This item was submitted to [Loughborough's Research Repository](#) by the author.
Items in Figshare are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved, unless otherwise indicated.

Representing valued bodies in PE: a visual inquiry with British Asian girls

PLEASE CITE THE PUBLISHED VERSION

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2012.690381>

PUBLISHER

Routledge (© Association for Physical Education)

VERSION

SMUR (Submitted Manuscript Under Review)

LICENCE

CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

REPOSITORY RECORD

Hill, Joanne L., and Laura Azzarito. 2019. "Representing Valued Bodies in PE: A Visual Inquiry with British Asian Girls". figshare. <https://hdl.handle.net/2134/11720>.

This item was submitted to Loughborough's Institutional Repository (<https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/>) by the author and is made available under the following Creative Commons Licence conditions.

For the full text of this licence, please go to:
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/>

Notice: This is the author's version of a book review published in *Sport, Education and Society*, 2012 (17:3, 263-276). The review appears here in its pre-publication format in lieu of the publisher's version of record. The published review can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17408989.2012.690381>

Representing valued bodies in PE: a visual inquiry with British Asian girls

Joanne Hill, MA ¹

Laura Azzarito, PhD ²

¹ Loughborough University, UK

² Columbia University, USA

Corresponding author:

Joanne Hill
School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences
Loughborough University
Loughborough LE11 3TU
Phone +44 (0)1509 228779
Email: j.hill@lboro.ac.uk

Key words: embodiment, girls, ethnicity, visual methods, identity

Abstract

Background: Status or value in sport and physical education (PE) contexts is often associated with performances of highly proficient sporting bodies (Shilling, 2008), which produce hierarchies of privileged and marginalised gendered and racialised positions. This may be communicated through text and images shared within school, physical cultures and media that young people consume. Understanding how students make sense of constructions of valued bodies in PE, and how this affects their sense of self, can assist in creating spaces for young people to experience alternative narratives.

Focus: The paper's aims are to explore varying ways British Asian girls visualise and make sense of themselves as active or sporting bodies, and what this means for their (dis)engagement in physical activity.

Theoretical framework: This study draws on a feminist poststructuralist approach (Davies & Harré, 1990; Weedon, 1997) concerning the ways in which young people create multiple subject positions through negotiating or rejecting verbal and visual narratives about physical activity and girlhood.

Methods: The data draws from a one-year collaborative visual ethnography conducted with 25 students aged 13-14 in a predominantly British Asian urban secondary school in the UK. In this research, student-participants were included in the data production through being asked to create photographs over a two-week period that represented their views of valued bodies in physical activity contexts in and out of school. Focus group interviews used participant-driven photo elicitation techniques to talk through the images (Clark, 1999).

Findings: In this paper, two British Asian girls' photos enabled them to talk about, analyse, and reflect on valued or sporting bodies that they saw in visual media. The girls illustrated their performances of constrained or empowered physicalities, within a physical culture that values, among girls, racialised performances of active but feminised bodies. Many girls placed their physical activity significantly in school, and saw sporting bodies as male and elite. Where students do not associate people like themselves as sporting bodies, there may be implications for their continued involvement in physical activity. At the same time, girls were physically active outside of school despite not seeing themselves as sporty. Reflecting on the invisibility of minority ethnic women in sports media, this research suggests that greater representation may enable young minority women to see themselves and people like them as valued bodies in sport and physical activity.

Valued bodies in sport pedagogy

Status or value in secondary PE contexts is often associated with performances of highly proficient sporting bodies (Shilling, 2008), given the continuing predominance of “traditional”, team, competitive sports in PE curricula and the centrality of corporeal performance in sport. Research on youth sport and PE finds that outcomes desired in sport put value on the display of specific normative body appearance and behaviour of proficient sporting bodies, producing hierarchies of privilege and marginality (Azzarito & Solmon, 2006; Hills, 2006; McCaughtry & Tischler, 2010; Oliver & Lalik, 2000; Shilling, 2008). Definitions of sporting bodies vary; in PE research, conferring privilege or status to bodies that perform appropriately either on and off the pitch in terms of ability (Evans, 2004; Hay & Macdonald, 2010; Redelius et al, 2009; Wright & Burrows, 2006), strength (Bramham, 2003; Hauge & Haavind, 2011; Parker, 1996), or muscularity (Gorely et al, 2003). The notion of “valued bodies” is useful to explore the ways in which certain bodily appearances and performances/actions attain high status because of their value within a social context such as a physical culture or PE context (Redelius et al, 2009; Wright & Burrows, 2006).

These narrow ranges of value are stratified along intersections of gender, race, class and age. In today’s public health context, certain cohorts of young people are more likely than others to be identified as having “bodies-at-risk”, a discourse that fixes and homogenises minority young people identities as “different”, unhealthy and physically inactive. Evidence from national reports in the UK indicates that “Other” girls, such as those from South Asian backgrounds, with low socio-economic status or with disabilities, have been identified as the least physically active and having the worst health status (Sporting Equals, 2007; Long, Hylton, Spracklen, Ratna and Bailey, 2009). Rather than valued bodies – bodies that are healthy, sporting, physically active – “different” bodies are presented as “deviant” from “normal” white bodies and Western ways of knowing (Evans, Rich, Davies & Allwood,

2008; Harris, 2004; Johnson, 2000; Ramanathan & Crocker, 2009). The cultural relationship between hegemonic masculinity and performances of proficient and strong sporting bodies (Connell, 1987, 1995; Wellard, 2006) simultaneously marks female sporting bodies as unfeminine (Cockburn & Clarke, 2002) or associates women's physical activity with maintenance of a "not too muscley", shapely and aerobicised appearance (Gorely et al, 2003; Markula, 1995).

Theoretical framework

Feminist poststructuralism can add to understandings of how discourses surrounding what is and is not valued can be taken up and negotiated by young people in the construction of their identities (Weedon, 1997). Only subjectivities made possible in discourse can be taken up (Davies, 2004). Identities and subjectivities are formed in relation to the discourses and images (Wright, 2004) that young people encounter and (re)produce within institutional and media sites. By "positioning" (Davies & Harré, 1990) oneself in relation to the discourses available within a culture or social field, individuals become embodied by practising or living out discourses. Rail (2009: 143) uses a poststructuralist framework to conceptualise positioning as how the 'gendered, heterosexualised and racialised discourses to which one has access' provide spaces that individuals can inhabit or codes by which they can act, behave and perform in social practices. These rationales 'make available different modes of relating to the self, and lived relations of the body' (O'Flynn, 2008: 110). To this poststructuralist approach, postcolonial feminist scholarship adds that inquiry on the body must rethink assumptions of Whiteness, as the privileging of white peoples, knowledge and experience, perceiving them as universal (Frankenberg, 1993), in the ways bodies are able to move, behave and look, which is of especial pertinence in activity contexts. This perspective can aid researching the intersecting gendered and racialised discourses to which young women have access to construct meanings and position their selves (van Sterkenberg & Knoppers, 2004). Many studies on young women and physical activity address gender

83 constructions and relations; ethnicity and race in intersection with gender must also be the
84 focus of study (Brah, 1996; Flintoff et al., 2008), for racialised discourse and practice have an
85 impact on the physical active body.

86 Engagement with visual cultural resources through sports media, spectatorship and
87 participation may inform or illuminate students' participation in school PE and the impact on
88 young people's physical identity or sense of self from constructions of valued bodies. This is
89 of keen importance especially in today's image-heavy, postmodern and individualised world
90 where self-worth and one's place in society are closely tied to the self-managed, but fluid,
91 body (Shilling, 2003, 2008; Turner, 2008). Tinning and Fitzclarence (1992) and Wright
92 (2004) suggest that young people learn through their engagements with popular or physical
93 culture, media and institutional sites and make meanings for their bodies that are relevant to
94 their readings of popular culture. Together, the consumption of many ideal bodies in visual
95 culture and the gaze of others put the body under examination. Visual cultures within schools
96 may be a part of the hidden curriculum, as resources for teaching that are not explicitly
97 planned for lessons (Harrison, Azzarito & Burden, 2004; Prosser, 2007). Research on both
98 PE and wider schooling contexts has previously made use of the concept of the hidden
99 curriculum to describe how students learn implicit, subconscious knowledge that reproduces
100 certain values or dominant interests, which may explain how inequalities are enforced,
101 especially in unconscious communication (Fernandez-Balboa, 1993; Kirk, 1992). The
102 discourses and images constituting a visual or physical culture can offer students fixed ways
103 of thinking about and visualising their own and others' bodies as valued or unvalued.

104 A physical culture in PE that valorises particular sporting bodies in gendered and
105 racialised ways may have a negative impact on young people who are unable to conform to
106 producing a sporting or normative body, do not gain status, and who feel excluded or
107 marginalised in PE. Some studies have explored the practices or processes of negotiating

embodied identities in secondary school PE in first world countries, considering the PE classroom to be a site for empowerment through knowledge of the body, providing opportunities for young people to construct their own meanings of their identities and deconstruct dominant notions of sporting or ideal bodies (Armour, 1999; Fisette, 2011; Garrett, 2004; MacNeill & Rail, 2010; O’Flynn, 2008). Researching intersectionality of gender/race/class in PE, sport and leisure has become crucial in understanding diversity among young people and their engagements with physical cultures (Atencio, 2008; Fitzpatrick, 2011; Flintoff, Fitzgerald & Scraton, 2008; George & Rail, 2005; Scraton, Caudwell & Holland, 2005; Scraton & Watson, 1998; Rail, 2009; Wright, 2006).

In particular, research on South Asians’ experiences in sport finds that they constitute identities and spaces for themselves among discourses of values, locations of and access to competitive sport (Scraton et al, 2005; Ratna, 2010); “Indo-Pak” masculine identities in recreational sport are formed in relation to Blackness and Whiteness (Thangaraj, 2010), while the cooptation of “stylish hybridity” by mass media and consumerism has been critiqued (Giardina, 2003). Asians are presented as structurally and discursively marginalised in some sports, including football in the UK (Burdsey, 2007; Crozier & Davis, 2008; Elling & Knoppers, 2005; Fleming, 1991). A perception of Asian young people’s low skill or submissive and frail bodies results in assumptions that they are little interested in sport, or that sporting bodies are not valued in Asian communities (Bramham, 2003; Fleming, 1991; Lewis, 1979; Lovell, 1991). Data is needed on whether there are multiple ways in which bodies come to be valued in diverse young people’s physical cultures and what impact local context, such as a school physical culture, may have on young people visualising themselves as valued sporting or active bodies.

Methodology

Participatory visual ethnography

This inquiry's design combined ethnography with participant-driven visual data to explore the meaning-making and practices associated with the discursive construction and visualisation of value and status for bodies in secondary PE lessons. To be critical about the meanings young people negotiate, we need to engage both with textual/verbal and visual discursive sources (Azzarito, 2010; Phoenix, 2010). Some research on bodies in PE has centred on surveillance of movements, appearances and interactions, indicating that a visual approach to studying PE classes and young people's experiences within them is important (Cockburn & Clarke, 2002; Fisette, 2011; Gard & Meyenn, 2000; Wright, 1995). Acknowledging that 'simply interviewing students ... is insufficient for understanding the complexities and nuances of their worlds', (Oliver, Hamzeh and McCaughtry, 2009: 96), visual methods are a strategy incorporated into interpretive research with young people that can provide both verbal and visual engagement. Three strands have developed in the use of visual methods: researcher-created or collected images; participant-created, existing images; and participant and researcher collaboration in the creation of images (Banks, 2007; Thompson, 2008). Taking up an epistemology that promotes situated knowledges and where researcher and participants co-construct knowledge through interaction (Haraway, 1990), this research combined collaborative data production with design informed by the principles of visual ethnography.

Ethnographic research can uncover the complexity of social settings, understanding that emplaced and embodied knowledge and experience is co-constructed among participants and researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Pink, 2007, 2009). The turn to research *with*, rather than *on*, young people and children, that seeks to address power relations has led to greater participatory or collaborative work (Christensen & James, 2000), acknowledging that young people are active agents able to invest in research and to interpret and negotiate discursive

messages (Greene & Hill, 2005). Young people's perspectives on images and visual cultures are necessary to deprivilege adult understandings of the body, provide insights into corporeal meanings and make visible the norms and values of the hidden curriculum (Oliver & Lalik, 2000; Prosser, 2007). Giving participants control over producing visual data can encourage involvement with a project. Although the participants here were not involved in the design of the study, they were able to select from their worlds the people, places and activities they wished to share. Photo-elicitation from researcher-produced or collated images (Azzarito & Solmon, 2006) and increasingly from participant-produced photographs (Azzarito & Sterling, 2010; Pope 2010) and drawings (Mowling, Brock & Hastie, 2006; MacNeill & Rail, 2010) has offered alternative ways of engaging young people in sharing non-verbal embodied experiences. Ethnographic studies with long-term engagement in a PE context have also become common (Fitzpatrick, 2011; Enright & O'Sullivan, 2011) for their 'capacity ... to capture a sense of the relationship between individuals, differences between them, and their perceptions of the discourses and practices that occur in different social fields' (Hills, 2006: 544). Long and Carless (2010: 216) suggest that "alternative" or creative methods may help to 'include the experiences – and therefore 'voices' – of individuals who might otherwise fail to be represented within more traditional interview methods'. At the same time, the voices heard through visual methods are not perceived to be more authentic or to uncover any "truer" identity or reality (Gauntlett & Holwarth, 2006) than through verbal methods, but a combined verbal and visual approach may enable researchers to think differently about the experiences that are communicated by participants (Buckingham, 2009; Phoenix, 2010).

Setting and participants

This study took place in one urban secondary school site in the East Midlands, UK, with an ethnically diverse student population that was 80 percent British Asian. Students were timetabled for two hours of PE lessons per week. Year 9 (age 13 to 14) classes were

chosen for the research in consultation with the PE teachers. The research participants were drawn from four PE classes: two girls' and two boys' classes of around 30 students each. The school was mixed (co-ed) but PE lessons were gender-segregated. Research observations ran throughout the school year from October to May. A number of weeks into the observation period, all students from both classes were informed about the focus of the study and were invited to join the participatory elements of the project. 25 students volunteered to participate (14 boys, 11 girls; 20 British Indian, two white, one black African, one Asian-African and one Anglo-Asian).

Data collection

A number of sources of data were used: field notes, group interviews, participants' photography and researcher's photography. Group interviews were carried out in single sex groups, to mirror the structure of the participants' PE classes. Identified as a potentially feminist method (Wilkinson, 1999), group interviews were deemed to offer ways of reproducing some of the social interactions and peer dynamics among the students, and ethically to assuage some of the researcher's authority and put the young people more at ease. In the first interviews, the participants discussed their experiences in physical activity and the ways that bodies become admired or valued in PE. Following these group interviews, each participant was given a digital camera for a fortnight and asked to create photos recording (1) what do you do when you're (not) being active? (2) what sorts of bodies are valued in your PE class, sports club or peer group? All participants were instructed in use of the camera's major functions including flash, zoom, exposure length and colour. They were permitted to delete any photos they did not want to share. At the end of the fortnight, cameras were collected by the researcher, all photographs uploaded and printed on gloss paper. Second and third rounds of group interviews were structured around photo elicitation techniques (Clark, 1999; Harper, 2002) whereby questions assisted participants in explaining the meanings of

their photos and the representations they offered of their experiences of physical activity during the fortnight with the camera. Field notes created by the researcher aimed to provide contextual data of the school community.

Analysis

In categorising the data, an iterative approach of multiple layers of coding (Bryman, 2008; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) was used to inductively and deductively categorise. Coding began line-by-line using emic themes and language. A content analysis of the images further noted people, place and activity (Wright, 2004; Rose, 2012), however the participants' photographs and interviews were viewed and coded side by side avoided removing the images from their verbal explanations. Where students used their photos to explain their verbal narratives, this highlighted themes surrounding how sporting or active bodies were visualised, which individuals could gain status in sport or PE and students' ways of positioning themselves with or against locally dominant values. All names used in this paper are pseudonyms.

Findings

Of the 14 girls involved in the research, only three were active in organised competitive sports outside of school. A vast majority of the photographs (156 of a total 195) of the photographs that the girls created to answer "what do I do when I'm being active?" were taken inside the school, specifically in PE lessons or after-school sports clubs, reflecting the centrality of school-based physical activity in their lives. In interview however, many of the girl participants reported their engagement with recreational activities, raising questions about their means to articulate physical activity participation.

As part of the field work, notes were kept of the visual media lining the walls of the PE corridor, including posters, notices and sports club advertisements. During the interviews,

girls discussed their responses to the images in the PE corridor, noting that they contemplated the messages communicated through this medium. Literature on the hidden curriculum suggests that the visual culture of a school, especially where PE departments display images of bodies engaged in activities, inform students which bodies are valued within the school, and hence which bodies can legitimately participate (Prosser, 2007). A number of these posters displayed elite athletes engaged, often competitively, in a number of sports. Over half the posters portrayed white men. Only one portrayed women of colour and no Asian women were represented in the posters. As such, legitimate sporting bodies promoted in the school site were embedded in Whiteness. That is, greater visibility in school poster displays was a marker of greater legitimacy for bodies in sport; Birrell and Theberge (1994) noted similar with respect to women's sport as a whole. This context provides a useful starting point for considering how some girls articulate their embodied identities as active or inactive as they negotiate and challenge dominant constructions of valued sporting and racialised feminine bodies. Photographs, and accompanying explanations, have been selected from two girls' photo diaries.

Bhavana

Bhavana was a highly active, confident and competent mover in PE. She was also a black belt in Tae Kwon Do which she participated in outside of school. Bhavana used two images of black males to illustrate her conceptualisation of valued bodies (an Olympic sprinter who is at the pinnacle of sporting success; and a teacher who is valued for supporting students). Black males here seem to be central to Bhavana's understanding of people who are involved in sport while girls like her are represented as passive or inactive. She photographed her brother demonstrating Tae Kwon Do moves as an example of an active, skilled and disciplined body (Figure 1). However, she does not photograph herself doing the same despite her own achievements in this sport. To represent her taekwondo participation,

Bhavana laid her kit out on the floor (see Figure 2), not even wearing it to pose in or to create photos similar to those showing her brother. The only time she was visible in the photo set was in a self-portrait. Bhavana explained that this photo answered “what I do when I’m not active”. Bhavana is an example of many girls in the project who did not include themselves in photos. The photography instruction sheet given to the students advised that it was acceptable for them to hand the camera to a friend in order to take photos of themselves, if they wished. While the lack of self-photos may at times have been a technical issue – no one around to take photos – in those instances where friends and family are photographed in action, as we see Bhavana’s brother, it would have been simple for the photographer and subject to switch roles. Bhavana (and others) chose not to do this. This young woman met with few images within the school space of girls like her as active or sporting bodies. Bhavana was confident and able in PE and active in martial arts outside school, but where South Asian girls’ bodies were invisible in the physical culture, her perception of herself was affected such that she did not represent herself as active in her photos – making herself invisible in her photo set apart from through the ideal femininity portrayed in her self-portrait photo.

Figures 1, and 2 here

Meena

Meena also offered an important insight into the ways students’ embodied subjectivities and activity participation could be affected. For Meena, Olympic athletes represented the sporting bodies that she admired. She talked about being inspired by watching the Olympic Games on the television:

I only watch the Olympics and it’s because the athletes are so good. It’s like it inspires you like, oh, even if I go towards sports sometime I’m going to try and do my best and maybe one day if I start to get really good at it I might take it forward, like,

284 you can imagine yourself there but then you realise like I don't go anywhere, I've got
285 to go and join a club first. (Meena)

286 Measures of status included exposure on television: because Meena only saw men's sport on
287 television, she saw men as more naturally suited to sport:

288 You watch telly and then you always see like in football they are always um, men
289 playing football and men playing rugby so it's like, and cricket and all that, but you
290 hardly see like women and girls playing all those sports, so it's like, it's just naturally
291 suited for [men]. (Meena)

292 While Meena suggested that she might, in the future, take up a sport in a competitive way, it
293 really has little relevancy to her life and self as she constructed herself here. She positioned
294 herself as different to the competitive sporting bodies she recognised in the Olympics and
295 media sport cultures. Although Meena said that she enjoyed watching elite athletes, her sense
296 of herself as articulated in her photo diary and interviews was not informed by being a sports
297 person. Meena reported that outside of PE she was not very active. In PE lessons, she did not
298 resist participating, but neither considered herself to have high ability. Here emphasis is
299 added to highlight how her language suggests she's not interested in sport but she thinks
300 other people might be:

301 They've got different sports so that there's something for everyone and it *could* like
302 *possibly* make *others* want to go and join the sport because it's so much variety so it's
303 like, um, you *might* go and join a club after you've done the sport in PE. (Meena)

304 Meena seemed unable to speak of herself as a sporting body. In Meena's set of 26 photos, she
305 emphasised seven that showed large groups of male students on the playing fields engaged in
306 football and running games at break times (see Figure 5). Photos of Meena and her friends
307 displayed them chilling out at lunchtimes, posing for the camera (Figure 6). In line with her
308 admiration for Olympic athletes, Meena explained that both her friends and the boys at
309 school are to be admired because they are committed to sports participation in extra-
310 curricular clubs at school. She discussed the support and team work she valued from them in

PE and their recreational dance activities at home. She perceived her friends as being active in extra-curricular sports clubs at school, but resisted joining in with them, claiming that she had other hobbies, including Art Club, that she preferred over sports.

Figures 3 and 4 here

The only activity that prompted Meena to talk animatedly was dancing with her friends at home. She talked about making up routines and teaching each other new moves, just to perform to each other in the home. She said,

It builds up my confidence and before I don't think I was really confident, but after I'd taken up dancing I used to um perform everywhere and I've learn the actual dance and everything. I think my confidence has gone up and I think it helps me to do things other than dance as well. Sometimes. (Meena)

Dancing, and particularly the performance of dancing, offered Meena confidence that she uses in other aspects of her life. Some girls talked about leisure/recreational spaces and activity forms (such as dancing) as being free and offering emotional satisfaction and kinaesthetic pleasure. As Atencio (2008) argues, alternative cultures or styles of, in this case, dance, can enable young women to avoid the disciplinary practices of dominant white culture. This contrasts with the space of the school wherein behaviour and movements are monitored by teachers, activities are constrained by certain objectives and students feel watched at all times. Students *invest* in the forms of activity that give them this sense of freedom, pleasure and positivity. Meena felt ambiguous about any connection between her physicality in expressive activities such as dance and the physicalities of her sportier friends. Although Meena did what was expected of her in PE, her experiences suggest that she simultaneously resisted subjectivity as a competitive sports player while promoting cooperative situations such as dance.

Meena's "sport is not for me" stance can also be seen in the way she spoke about sport as not being an acceptable career path for people of a certain background:

It's like different types of people expect different things, so like some people who um, say if for example, weren't educated and they want to educate their kids as far as they can, and they don't want to take the risk that oh, if they go round doing sports then what are they going to earn later on? So I think it's a bit like that. (Meena)

While she did not explicitly refer to British Asian or another specific ethnicity, using instead indicators of class or socio-economic background, Meena's speech recalls the common notion that British Asian parents want their children to be doctors or lawyers, devaluing sport if it has no academic or career use (Ramanathan & Crocker, 2009; Strandbu, 2005). Meena, while talking impersonally, may have been positioning herself and her family as devaluing sport as a career. Some of the ways in which sport was constructed in the school physical culture led Meena to think that an investment in sport means a large commitment, a life of sport and aiming for a high level of success in it. Participation-level or recreational engagement were not associated with valued sporting endeavours.

Discussion

While some measures were identified among teachers as attempts to increase girls' participation in PE and school sport, such as allowing freer interpretation of the PE kit rules; including traditionally female activities on the curriculum; and dividing PE into single sex classes, there appeared a divide between the recreational, school-level activities that were available for girls, and engagement in higher levels of sport that was reserved for male athletes. Theories of discursive practice (Weedon, 1997; Davies, 1989), visual culture (Prosser, 2007) and hidden curriculum (Kirk, 1992) highlight that the dominant visual messages offered within the school space affected these girls' constructions of themselves as active or sporting.

With girls such as Meena positioning sports as predominantly for boys, images displayed throughout the school rarely offered an alternative visualisation of girls' legitimate place in physical activity. Although it is clear that not all young people will become

successful in competitive sport, findings here suggest a link between the visibility and legitimacy of elite female athletes and girls' positioning of themselves as active or sporting bodies. Yet among these narratives suggesting Asian students' low ability and engagement in physical activity, it is also evident that these girls *were* active outside of school, that despite the construction of girls like them as inactive, they were able at other times to resist. Young people's own body narratives give them the ability to make multiple readings of bodies that they encounter in educational or media sites (Atencio, 2008; Davies, 2004; van Sterkenburg & Knoppers, 2004). The school physical culture appeared to offer few alternative narratives for producing subjectivities, so that within the meanings the girls had available to them, they did not define their recreational engagement as sporty. Yet outside of school, the girls found meanings that enabled them to engage in physical activity and thus resist notions of Asian girls and women as passive and physically inactive (Fleming, 1991; Lovell, 1991). Bhavana and Meena became involved in, respectively, taekwondo and dance through female friends or family members, who did represent active minority ethnic women. Peer and family networks have been found important for minority girls' recreation (Scruton & Watson, 1998).

This paper has explored a number of the ways that young women visualised valued bodies and their active or inactive embodied identities within PE contexts. By interrogating the discourses that educational institutions are offering to young people through the hidden curriculum, ways can be found to deconstruct assumptions of Whiteness in the ways sporting and gendered bodies are given value in school sites (Wright, 1995). This paper is part of a broader study that engaged a diverse group of young people in visual and verbal methods of data production to investigate their physical activity practices in the context of their diverse, urban secondary school. If researchers and teachers are committed to deconstructing Whiteness that is embedded in the visual physical cultures of activity spaces, and which informs how bodies may be valued in schools, participatory visual methods within

ethnographic studies have the potential to enable highlighting the complexity of young people's meanings of their selves in culturally and gender sensitive ways (Vertinsky, 1992). Although Bhavana and Meena were participants in physical activity, if they do not position themselves as active within the discourses defining what active means there may be implications for their continued engagement (Garrett, 2004b). Given the increasing importance placed on competition in school sport and at the same time lifelong activity, a commitment to representing diversity among elite sports players may assist objectives to increase young people's engagement. Young people are able to verbalise and visualise what valued bodies mean to them. If they are given potential to create alternative narratives and selves within educational settings they may have more space to articulate and experience active identities.

References

- Armour, K. 1999. The case for a body-focus in education and P.E. *Sport, Education and Society*, 4, 5-15.
- Atencio, M. 2008. 'Freaky is just how I get down': investigating the fluidity of minority ethnic feminine subjectivities in dance. *Leisure Studies*, 27(3), 311-327.
- Azzarito, L. 2010. Future girls, transcendent femininities and new pedagogies: toward girls' hybrid bodies? *Sport, Education and Society*, 15(3), 261-275
- Azzarito, L. and M. Solmon. 2006b. A feminist poststructuralist view on student bodies in physical education: sites of compliance, resistance and transformation. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 25, 200-225.
- Azzarito, L. and J. Sterling. 2010. 'What it was in my eyes': picturing youths' embodiment in 'real' spaces, *Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*, 2, 2, 209-228.
- Banks, M. 2007. *Using visual data in qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Brah, A. 1996. *Cartographies of diaspora: contesting identities*. London: Routledge.
- Bramham, P. 2003. Boys, masculinities and PE. *Sport, Education and Society*, 8, 57-71.
- Buckingham, D. 2009. Creative visual methods in media research: possibilities, problems and proposals. *Media Culture Society*, 31, 633-652.

- 418 Burdsey, D. 2007. *British Asians and football: culture, identity, exclusion*. Oxford, Routledge.
- 419 Christensen, P. and A. James. 2000. Childhood diversity and commonality: some methodological
420 insights. In P. Christensen and A. James (Eds.), *Research with children: perspectives and*
421 *practices*. London: Falmer Press.
- 422 Clark, C. D. 1999. The auto-driven interview: a photographic viewfinder into children's experiences.
423 *Visual Sociology*, 14, 39-50.
- 424 Cockburn, C. and G. Clarke. 2002. "Everybody's looking at you!": girls negotiating the "femininity
425 deficit" they incur in Physical Education. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 25, 651-665.
- 426 Connell, R. 1987. *Gender and power*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- 427 Connell, R.W. 1995. *Masculinities* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- 428 Crozier, G. and J. Davies. 2008. 'The trouble is they don't mix': self-segregation or enforced
429 exclusion? *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 11:3, 285-301.
- 430 Davies, B. 1989. The discursive production of the male/female dualism in school settings. Oxford
431 Review of Education, 15(3), 229-243.
- 432 Davies, B. and R. Harré. 1990. Positioning: the discursive production of selves. *Journal of the Theory*
433 *of Social Behaviour*, 20, 43-65.
- 434 Elling, A. and A. Knoppers. 2005. Sport, gender and ethnicity: practises of symbolic
435 inclusion/exclusion, *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 34(3), 257-268.
- 436 Enright, E. & M. O'Sullivan. 2011. 'Can I do it in my pyjamas?' Negotiating a physical education
437 curriculum with teenage girls. *European Physical Education Review*, 16(3), 203-222.
- 438 Evans, J. 2004. Making a difference? Education and 'Ability' in Physical Education, *European*
439 *Physical Education Review*, 10(1), 95-108
- 440 Evans, J., E. Rich, B. Davies, and R. Allwood. 2008. *Education, disordered eating and obesity*
441 *discourse. fat fabrications*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- 442 Fernandez-Balboa, J-M. 1993. Sociocultural characteristics of the hidden curriculum in physical
443 education., *Quest*, 45, 230-254.
- 444 Fiset, J.L. 2011. Exploring how girls navigate their embodied identities in physical education,
445 *Physical Education & Sport Pedagogy*, 16: 2, 179-196.
- 446 Fitzpatrick, K. 2011. Stop playing up!: Physical education, racialization and resistance, *Ethnography*,
447 12(2), 174-197.
- 448 Fleming, S. 1991. Sport, solidarity and Asian male youth culture. In G.Jarvie (ed.), *Sport, Racism and*
449 *Ethnicity*, London: Falmer Press.
- 450 Flintoff, A., H. Fitzgerald and S. Scraton. 2008. The challenges of intersectionality: researching
451 difference in physical education. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 18:2, 73 —
452 85

- 453 Frankenberg, R. 1993. *White women, race matters: the social construction of whiteness*. Minneapolis:
454 University of Minnesota Press.
- 455 Gard, M. and R. Meyenn. 2000. Boys, bodies, pleasure and pain: interrogating contact sports in
456 schools. *Sport, Education and Society*, 5, 19-34.
- 457 Garrett, R. 2004. Negotiating a physical identity: girls, bodies, and physical education. *Sport*,
458 *Education and Society*, 9, 223-237.
- 459 Gauntlett, D. and P. Holzwarth. 2006. Creative and visual methods for exploring identities. *Visual*
460 *Studies*, 21(1), 82-91.
- 461 Giardina, M. 2003. 'Bending it like Beckham' in the global popular: stylish hybridity, performativity,
462 and the politics of representation, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 27(10), 65-82.
- 463 George. T. and G. Rail. 2005. Barbie meets the bindi: discursive constructions of health among young
464 South-Asian Canadian women, *Women's Health and Urban Life*, 4(2), 44-66.
- 465 Gorely, T. R., Holroyd and D. Kirk. 2003. Muscularity, the habitus and the social construction of
466 gender: towards a gender relevant physical education. *British Journal of Sociology of*
467 *Education*, 24, 429-448.
- 468 Greene, S. and M. Hill. 2005. Researching children's experience: methods and methodological issues.
469 In S. Greene and D. Hogan (Eds.). *Researching children's experience: methods and*
470 *approaches*. London: Sage.
- 471 Guba, E. and Y.S Lincoln. 2005. Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging
472 confluences. In N.K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd
473 ed.). London: Sage.
- 474 Haraway, D. 1990. Situated knowledges: the science question in feminism and the privilege or partial
475 perspectives. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575-599.
- 476 Harris, A. 2004. Jamming girl culture: young women and consumer citizenship, in: A. Harris & M.
477 Fine (Eds.). *All about the girl. Culture, power, and identity*, London, Routledge.
- 478 Harper, D. 2002. Talking about pictures: a case for photo-elicitation. *Visual Studies*, 17(1), 13-26.
- 479 Hauge, M. and H. Haavind. 2011. Boys' bodies and the constitution of adolescent masculinities.,
480 *Sport, Education and Society*, 16(1), 1-16
- 481 Hay, P. J. and D. Macdonald. 2010. Evidence for the social construction of ability in physical
482 education, *Sport, Education and Society*, 15(1), 1-18.
- 483 Hills, L.A. 2006. Playing the field(s): an exploration of change, conformity and conflict in girls'
484 understandings of gendered physicality in physical education. *Gender and Education*, 18(5),
485 539-556.
- 486 Johnson, M.R.D. 2000. Perceptions of barriers to healthy physical activity among Asian communities.
487 *Sport, Education and Society*, 5(1), 51-70.
- 488 Kay, T. 2006. Daughters of Islam: family influences on Muslim young women's participation in
489 sport. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 41, 357-373.

- 490 Kirk, D. 1992. Physical Education, discourse, and ideology: Bringing the hidden curriculum into
491 view. *Quest*, 44, 35-56.
- 492 Lewis, T. 1979. Ethnic influences of girls' physical education. *The British Journal of Physical*
493 *Education*, 10(5), 5.
- 494 Long, J. and D. Carless. 2010. Hearing, listening and acting. In M. O'Sullivan and A. MacPhail,
495 (eds.). *Young People's Voices in Physical Education and Youth Sport*, Routledge: London.
- 496 Long, J. Hylton, K., Spracklen, K., Ratna, A. and Bailey, S. 2009. Systematic review of the literature
497 on Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in sport and physical recreation. Sporting Equals
498 and the Sports Council: London.
- 499 Lovell, T. 1991. Sport racism and young women. In G. Jarvie (Ed.), *Sport Racism and Ethnicity*.
500 London: Falmer Press.
- 501 MacNeill, M. and G. Rail. 2010. The Visions, Voices and Moves of Young 'Canadians': Exploring
502 Diversity, Subjectivity and Cultural Constructions of Fitness and Health. In J. Wright (Ed.).
503 *Living Physical Activity: Young People, Physical Activity and the Everyday*. London:
504 Routledge.
- 505 Markula, P. 1995. Firm but shapely, fit but sexy, strong but thin: the postmodern aerobicizing female
506 bodies. *Sociology of Sport Journal* 12: 424-53.
- 507 McCaughtry, N. & A. Tischler, 2010. Marginalized boys speak out: insights from school physical
508 education for the obesity Crisis. In M. Kehler and M. Atkinson, *Boys' bodies: speaking the*
509 *unspoken*. Oxford: Pater Lang.
- 510 Mowling, C., S.J. Brock and P. Hastie. 2006. Fourth grade students' drawing interpretations of a Sport
511 Education soccer unit, *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 25, 9-35.
- 512 O'Flynn, G. 2008. *Young women, health and the self: the body, schooling, and the discursive*
513 *construction of gendered and classes subjectivities*. Saarbrücken: VDM.
- 514 Oliver, K., M. Hamzeh. and N. McCaughtry. 2009. Girly girls *can* play games/*las niñas pueden jugar*
515 *tambien*: co-creating a curriculum of possibilities with fifth-grade girls. *Journal of Teaching*
516 *in Physical Education*, 28, 90-110.
- 517 Oliver, K.L. and R. Lalik. 2000. Bodily knowledge; Learning about equity and justice with
518 adolescent girls. New York: Peter Lang.
- 519 Parker, A. 1996. The construction of masculinity within boys' physical education. *Gender and*
520 *Education*, 8, 141-158.
- 521 Phoenix, C. 2010. Seeing the world of physical culture: the potential of visual methods for qualitative
522 research in sport and exercise. *Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*, 2(2), 93-108.
- 523 Pink, S. 2007. *Doing visual ethnography* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- 524 Pink, S. 2009. *Doing sensory ethnography*. London: Sage.

- 525 Pope, C.C. 2010. Got the picture? Exploring student sport experiences using photography as voice. In
 526 M. O'Sullivan and A. McPhail, *Young People's Voices in Physical Education and Youth*
 527 *Sport*, Routledge: London.
- 528 Prosser, J. 2007. Visual methods and the visual culture of schools. *Visual Studies*, 22(1), 13-30.
- 529 Ramanathan, S. & P.R.E. Crocker. 2009. The influence of family and culture on physical activity
 530 among female adolescents from the Indian Diaspora, *Qualitative Health Research*, 19(4),
 531 492-503.
- 532 Ratna, A. 2010. 'Taking the power back!' The politics of British-Asian female football players,
 533 *Young*, 18(2), 117-132.
- 534 Rail, G. 2009. Canadian youths' discursive constructions of health in the context of obesity discourse..
 535 In J. Wright and V. Harwood (Eds.). *Biopolitics and the 'obesity epidemic': governing bodies*.
 536 Abingdon: Routledge.
- 537 Redelius, K., B. Fagrell. and H. Larsson. 2009. Symbolic capital in physical education and health: to
 538 be, to do or to know? That is the gendered question, *Sport, Education and Society*, 14: 2, 245-
 539 260.
- 540 Rose, G. 2012. *Visual methodologies: an introduction to the interpretation of visual methods* (3rd ed.).
 541 London: Sage.
- 542 Scraton, S, J. Caudwell and S. Holland. 2005. 'Bend it like Patel': Centring 'race', ethnicity and
 543 gender in feminist analysis of women's football in England, *International Review for the*
 544 *Sociology of Sport*, 40(1), 71-88.
- 545 Scraton, S. and B. Watson. 1998. Gendered cities: women and public leisure space in the 'postmodern
 546 city'. *Leisure Studies*, 17, 123-137.
- 547 Segal, L. 1997. *Slow motion: changing masculinities changing men* (2nd ed.). London: Virago.
- 548 Shain, F. 2003. *The schooling and identity of Asian girls*. Trentham Books Limited, Stoke-on-Trent.
- 549 Shilling, C. 2008. *Changing bodies: habit, crisis and creativity*. London: Sage Publications.
- 550 Sporting Equals. 2007. *Ethnic minorities, refugees and migrant communities: physical activity and*
 551 *health*, Greater London Authority, 1_9. Available online at:
 552 [http://www.sportingequals.org.uk/DynamicContent/Documents/BriefingPapers/Ethnic_minoriti](http://www.sportingequals.org.uk/DynamicContent/Documents/BriefingPapers/Ethnic_minorities_physical_activity_and_health_bri(1).pdf)
 553 [es_physical_activity_and_health_bri\(1\).pdf](http://www.sportingequals.org.uk/DynamicContent/Documents/BriefingPapers/Ethnic_minorities_physical_activity_and_health_bri(1).pdf) (accessed 20 July 2011).
- 554 Thangaraj, S. 2010. Ballin' Indo-Pak style: pleasures, desires, and expressive practices of 'South
 555 Asian American' masculinity, *International Review of the Sociology of Sport*, 45(3), 372-389.
- 556 Thomson, P. 2008. *Doing visual research with children and young people*. London: Routledge.
- 557 van Sterkenburg, J., & Knoppers, A. 2004. Dominant discourses about race/ethnicity and gender in
 558 sport practice and performance. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 39(3), 301-
 559 321.
- 560 Vertinsky, P. 1992. Reclaiming space, revisioning the body: the quest for gender-sensitive physical
 561 education. *Quest*, 44, 373-396.

- 562 Weedon, C. 1997. *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.
- 563 Wellard, I. 2006. Able bodies and sport participation: social construction of physical ability for
564 gendered and sexually identified bodies. *Sport, Education and Society*, 11, 105-119.
- 565 Wright, J. E. 1995. A feminist poststructuralist methodology for the study of gender construction in
566 physical education: description of a study. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 15(1),
567 1-24.
- 568 Wright, J. E. 2004. Analysing sportsmedia texts: developing resistant reading positions. In J. E.
569 Wright, D. Macdonald & L. Burrows (Eds.), *Critical inquiry and problem-solving in Physical*
570 *Education*. London: Routledge.
- 571 Wright, J. 2006. Physical education research from postmodern, poststructural and postcolonial
572 perspectives. In D. Kirk, D. Macdonald and M. O'Sullivan (Eds.), *Handbook of physical*
573 *education*. London: Sage.
- 574 Wright, J. and L. Burrows. 2006. Re-conceiving ability in physical education: a social analysis. *Sport,*
575 *Education and Society*, 11(3), 275-291.
- 576
- 577 Word count: 6904
- 578
- 579 Summary abstract:
- 580 Learning about the body in physical education, students often construct meanings based on
581 their engagements with sporting or valued bodies in popular culture and media. The visibility
582 of elite sports players in media, predominantly white and male, can affect the ideas that
583 young minority ethnic women have about who can be sporty or active, and hence their own
584 value within physical activity. Using visual methods, research was carried out with British
585 Asian girls aged 13-14, who created photographs that represented their involvement in
586 physical activity, and their ideas of which bodies are valued as sporting. Many girls placed
587 their physical activity significantly in school, and saw sporting bodies as male and elite. At
588 the same time, girls were physically activity outside of school despite not seeing themselves
589 as sporty. Reflecting on the invisibility of minority ethnic women in sports media, this
590 research suggests that greater representation may enable minority girls to see themselves as
591 valued bodies as part of working to increase their engagement in sport and physical activity.