

The Gay Games

A history

Caroline Symons



Routledge Critical Studies in Sport

The Gay Games

A history

Caroline Symons



First published 2010
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
270 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2010 Caroline Symons

Typeset in Goudy by Swales & Willis Ltd, Exeter, Devon
Printed and bound in Great Britain by
CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham, Wiltshire

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

The publisher has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this book, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Symons, Caroline.

The gay games : a history / Caroline Symons.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Gay Games—History. 2. Gays and sports—History. I. Title.

GV722.5.G36S96 2010

796.08664—dc22

2009046816

ISBN10: 0-415-47296-2 (hbk)

ISBN10: 0-203-89184-8 (ebk)

ISBN13: 978-0-415-47296-8 (hbk)

ISBN13: 978-0-203-89184-1 (ebk)

The Gay Games

The Gay Games is an important piece of new social history, examining one of the largest sporting, cultural and human rights events in the world. Since their inception in 1980, the Gay Games have developed into a multi-million dollar mega-event, engaging people from all continents, while the international Gay Games movement has become one of the largest and most significant international institutions for gay and lesbian people.

Drawing on detailed archival research, oral history and participant observation techniques, and informed by critical feminist theory and queer theory, this book offers the first comprehensive history of the Gay Games from 1980 through to the Chicago games of 2006. It explores the significance of the Games in the context of broader currents of gay and lesbian history, and addresses a wide range of key contemporary themes within sports studies, including the cultural politics of sport, the politics of difference and identity, and the rise of sporting mega-events. The organisation's controversial split, the emergence of the World Outgames, and the lively tension between the Games' assimilative tendencies and its transformative promise also are critically examined.

This book is important reading for any serious student of international sport or gender and sexuality studies.

Caroline Symons is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Sport and Exercise Science and the Institute of Sport, Exercise and Active Living at Victoria University, Australia. Her currently funded research projects are concerned with women in sport leadership positions, the sport and physical activity patterns of adolescent girls and the LGBT sport experience in Australia. In 2007 she was the recipient of two university teaching awards. She is a leader in sexuality diversity and inclusive curriculum in sports studies and challenging homophobia educational programs within sport in Australia.

Routledge Critical Studies in Sport
Series Editors
Jennifer Hargreaves and Ian McDonald
University of Brighton

The Routledge Critical Studies in Sport series aims to lead the way in developing the multi-disciplinary field of Sport Studies by producing books that are interrogative, interventionist and innovative. By providing theoretically sophisticated and empirically grounded texts, the series will make sense of the changes and challenges facing sport globally. The series aspires to maintain the commitment and promise of the critical paradigm by contributing to a more inclusive and less exploitative culture of sport.

Also available in this series:

Understanding Lifestyle Sports
Consumption, identity and difference
Edited by Belinda Wheaton

Why Sports Morally Matter
William J. Morgan

Fastest, Highest, Strongest
A critique of high-performance sport
Rob Beamish and Ian Ritchie

Sport, Sexualities and Queer/Theory
Edited by Jayne Caudwell

Physical Culture, Power, and the Body
Edited by Jennifer Hargreaves and Patricia Vertinsky

British Asians and Football
Culture, identity, exclusion
Daniel Burdsey

Culture, Politics and Sport
Blowing the whistle, revisited
Garry Whannel

Olympic Media
Inside the biggest show on television
Andrew C. Billings

Marxism, Cultural Studies and Sport
Edited by Ben Carrington and Ian McDonald

Preface

Caroline Symons' book, *The Gay Games: A history*, is the most comprehensive book about the Gay Games to date. While others have referred to the Gay Games within the more general discourse of the relation between sport, sexuality, and sexual politics, she focuses more specifically on the history of the Gay Games since their inception in San Francisco in 1982. The first Games were a radical intervention, a reaction to the deep and divisive homophobia which many gay athletes had encountered in mainstream sport and which had driven them to look for an alternative outlet for their love of sport. The gay liberation movement had already created an opening for the rapid growth of gay cultural activities and the Gay Games was part of this development. But whilst the original aim of the Gay Games 'to promote the spirit of inclusion and participation, as well as the pursuit of personal growth in a sporting event' has been reiterated by each of the organizing committees, there have been significant changes from one Gay Games to the next in their rationale, organization, and financing, and there have been conflicts and schisms, as well as developments in response to national and global politics and events.

The Gay Games: A history highlights and assesses these incidents and changes. Because Caroline participated in the Games herself and was the Melbourne representative on the Sydney 2002 bid team and got to know the Sydney organizers and also observed and was a committee member on the FGG during the late 1990s and got to know the Directors and Gay Games' organizers, she was able to gain access to events and meetings and got to know and interviewed key figures in decision-making debates about how the Games should be run. As a result, her account provides an in-depth investigation of the specific features of each of the Games, and includes original and detailed material and analysis. Her history of the Games concludes with sensitive comment on the important schism between two factions in the Gay Games' movement. The result was that in 2006 two competing events took place – Gay Games VII, held in Chicago, sanctioned as usual by the FGG, and the breakaway World Outgames, held in Montreal, which had an organizing and sanctioning body, newly created in 2004, namely, the Gay and Lesbian International Sport Association (GLISA). Not surprisingly, there was a lower standard of performance in both Montreal and Chicago than at previous Gay Games because many athletes could not, or did not want to, go to both. To avoid another clash, the second World Outgames was held in 2009 in Copenhagen,

Denmark and the third World Outgames will be held in Antwerp, Belgium, in 2013. Gay Games VIII will be held in Cologne, Germany, in 2010 and Gay Games IX will take place in Cleveland, USA in 2014.

Caroline Symons' history of the Gay Games fits ideally into the *Routledge Critical Studies in Sport* series. The Gay Games have been a significant reaction to homophobic oppression in sport which can still wreck the lives of some sportsmen and women, and have provided a haven for participants within all categories of gender and sexuality, including gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender participants, transforming for them the way in which sport is experienced and understood. However, it remains difficult for gay sportsmen and women from outside the West, and in particular those from countries where homosexuality remains illegal and hidden, to be helped in their quest for open participation. The co-existence of the Gay Games and the World Outgames represents an important cultural and political uncertainty. Whereas from the start the Gay Games were celebrated as the largest cultural event on the Gay calendar which united people from the gay community, they have recently embodied controversy and conflicting discourses. The futures of both the Gay Games and the World Outgames are still in a state of flux, although discussions to resolve conflict between the two organizations have been taking place since July 2009, peaking at a meeting on 5 March 2010 between the Presidents of GLISA and FGG. Following the meeting, a co-operative statement was made, in response to feedback from the worldwide community, which included the following suggestions, contingent upon the approvals of the boards of both GLISA and FGG: 'GLISA and FGG have agreed to organize one quadrennial event in 2018. This event will be comprised of three equally important components – Sports, Culture, and Human Rights. A new name will be proposed for this joint event.'

Students and researchers would benefit from reading Caroline Symons' book in order to make sense of events leading to this situation and of the challenges ahead for gay sport. Her book also points to the importance of making links between empirically-grounded accounts and theoretical understanding. But the text would be interesting to a wider readership than just an academic one – to gay sportsmen and women themselves, to policy-makers, and to those concerned with equal rights, human rights, and the politics of sexuality.

Jennifer Hargreaves and Ian McDonald
Co-editors *Routledge Critical Studies in Sport*

Acknowledgements

A number of people have contributed to this book project and have enabled its completion in so many ways, and I am forever grateful. I have received invaluable feedback and support from my academic mentors, Dennis Hemphill, Katie Hughes, Donna Dening and Terry Roberts. Colleagues such as Bob Stewart, Rob Hess, Michael Burke, Greg Dingle, June Senyard and Graham Willet have also shared ideas and reviewed my work.

It was a pleasure to work with the esteemed editors of the Routledge Critical Sport Studies series, especially Jennifer Hargreaves. Her extensive advice, encouragement, academic insight and professionalism have been exceptional. The Routledge Sport and Leisure team of Brian Guerin and Simon Whitmore have also been most helpful.

I am also indebted to all of the Gay Games' family who assisted me with this history project, providing their stories of the Gay Games, vital feedback on chapter drafts and most importantly inspiration with their passion, courage and achievements in developing and shaping the Gay Games movement. Charlie Carson, Emy Ritt and Kate Rowe were especially helpful with their feedback. The Outgames' leaders who shared their stories in this book have also been generous.

This book would never have been completed without the loving support and assistance of my family. My father David Symons assisted with the extensive reference list and prepared the photographs. My partner Jenny Bonney acted as critical reader. My parents Jeanette and David helped Jenny and I with the joys and challenges of caring for a young family and our darling daughter Caitlin provided us with a constant reminder of what is important in life.

I acknowledge the following for permission to use material that I have previously authored:

Routledge, for excerpts from (1) 'Challenging Homophobia and Heterosexism in Sport. The promise of the Gay Games', published in 2007 in Atchison, C. (ed.) *Gender, Sport and Identity: Masculinities, Femininities and Sexualities* (140–59); and (2) 'Transgendering Sex and Sport in the Gay Games', published in 2006 in Caudwell, J. (ed.) *Sport, Sexualities and Queer/Theory* (109–29). My colleague Dennis Hemphill co-authored this chapter and has also given permission to reprint sections of it in this book. Walla Walla Press and Dennis Hemphill, co-editor of the book *Gender, Sexuality and Sport: A Dangerous Mix* (2002), have also

given permission to use excerpts from my chapter in this book, titled 'The Gay Games and Community' (100–114).

I am indebted to photographers Paul Finneseth, A. P. Meredith, Jay W. Photos and T. Bianchi, as well as the generosity of Sara Waddell Lewinstein and the Federation of Gay Games for the photographs in this book.

Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	vi
<i>Preface</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
1 Introduction	1
2 Dancing with Tom Waddell	13
3 Gay Games I	38
4 'Triumph in 1986': Gay Games II	65
5 'Celebration '90': Gay Games III	100
6 'Unity '94': Gay Games IV	119
7 'Friendship through Culture and Sport': Gay Games V	147
8 'Under New Skies': Gay Games VI	174
9 Transexed conundrums	201
10 Gay Games VII and 1st World Outgames: Split asunder!	217
11 Conclusion	241
<i>Appendix: Interview details</i>	248
<i>Summary Table of Gay Games</i>	250
<i>Glossary</i>	257
<i>Notes</i>	264
<i>Bibliography</i>	273
<i>Index</i>	293

List of figures

2.1	Tom Waddell, Sara Lewinstein and their daughter Jessica as a toddler	16
3.1	Basketball players during Gay Games I	51
3.2	Team San Francisco marching in athletes parade during Gay Games I	53
3.3	Tom Waddell erasing the word Olympics from Gay ‘Olympic’ Games posters of Gay Games I	57
3.4	Weightlifter during Gay Games I	61
4.1	The Rainbow Roll for the End of AIDS – creator Brent Nicholson-Earle, Jessica Waddell Lewinstein and other Rainbow Rollers (Gay Games IV)	86
6.1	Charlotte Avery and Sabra Williams, from London, celebrate their gold medal in the pairs figure skating – Gay Games IV	122
7.1	Physique at Gay Games V	153
8.1	Pacific Islanders waiting to march in the parade of athletes during Gay Games VI	184
8.2	Team Band performing during Gay Games VI.	190
10.1	Greg Louganis and Jessica Waddell Lewinstein present the Tom Waddell Award to recipient Lydia la Rivere-Zijdel of Amsterdam and male recipient Derek Liecny during opening ceremony of Gay Games VII	226

1 Introduction

Together we ran, jumped, played, loved and unalterably changed each other's lives.
(Forzley and Hughes 1990: 1)

The international Gay Games has become one of the largest sporting, cultural and human rights events in the world, as well as the largest international participatory lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTIQ) event.¹ Games have been held every four years since 1982. The first and second Games were in San Francisco, followed by Vancouver, New York City, Amsterdam, Sydney and Chicago. Over this period the Games have grown tenfold in participation and have developed from an essentially local Californian multi-sport event to a multi-million dollar, major, sporting extravaganza engaging people from all continents in diverse programmes of sports, culture, entertainment and human rights.

The international Gay Games movement developed through the success of the individual Games and includes LGBTIQ sport, recreation and cultural clubs, organisations, events, competitions and festivals. According to Dennis Altman, a leading academic on the development of gay and lesbian communities worldwide, the Gay Games movement has become one of the largest international gay and lesbian institutions (2001: 100). This movement ensures ongoing community activities and development through sport and culture. The international governing body overseeing the continuity of the Gay Games – the Federation of Gay Games (FGG) was founded in Seattle in 1989.

Inspired by the Olympics, but disillusioned by its apparent racism, sexism, nationalism, homophobia and elitism, the principal founder of the Gay Games, Tom Waddell, envisaged the Gay Games as a peoples' games (Messner and Sabo 1994: 113–19). Hence, the main aims of the international Gay Games movement are the fostering of inclusion, participation and doing one's personal best.² The Gay Games were to be open to people of all sexual orientations, genders, races, nationalities, ages, abilities, religions and political perspectives – so long as participants adhered to this spirit of inclusion and respect for diversity. The early organisers also valued sport participation because it was thought to give a focus to people's lives, to provide an opportunity to meet others and form friendships, as well as to provide an avenue for personal achievement and validation. It was also

2 Introduction

believed that through an inclusive Games' philosophy and the vehicle of participatory sport, segregation and prejudice within gay and lesbian communities could be broken down.

The centrality of sport to the original Gay Games programme had other purposes, the principal one being to demonstrate to mainstream society that gay people were like everyone else – they played sport. Linked specifically to the role of gay men, this mainstreaming would supposedly help dispel myths about them being un-masculine. After all, sports, especially those involving the demonstration of strength, power, speed and combativeness, were considered excellent social practices to affirm traditional masculinity. Specifically, these sports were developed as training grounds and celebratory public arenas for supremacist forms of heterosexual masculinity. Sport had become one of the most media covered, globalised, consumed and naturalising institutions for 'defining preferred and disparaged forms of masculinity and femininity, instructing boys and men in the "art" of making certain kinds of men' (Rowe and McKay 1998: 118). Homosexual men were definitely suspect in this macho sports world, women were rendered the naturally inferior 'other' and lesbians were portrayed as a dominant and corrupting force within women's sport. Rigid, limiting and discriminatory binary oppositions of male/female, masculinity/femininity, heterosexuality/homosexuality, which have predominated in Western understandings of sex, gender and sexuality, have been naturalised, reinforced and at times resisted within the arena of sport.

Whilst the Gay Games have had a mainstreaming emphasis, they have also been envisaged as a 'radical' alternative to conventional sporting events and practices. Representations and embodiment of sport, sex, gender, sexuality and community appear to be played out at the Gay Games in challenging as well as conventional ways. Their affirming sporting and cultural environment for LGBTIQ peoples and their potential resistance to the gender order make the Gay Games a significant event. The scale of the international Gay Games movement and the more particular impacts of individual Gay Games upon LGBTIQ communities globally, within host cities and local contexts, are also important areas for investigation.

This book is unique in a number of ways. It provides the first social history of the Gay Games from their founding up until their hosting in Chicago in 2006. It is comprehensive in its scope, using extensive archival research as well as interviews with many of the key organisers and numerous participants of the eight documented Games. This history concentrates on the way each Gay Games was organised. It also examines the network of political, social, cultural and economic factors that influenced the organisation, policies, conduct and especially the lived experience of these Games. The internationalisation of the Gay Games movement during the 1990s, the significant split in the international LGBTIQ sport movement that occurred with the establishment of the 1st World Outgames in Montreal in 2006 and the founding of the Gay and Lesbian International Sport Association (GLISA) that oversees the Outgames, is also touched upon. Each Gay Games is located within the social context, including the gay and lesbian history of its host

city and country. Broad and important historical influences affecting LGBTIQ communities during the latter part of the twentieth century and the start of the new millennium have also contributed to the shaping and impact of the Gay Games. These include counter-cultural and civil rights developments of the 1960s and 1970s, gay and lesbian liberation, feminism, HIV and AIDS, the backlash of the right in many Western nations, the effects of consumer capitalism and the health and fitness movement, the rise of mass participatory mega-events, identity and difference politics, the global circulation of gay and lesbian identities and international LGBTIQ sport politics.

There is significant diversity within LGBTIQ communities along the lines of sex, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, age, socio-economic class, ability/disability, HIV status, religion and political perspective. Modern social identities such as 'lesbian', 'gay', 'bisexual', 'transgender' and 'queer' in themselves carry no single political agenda (Epstein 1999: 30). Same-sex desire and systems of gender/sexuality worldwide are also diverse. As a distinctly recent Western major event that professes inclusion as a central principal, the Gay Games stand out as a test case for diversity sensitivity in policy and practice. The challenges of organising a major event, the particular opportunities and obstacles presented with this very large and public LGBTIQ event, and the complexities of inclusiveness, are all addressed in this social history of the Gay Games.

Particular attention has been paid to the role and organisation of sport at the Gay Games, as issues of sex, gender and sexuality for LGBTIQ communities and mainstream society are most contentious and significant here. A substantial Cultural Festival was added to the Gay Games programme in Vancouver in 1990. Culture had essentially been left off or downplayed within the Games agenda by the early organisers because gays performing in theatre and dance only tended to confirm stereotypes. The Cultural Festival of the Games has historical significance in itself and its development, which has a strong gendered and sexual politics, is documented in this history. Likewise, the inclusion of a social issues and an international human rights programme during the Amsterdam and Sydney Gay Games will also be examined as an integral part of the growth, development and global reach of the Gay Games.

Methodology

Historical research methods such as archival and document analysis, oral history interviewing, and the examination of secondary sources, are used in this book. Secondary sources include media commentary and short souvenir histories of a number of the Gay Games, their contextualisation within broader social histories of relevant mainstream communities and LGBTIQ communities, as well as within social theoretical understandings of gender and sexuality. Participant observation is also used to augment these research methods enhancing my understanding of the development, processes, personalities and politics of the Federation of Gay Games (FGG), Gay Games V, VI and VII and the 1st World Outgames.

4 Introduction

Archival research

Archival materials on the Gay Games were first 'mined' in December of 1995, when they were being organised by archivist and graduate student, Tina Miller, under the supervision of Terry Allison, the Collections Librarian at California State University (CSU), San Marcos.³ At this time the archive was housed at CSU, San Marcos (Miller 1995). More extensive research on the archive occurred during November of 1996. When the archives were integrated within the San Francisco Public Library collections, much of Miller's organisational system was retained, and the citations within this book up until Gay Games VI are based on the original archives' organisation. I re-visited the archives in San Francisco during October of 2007 to find that much of the written materials from the Gay Games post-Amsterdam are in electronic form and kept with the FGG.

Official programmes, posters, organisational information, photographs, newsletters, official reports, Gay Games memorabilia and newspaper/magazine clippings were also obtained from a number of other sources. As an observer and active member of various FGG committees from 1996 to 2002 and 2007, the minutes of meetings, policy documents, programmes, reports and newsletters concerning the operations of the FGG as well as Gay Games IV, V and VI were made available. During a visit to Amsterdam in December of 1996 to interview the organisers of Gay Games V, information concerning the organisation of these Games was obtained. By participating in Gay Games V, VI and VII and the 1st World Outgames, further documentation in the form of programmes, memorabilia and newspapers were collected. Key organisers of Gay Games VI and VII have also provided me with reports on these Games.

An in-depth analysis of the micro-politics and decision-making processes that occurred during the organisation of each Gay Games is only touched on in this book, although, due to a closer proximity to events and people I could give a richer picture of this with Sydney 2002. Generally speaking, the archival sources and interviews did not provide this detail. It was not until Gay Games IV that staff in Directorships overseeing the organisation of key aspects of the Gay Games wrote reports on their portfolio areas. I have used some of these reports within the book. They tend to emphasise positive outcomes although organisational difficulties are also alluded to. Political dissention and the final decision-making/conflict-resolution process are not given in these documents. A more detailed political analysis of the Gay Games – at the micro policy and organisational level – could be the subject of future research into the Gay Games.

Oral history interviews

Orally communicated history was used as the most appropriate research method for exploring the subjective experiences and meanings of these Games for the participants and organisers, and explaining key events of the Games. This method provided original source material and complemented the written record with first-hand accounts. A total of 61 oral history interviews were gathered and analysed in

the construction of this Gay Games history. Thirty-nine interviewees were 'purposely selected' because of their roles as key players in the organisation of the seven Gay Games. They had direct involvement either as paid or unpaid managers or Directors on the management boards of these Gay Games. Many of these Gay Games managers also served as Directors on the Board of the FGG. These people discussed their memories of and involvement with the Gay Games. Two interviews from the 1st World Outgames and GLISA and Mark Tewksbury's autobiography (2006) provide the first-hand accounts informing my understanding of the fallout between the FGG and Montreal organisers over the 2006 Gay Games and the establishment of the rival Outgames. The FGG perspective for this fallout is given by FGG Directors and Chicago Gay Games organisers, who had direct knowledge of this history, as well as by the lengthy written account given on the FGG website.

The primary purpose of the FGG is to select the hosting city of a Gay Games, to ensure that the main principles of the Gay Games – inclusion, participation and achieving one's personal best – are maintained, to monitor and advise on the overall running of the Games, to protect the image and trademarks of the FGG, and to promote the growth and well-being of the international Gay Games movement. The FGG also sets specific policy guidelines for the Gay Games, for instance, the organisation and conduct of the sports programme. Ten of the interviewees had been key players on the FGG without having been directly involved in the organisation of a Gay Games. They were selected because they had contributed significantly to the shaping of particular aspects of the FGG, and due to their knowledge of the Gay Games themselves. Within this sample Directors came from South Africa, Canada, Germany, France and the US. Many of the Gay Games and FGG organisers that were interviewed had been inspired to take on leadership roles with the Games through actual participation in the sports and cultural aspects, and many have continued their sports and cultural participation after the completion of their terms in office.

Interviews were also conducted with ten Gay Games participants who had no direct management role. They will be identified as 'participants' in the methodology discussion that follows. Interviewees who had an organisational role with the Gay Games will be identified as 'organisers'. 'Participant' interviews concentrated on personal experiences of the Gay Games, and the meaning and significance of individual participation. In this they provided background information during the research of the book. Interviewees came from South Africa, Ireland, England, Australia and the US. This interview sample does not purport to be representative of the diversity of participation at the Gay Games.

Interviews took from one hour to four hours, using a semi-structured format. After discussing their personal histories and motivations, the interviewees elaborated on their Gay Games story including their participation in various Gay Games, their organisational contributions and their general experiences and Games highlights. Participant interviews were more open-ended and concentrated on the person's background, mainstream and LGBTIQ sports and cultural experiences, and Gay Games experiences. Ethical approval was gained from the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee.

All Gay Games managers and FGG Directors wished for their real names to be used in the publication of this history. This was considered to be a political act for them, one of being public, visible and proud of who they were and their involvement and achievements with the Gay Games. All of these people hold leadership positions within their respective lesbian and gay communities as well as within the Gay Games organisations and the FGG. Participants were another matter and their names have been changed for reasons of confidentiality. Real names have been used for practically all key leaders within the Gay Games movement who appear in this history – including those not interviewed. These leaders have appeared in publicly accessible documents including Gay Games programmes. However, wherever there has been any doubt concerning the public identification of individuals, a pseudonym has been used. Unless already in the public arena, or discussed in a way that confidentiality is maintained, a person's HIV status has also been kept strictly confidential.

Gay Games organisers and participants discussed the meaning and significance of the Gay Games in personal terms. They highlighted what was important to them, used varying terminology, and had particular interests, political and personal agendas and perspectives. Minichiello notes that 'stories' during interviews may be exaggerated to maximise 'listener impact' (Minichiello *et al.* 1995: 119). I was interested in and tried to be aware of these human biases – including my own. Events, experiences and other phenomena often construed as 'facts' never just speak for themselves in history. These can be ambiguous and inconsistent, and the historian always has to decide which ones to 'give the floor, and in what order or context' (Carr 1964: 18).

Hence, historians are always involved in interpretation, and a model or theory is required to achieve this. Furthermore, 'every history is enculturated in the systems of values and interests out of which it comes' by both the people telling the story and the storyteller (Denning 1988: 98). Historians need to acknowledge their own subject position and ideological assumptions in their interpretations. They also need to appreciate the systems of values, interests and established meanings from which the individuals, communities and identities that they are studying are constituted. This assumes that experience as an explanatory tool of history is never self-evident or self-explanatory. As observed by Joan Scott (1993: 143) 'experience is at once always already an interpretation of something that needs to be interpreted'.

As the researcher, I strove for critical awareness through acknowledgement of my own subject position as a white, Australian, middle-class, tertiary-educated, feminist-informed academic, same-sex partnered, mother in her 40s, with a background in elite swimming as a competitor and with a commitment to 'sport for all'. This book is the product of my doctoral thesis, which I started at a time during which I was only just coming out myself. The research project became part of my journey of discovery within a surprisingly prejudiced mainstream society and a diverse and usually affirming LGBTIQ world. The supplementary research method of participant observation, which will be outlined in the next section of this methodology, provided an important context to observe and learn about this new