that future research should focus on the collection and analysis of further primary data to explore the utility of dwelling-mobility theory within this context in more depth. It is imperative that future data collection focusses on the potential for sport to provide an

intertwined experience of both 'I am my body' or 'my body can'. More specifically, precise examples of delivery and interventions which promote empowering embodiment for women should be identified and included as a purposeful sample for further qualitative research. Furthermore, different activities should be explored in terms of their potential to provide empowering bodily experiences for women, so that specific pathways to wellbeing are illuminated. Such an approach would also allow for the identification of features of best practice models of delivery, that allow for experiences grounded in embodied identity dwelling-mobility to be facilitated within women's leisure provision.

Future research should also contribute more broadly the potential of active leisure and physical activity (see Aaltonen 2013; Impett, Daubenmier et al., 2006) and vocational style training (see Yarnal, Hutchinson et al., 2006). This could help, and compare how empowering embodiment is experienced within different types of physical activity.

Furthermore, another area for future research may be the exploration of how activities with a strong aesthetic focus such as gymnastics, or sport with a history of women's participation such as netball may compare to more traditionally masculine sports, or sports that offer critical discussion with regards to aesthetics such as bodybuilding.

Whilst the current theoretical discussion focuses on empowering embodiment within the life world dimensions of embodiment and identity, we also acknowledge the possibility of exploring how women's empowering embodiment may be experienced within each of the other four life world dimensions. Specifically, there is a clear justification for research focusing on how women's experience of spatiality within a sporting context (Chisholm, 2008; Yarnal et al., 2006; Young, 2005) may provide a pathway to empowering embodiment.

In the current research, whilst women's bodies and body identity were the central focus, the corporeal experiences described by participants in the primary and secondary data lacked a

fleshy, haptic, physicality in terms of the physical narratives provided by women. Therefore these narratives failed to address the call for phenomenological research which addresses the more sensory dimensions of embodiment made by Allen-Collinson & Owton (2015) or provide examples of 'intense embodiment' or periods of heightened corporeal existence.

Whilst the women demonstrated a sense of embodiment in terms of their bodily focus, as well as an acceptance and faith in their physical selves, recounting experience of body knowledge—the manner in which they discussed their bodies could be described as somewhat distant and abstract. It could be considered that this reveals a sense of disembodiment or objectification that may pose a threat to their experience of embodied identity dwelling. Further research drawing upon the work of Stewart and Pullen (2014) & Shilling (2012) would enable critical discussion concerning the limitations of *being* bodies. However, ultimately the relationship between body awareness, empowerment and wellbeing needs to be explored in more detail. To this end, our final suggestion is that further research should focus on exploring this abstraction, and making greater steps in the direction of refocussing on the physical aspects of body experience.

Notes

[1] Whether power is seen as a ratio between parties (Dunning, 1994) as decentralized and ubiquitous (Foucault 1980) or symbolic and constantly re-legitimised (Bourdieu, 1979) the absence of power can be oppressive. A Foucauldian conceptualisation would suggest that power is productive and can be used as a mechanism for social change as opposed to constraining individuals. The critical nature of this conceptualisation provokes alternative theorisations about power relations between men and women rather than from the perspective of oppression or repression, which is particularly appealing to feminist theorists (Mills,

2003). This approach provides a 'repressive hypotheses' whereby 'power needs to be seen as something which has to be constantly performed rather than being achieved' (Mills 2003, p.35) signifying implications for movement and social change.

[2] The term empowerment is used frequently throughout the paper and while there is acknowledgement that the concept is not clearly defined and is used in different ways by different authors across disciplines, there is consensus that empowerment refers to individuals and groups ability to take control (Zimmerman, 1995).

[3] Whilst the focus is the gendered nature of corporeality, it is important to note that other classifications: race (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005); social class (Abbas, 2004) and disability (Meekosha, 1998) play an important role in how women experience their bodies. Although the association between classifications and body experience will not be explored in depth within this paper, it is accepted as a focus for future research, and a consideration for associated inquiry, especially in terms of sampling.

[4] Since Wacquant's original criticism of social studies as rarely encountering living bodies, there has been an increase in empirical sociological research which takes a qualitative approach (see Markula). Despite this increase in qualitative research, the sociological work in isolation is unable to adequately explore the lived experience of gendered bodies within a sport environment.

[5] A phenomenological approach that honours the sociological demonstrates parallels with Schultz's broader attempt to locate life world theory within a sociological context (Schutz 1967), and the social-phenomenological tradition (Katz and Csordas, 2003; Schutz, 1967). This work (Wagner, 1973) emphasises the life world dimension of inter-subjectivity, and the social construction of 'reality', 'knowledge' and ideologies in-line with prevailing power-

imbalances. Whilst social-phenomenological research contends that lived experience is embedded in multiple sociological contexts, for the purposes of the current paper we will consider the gendered nature of lived experience.

[6] Heidegger's notion of dwelling has also been adopted within other academic contexts in order to explain our being in the world. For example, the social anthropologist Ingold (2000) draws upon the work of Heidegger to re-work a conceptualisation of dwelling in relationship to the perception of the environment. Specifically Ingold's use of the term dwelling refers to the togetherness of being and things that make up environments, and focusses on how lived experiences and perceptions become embedded within landscapes.

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