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Pump Fiction:
The Bodybuilding Sub-Culture And Attitudes Towards Health.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Parks, Recreation & Tourism Management.

at

Lincoln University

By

G.S.D. Ballard

Lincoln University

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Acknowledgments.

A wise person once told me that there are only two types of experiences in life. One, like a good holiday, is hugely enjoyable at the time, but will really bore the people you tell about it. The other experience, for example, being mugged by a transvestite hooker in Paris, is not particularly pleasant, but makes a really great story for social occasions like black-tie dinners and weddings. This thesis, I would argue, falls into the second category of experience, not because of any physical or psychological violence it has done me, but for the emotional roller coaster ride, the interesting people and tales, and the reminders that I am alive.

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Introduction.

Very little detailed analysis of bodybuilders has been conducted (Klein, 1986). Perhaps because of the lack of studies on bodybuilders, or perhaps as a reflection of the nature of the sub-culture, it appears that bodybuilders cannot easily be packaged into one particular line of thinking or academic discipline. The studies that have been undertaken on these athletes tend to examine issues such as objectification of the body, posing, harsh dieting practices and the use of drugs, including anabolic steroids. By examining these facets of bodybuilding in isolation these studies tend to judge bodybuilders in a negative way, rather than focussing on the bodybuilding lifestyle as a whole in order to more fully understand all the aspects of the sport and the reasons behind some of the norms and values.

This thesis is an ethnographic-style account of elite level bodybuilders in New Zealand and is an attempt to bridge some of the gaps in the literature by emphasising how normal both males and females participating in the sport, at the elite level, can be. The first chapter is the literature review which outlines the existing literature on the body, bodybuilders and drug use. The literature chapter details the history of bodybuilding and the development of a bodybuilding subculture which was once viewed as deviant, but presently enjoys some degree of legitimacy and, perhaps, respectability among the general population. This chapter also details some of the health issues related to bodybuilders. Although this may include diet, a large segment relates specifically to drug use.

Given the significance of drug use in bodybuilders' lives, a brief history of anabolic steroid use is included and shows that bodybuilders and power lifters were the first athletes to use these drugs. How anabolic steroids work, in terms of physical and psychological effects on the individual, and the possibility of healthy
steroid use will be examined within the context of increasing medical intervention in the general population.

In order to integrate the possibility of healthy steroid use with the values and norms associated with the bodybuilding sub-culture, the literature review will also outline the concepts of a serious leisure career and locus of control. These are the tools which will be used in the analysis sections to both explain and understand some of the issues in relation to diet and drug use in the lives of elite level bodybuilders.

The second chapter details the methodology used to gather the data. The reasons why qualitative, semi-structured interviews were thought to be most appropriate, the selection of respondents to be interviewed and the places chosen to observe bodybuilders will be discussed. The ethical considerations will be described because of the potentially illicit nature of some of the data.

Chapters three and four together form the analysis section. Chapter three focuses on the bodybuilding sub-culture and the important values of health and individualism associated with it. It details the gym hierarchy and illustrates, firstly, how novice bodybuilders must get in with the higher ranked athletes, and then use their knowledge to successfully compete and gain status themselves. The role of internal attributions related to the athlete's experience in the hierarchy is also examined in relation to diet and drug practices.

Chapter four details how important the lifestyle of bodybuilding is to the athletes in this study in relation to a theoretical bodybuilding career path. The issues of internal control and individualism which are so important in the bodybuilding sub-culture appear to be challenged as the athlete moves up the gym hierarchy. These challenges, along with the athletes' coping strategies, are described.
Chapter five discusses the two analysis chapters and attempts to integrate the findings of this study with the literature review and outlines the limitations and possibilities for future research.
Chapter 1.

Literature Review.

Sport, The Body and Bodybuilders.

Introduction.

The primary issue to bodybuilders is the health of the mind and body. Health revolves around the discipline and control required to build a strong and muscular body. In this literature review, I will firstly give a brief over-view of the body. This includes the changes in ideal body types over time and the social influences affecting such changes. Second, as this work is primarily about elite level bodybuilders, a history of bodybuilding and a description of modern bodybuilding contests will be outlined. Third, within a framework of the sociology of sport and medicalisation as a system of social control, the bodybuilding sub-culture and practises will be described. Literature associated with serious leisure and locus of control is also relevant to explaining some of the sub-cultural values and practices. Finally, as it is widely believed that bodybuilding involves the heavy use of performance enhancing drugs, the history and effects of anabolic androgenic steroids will be reviewed.

The Body.

The body is central to bodybuilding and lately, to wider society. In the psychological literature, the alignment of the belief that humans were separate and above the animal kingdom (Freeman, 1984) with the observation that clearly
showed humans and animals engaging in very similar behaviours, caused problems for thinkers in pre-industrial societies (Franken, 1988). In the sociological and anthropological literature on pre-industrial societies, the body was enigmatic because societies did not differentiate between cultural and social worlds (Lash, 1990) and yet the body was at least partly involved in the creation of both cultural and social artefacts. The pre-industrial body, according to sociologists, was, therefore, the central focus for maintaining human separateness from nature and came to represent differences between good and bad; rational and irrational; right and left handedness; male and female (Turner, 1996). In a religious sense, the body became something which contained good and bad elements which needed to be controlled in order to maintain the idea of human separateness from nature (Turner, 1996).

Whether as a consequence of industrialisation or because of it, social and cultural worlds became more differentiated (Lash, 1990). People, who now tended to work in factories, were increasingly controlled by newly developed machinery and the clock (Rifkin, 1995; Woodcock, 1944, in Naftalin, 1944) while religion, in the form of the Protestant work ethic, was used to provide early capitalists with a workforce believing in sobriety and honest hard work (Turner, 1991 in Featherstone, Hepworth & Turner, 1991). Lash (1990) identifies this period as modernism.

At this time, the process of improving the health of the population was governed through both religious and social controls, targeted specifically at controlling dietary practices (Turner 1996). Socially, increased regulation of dietary practises was associated with the increased medical knowledge and technology of the time, and the associated legitimacy of medical intervention in the lives of workers. The church also viewed diet as important, since diet was associated with practises of sacrifice which allowed for purity of body and spirit (Turner, 1991 in Featherstone, Hepworth & Turner, 1991). It can be argued, therefore, that early
industrialisation saw the development of increased physical control of the body through the combined use of technology and social control. Such ideas of physical control through science and religion are important and will be developed later.

Lash (1990: 11) argues that while modernism was characterised by differentiation of cultural and social worlds, post modernism can be characterised by de-differentiation of all cultural objects produced. The body in post-modern societies remains a metaphor for systems of social practices and signs. Such metaphors, however, may shift meaning in different contexts (Turner, 1996). Perhaps because of its aspects as shifting metaphor, the body is, therefore, of great interest as a political instrument (Featherstone, Hepworth & Turner, 1991; Radley, 1996; Shilling, 1993; Turner, 1996), which appears to be particularly important within a sporting context for both maintaining and creating social control (Eitzen, 1989; Gratton & Taylor, 1991; Houlihan, 1991; Nafzinger, 1989 cited in Bourdreaux & Konzak, 1991). The politics of sport and the body, therefore, does not occur in isolation, but within the wider context of society (Gratton & Taylor, 1991; Houlihan, 1991; Turner, 1996).

Medical intervention in the population is one important example of the politics of the body which is particularly relevant to the study of athletes and bodybuilders. The importance of medical intervention to ensure the health of the workforce after the Industrial Revolution has been discussed above. Such intervention practises continue to be “a major institution of social control” in modern industrial societies (Zola, 1972, cited in Dunning & Rojek, 1992:49). Activities or events which were once considered to be a normal part of life, for example old age or pregnancy, are now considered to require medical intervention (Zola, 1972, cited in Dunning & Rojek, 1992). Simultaneously, behaviours which

---

1 For example the work of Pierre Bourdieu concerning the relationship between posture and social class.

2 This may be particularly important in a sporting context and is discussed in a later section.
were once labelled as criminal or deviant are becoming re-categorised as sicknesses requiring medical attention and are increasingly becoming the subject of doctors and hospitals rather than the police and the courts (Conrad & Schneider, 1980).

Furthermore, improved technologies and the increased categorisation of people based on medical pathology means that preventative medicine is also becoming more important in industrialised countries. Individuals who show no symptoms of pathology may still be deemed to require medical attention simply because they are at a certain point in their life-spans (Illich, 1975).

Medical developments have an impact on attitudes towards bodies, especially in regard to what is considered a healthy practice and what intervention protocols should be considered legitimate or illegal. The use of drugs is closely linked to these improved medical practices. Laura & White (1991) and others suggest, therefore, that athletes may be another distinct group of people which requires specialist medical intervention. It creates an interesting predicament for bodybuilders (and athletes in general) who might actually, or simply wish to, undertake practices of dubious moral value, such as drug use.

With medical intervention and the associated establishment of social norms regarding fit bodies, the concept of body image becomes important. It seems to be especially relevant to bodybuilding because it is a sport which is fundamentally about creating or conforming to a particular body image. Body image can be defined as “the picture of our own body which we form in our mind” (Schlinder, 1935 in Gordon & Gergen, 1968:107). Although defined in psychological terms, body image or ideal body shape is also influenced by socio-cultural forces and is relevant to a discussion of the development of bodybuilding practises.

The physicality of the body “places humans in relation to each other in mutual visibility” (Radley, 1996: 561). Bodies may, therefore, convey messages
about socialisation (e.g., Bourdieu, 1984), may be an expression of physical or social experiences (Baerveldt & Voestermans, 1996 in Turner, 1996) or convey messages about membership to a particular group (Radley, 1996 in Turner, 1996). Ironically because such messages must be interpreted by a receiver, bodies may also convey non-intended messages (Baerveldt & Voestermans, 1996 in Turner, 1996). Physical bodies creating messages are used in consumer culture which has led to the concept of a stylised body where ideal messages of young, healthy and beautifully fit bodies are constructed for purposes of exchange value and hedonism (Featherstone, 1991 in Featherstone, Hepworth & Turner, 1991).

If body image is led by consumer culture, it should not be surprising that tastes and preferences for certain body types should change over time in accordance with changes in cultural values and/or producer imperatives. Nineteenth century, modernist, ideals of physical perfection, for example, were varied, depending on context. Males depicted in art, particularly statues, tended to follow early Greek ideals (Chapman, 1994), although Lammer (1992) suggests that the Greek ideal was in fact a construction of nineteenth century society, rather than being something Ancient Greek athletes themselves would have strived for.

In nineteenth century society at large, fashion swayed between the very slender and the very fat. Extreme thinness, it was thought, resulted from lack of physical exertion and could thus be a sign of esteem, since physical exertion and exercise was viewed as the domain of the working classes (Chapman, 1994). On the other hand, wealth and success could also lead to excessively fat bodies due to constant eating and lack of physical exertion. Fat men, therefore, were also seen in some ways as physically ideal (Chapman, 1994).

Currently there appears to be a different ideal body standard for men and women. For women, physical beauty appears to be measured in terms of being thin (Hsu, 1989), while male ideals are in terms of muscularity (Tauri, 1995). Faludi (1991) claims that
capitalism and consumer culture may be the driving force behind such cultural preferences for ideal body types. Capitalism may influence the current fashion for female thinness and male muscularity, especially when coupled with the social forces of increasing medical intervention and advise related to body problems, such as the need to be active to counter disease and obesity (e.g., Blair, Booth, Gyarfás, Iwane, Marti, Matsudo, Morrow, Noakes & Shephard, 1996; Owen & Bauman, 1992). The stigmatisation of, and discrimination towards fat people (Cash & Hicks, 1990) contribute to the cult of the body.

Arguably, the trend for such body fashion has also been compounded by the accompanying improvements in communications and the camera (Turner, 1996). Furthermore, the demand for body images and the continued improvements in medical technology have allowed the physical body to become almost infinitely malleable through the use of surgery, drugs, exercise and diet regimes (Bourdreaux & Konzak, 1991). Turner (1996) argues that such medical technology and consumers’ need to take advantage of it has resulted in body projects where people spend time and money to create body ideals. This is discussed on page thirty two in relation to the social-psychology of bodybuilding and weight training.

Arguably, as a result of consumer culture and people’s inability to conform to such ideal body types, there appears to be growing dissatisfaction in the West among males and females in regard to their bodies (Cash, Winstead & Janda, 1986). Such dissatisfaction may not be related to a specific medical problem but may have negative psychological impacts on people (Cash et al, 1986), such as reduced self esteem and depression-proneness (Betz, 1986 cited in McCauley, Mints & Glen, 1988). Reduced self esteem and depression can lead people to undertake body projects using weight-loss techniques, surgery and drug use, simply to boost their psychological well-being. For men, this may also include the use of weight training techniques. The origins of modern bodybuilding should, therefore, be discussed.
The Origins of Bodybuilding.

Although very little sociological work has been undertaken on bodybuilders, the development of the sport can be traced back to the late nineteenth century. It can be argued that one man in particular, Eugen Sandow, was responsible for the development of a whole movement of physical culture. He was certainly responsible for providing the means to attain physical perfection and the marketing of what became known as bodybuilding across Western Europe, the United States, South Africa and Australasia (Chapman, 1994).

Sandow was a fierce proponent of the idea that anybody, including women, could develop a physique that was both muscular and symmetrical (Chapman, 1994). Sandow believed that this could be done by the use of scientific exercise programs incorporating the use of weight lifting. More than this, he was the first person to encourage the use of heavy resistance training to develop the muscles of the body, something which directly contradicted the wisdom of the time (Chapman, 1994).

Also contrary to some of the hyperbole surrounding him, Sandow believed that he was perfectly in control of his physical development rather than being a perfectly developed man (Chapman, 1994). It was this element of control which led Sandow to develop his line of fitness equipment, fitness programs and fitness clubs, as well as publishing magazines on health and developing the body. For Sandow, and perhaps partly influenced by the development of capitalism and the Protestant work ethic, improving the mind, spirit and body were essentially the same things (Chapman, 1994).

\[3\] The idea of control in regard to development of the mind and body seems to be a very important concept in the modern bodybuilding sub-culture.
Sociologically, being healthy in nineteenth century Europe meant being physically strong rather than being muscular and was valued for both social and economic reasons. Earlier, I discussed how the health and strength of workers after the Industrial Revolution was in the economic interests of individual capitalists. The development of an interest in the health and strength of the whole population, however, required State intervention and was largely motivated by an interest in mass warfare (Budd, 1997; Turner, 1991 in Featherstone, Hepworth & Turner, 1991).

Giddens (1986) argues that the development of a nation state and its identity is governed in part by social policies which are directly related to military action. It should not be surprising, therefore, that the health of the population in Britain became especially significant to the British Government during the Boer War because of the need for army recruits (Chapman, 1994). With the use of Sandow’s training principles it was considered possible, perhaps for the first time, to train army recruits to be bigger and stronger (Chapman, 1994) rather than relying on natural endowment.

The Protestant work ethic and the development of capitalism was also applied to public health at this time (Bourdreaux & Konzac, 1991). With Sandow’s ideas of development of mind and spirit in conjunction with the body, it was perhaps not surprising that the church saw the movement as an opportunity to encourage moral and religious development through the use of physical exercise (Chapman, 1994). Chapman (1994) and Klein (1993) refer to this application of the Protestant work ethic as Muscular Christianity.

In the late nineteenth century, strongman contests, where men competed against each other in acts of strength, had not yet achieved the status of sport because they did not usually involve fighting other men or throwing some form of object (Chapman, 1994). They were instead restricted to music hall style
entertainment shows or the circus, with the contestants usually being viewed by the public as freaks (Chapman, 1994). With his showmanship, however, and heavy promotional efforts, including the use of make-up, careful lighting arrangements and the new technology of moving pictures, Sandow gave these strong-man, music-hall shows a degree of respectability (Chapman, 1994).

As well as his impressive shows of strength, Sandow used posing and sex to great effect in marketing his shows to the widest possible audience, including, for the first time, women of good character (Chapman, 1994). Not only did he become recognised as the world's strongest man, but his good looks, charm and well developed body (in terms of symmetry and balance as well as size), coupled with the social forces of war and muscular Christianity, helped stimulate the public's interest in the strength and health of the body.

The major breakthrough for competitive bodybuilding came in London, in 1901 with The Great Competition. Chapman (1994) regards this as the first true bodybuilding contest since it was the first posing competition which was not attached to some other related attraction, such as a weight lifting show. It was also the first truly national body, competition (Chapman, 1994).

Perhaps more importantly, the Great Competition was the first posing event which had a written set of judging criteria. Prizes were not necessarily awarded to men with the largest physiques. Judges did consider overall development, but also equality or balance of development, the condition or tone of the tissue, general health and the condition of the skin (Chapman, 1994: 131). Arguably, these criteria form the basis of modern bodybuilding's judging criteria of symmetry, proportion and mass (NZFBB, 1998, personal communication; NABBA, 1988, personal communication).

*These are the two bodybuilding federations in New Zealand*.
Modern Bodybuilding Contests.

There is still some debate as to whether bodybuilding is a sport or a spectacle (Klein, 1986), a debate perpetuated, perhaps, by the very open use of drugs, particularly anabolic steroids. More recently, bodybuilding has started to gain mainstream recognition (at least in the United States and Europe) because of heavy promotional efforts by its governing bodies.

Modern bodybuilding contests have been modified to appeal to modern audiences. Most of the changes have occurred in female bodybuilding. Women have three types of competition; the physique class, the figure class and the fitness class. The emphasis of the judges in each of these competitions is slightly different in each case. Physique class uses the same judging criteria as for men’s bodybuilding, i.e., symmetry, proportion and mass. The figure class has less emphasis on muscle mass and more emphasis on symmetry and proportion. The fitness class has judging criteria more closely akin to modelling, such as grace and balance of movement. Judging in all bodybuilding contests is, however, highly subjective and this helps explain why competing athletes at least, view bodybuilding as a highly political sport (Klein, 1986).

The Bodybuilding Sub-Culture.

A sub-culture is a collection of individuals who possess similar or common interests, characterised by the interaction of its members (Matza, 1969; Stuck, 1990). Interaction with others not in possession of these shared interests is reduced

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5 Arguably, this is as a result of the challenge these athletes represent to popular definitions of femininity (Johnston, 1995; Martin & Gavey, 1996; Obel, 1996).
(Matza, 1969; Stuck, 1990). Furthermore, social interaction within the sub-cultural group results in individuals manifesting behaviours, attitudes and beliefs characteristic of that subculture which may or may not be at odds with the mainstream values of society (Matza, 1969; Stuck, 1990).

Butt (1987: 113) suggests that “the world of sport presents a highly organised social structure that may be divided into individual sports, each with its own subcultures”. Individuals may be drawn towards these subcultures for various reasons, but once committed, they uphold the distinctive values and norms within that subculture (Matza, 1969). Sub-cultural groups may become deviant in some ways either by upholding values and norms which are in opposition to those held by mainstream society or by taking values and norms held by society at large to such extremes as to no longer be considered normal (Ewald & Jiobu, 1985). Once in a sub-cultural group, individuals maintain the group's values by mechanisms of learning, conformity to reference group behaviour and enhancement of reputation within that reference group (Matza, 1969).

The basic values which bodybuilders adhere to and which are heavily promoted by the sport’s governing bodies are “health, heterosexuality and rugged individualism” (Klein, 1986: 115). Unlike some other subcultural groups, these values do not appear to be in conflict with mainstream values (at least in the West), and body building certainly does not view the larger society as “malfuctioning and in need of alternatives” (Klein, 1986:115). On the contrary, bodybuilders appear to accept mainstream society’s values and strive for the individualism and economic goals which these values create (Klein, 1986). This is an important point addressed in my data analysis.

On a micro level, these values manifest themselves in certain gym norms which can easily be observed. Such norms may be related to the use of equipment or the types of clothes worn. It may also be relevant in terms of how exercises are
performed, how exercise programmes are designed and the decisions regarding what
diet and drug protocols to use. Some of these practices may appear to be in
contradiction to the wider values of health promoted by the bodybuilding
federations. In whatever way such exercise and drug programmes are designed,
there is a value in the sub-culture which provides bodybuilders with an expectation
that they will succeed in building a body which is better than the one they already
possess.

As noted above, within any subcultural environment, individuals may act
in certain ways to either conform to group norms and/ or to enhance their
reputations. Bodybuilders in the gym are no exception. Sometimes bodybuilders’
actions may cause some distress, for example the use of drugs, and so athletes must
justify their actions by using neutralisation techniques (Fuller & LaFountain, 1987;
Matza, 1969; Stuck, 1990), especially since these actions may contradict societal or
subcultural values. Group members may view their actions as not causing damage
to anyone (denial of victim); they may believe that they are not harming themselves
(denial of injury); individuals may condemn those with mainstream values6
(condemnation of condemners); and perceive their values and norms as being of a
higher order than those outside the group7 (appeal to higher loyalties).

It is perhaps as a result of the affinity to the sub-cultural group, or the
perceived politics involved in winning a bodybuilding contest, that the gym has
developed a distinct and rigid hierarchy of members. Klein (1986) identified six
distinctive hierarchies at an Olympic Gym in Southern California, which seem to
approximate closely with some of the structures identified by Ballard (1995) and
Tauri (1994) in their studies of New Zealand gymnasia. Klein’s hierarchies are:-

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6 For athletes, this means questioning "the knowledge, motives and integrity of their critics" (Fuller and
LaFountain, 1987:973).
7 For athletes, this may manifest itself in a "code of commitment" (Fuller and LaFountain, 1987:973).
Owners.

These include gym owners and, perhaps more appropriately, the bodybuilding governing bodies. In Southern California these groups occupy the top position in the hierarchy and exert great influence over professional bodybuilders. It is they who decide who wins the major contests (and thus who will earn prize money) and who will get the most exposure in magazines and advertisements for bodybuilding products (thus allowing bodybuilders to finance their sport). The status accorded this group is the result of the power that they can exert on a bodybuilder’s career.

Among the gym users, Klein (1986) identified the following status hierarchy.

Professional body builders.

These represent the second level in Klein’s hierarchy. These athletes train to compete in the professional ranks and are thus paid for winning contests. For these individuals, bodybuilding is their job and they may spend most of each day in the gym (Ballard, 1995). Although gym owners and the Weider empire have a great deal of power over the careers of bodybuilders, and are thus accorded respect, the professional bodybuilder is the most respected athlete in the gym among their peers. In New Zealand, there is currently only one professional bodybuilder and he rarely trains in New Zealand. For all intents and purposes, therefore, no New Zealand gym will have a professional in their ranks.

Amateur bodybuilders.

These people, like the professional bodybuilders, may also spend most of their day in the gym. They also enter lesser competitions, but are not paid any prize
money. In New Zealand, even a good quality gym is unlikely to have a competitive bodybuilder as a member because amateurs are so widely distributed throughout the country* (Tauri, 1994).

**Gym rats.**

This is a term coined by Klein (1986) to describe members of gyms who may train very hard and have physiques similar to bodybuilders and thus may be labelled as bodybuilders by the lay public. They do not, however, enter competitions, and although they may have large physiques, they do not have the symmetry or balance required of a competitive bodybuilder (Ballard, 1995). Among the bodybuilders, these people have a lower status in the gym than the bodybuilders who compete.

**Members at large.**

For most gyms, this group makes up the majority of gym members and they may not look at all like bodybuilders. Of the gym regulars, these people have the lowest status in the eyes of the bodybuilding/gym community. In New Zealand, these members tend to use weights equipment for circuit training or to train for other sports such as rugby (Tauri, 1994; Ballard, 1995).

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* Because in New Zealand, bodybuilding is a 'small' sport, it can easily be argued that winning a national title should be a minimum requirement for the label 'competitive bodybuilder'. For the purposes of this study, the minimum standard is considered to be South Island Champion or better. See chapter two for a fuller explanation.
Onlookers and pilgrims.

For the big body-builder gyms in Southern California, this group of people simply *sight-see* and do not train (although some sight-seers may be professional bodybuilders). This may be because they are body builders from other parts of the country, or perhaps even overseas, who have come to pay homage to the *home* of bodybuilding (Klein, 1986; 1993). Alternatively, they may just constitute an interested public. In New Zealand gyms, this category of persons does not appear to exist (Tauri, 1994), although anecdotal evidence suggests that competitive bodybuilders do indeed like to travel to other gyms within New Zealand either to *spy* on their rivals or to avoid being *spied* upon by them. This is especially important in the lead up to a big competition.

Viewing groups of bodybuilders as part of a sub-culture is possibly only one way of defining this group. Another concept which might be useful in interpreting bodybuilders’ behaviour is that of *serious leisure*.

**Serious Leisure.**

Stebbins (1992) conducted ground-breaking research on *serious leisure*, including the concept of leisure *careers*. The characteristics of serious leisure are participants needing to participate in the activity whether or not the activity is going well; developing a *career* in the activity over time; using significant personal effort to develop the required skills to perform the activity; getting benefits which endure when not undertaking the activity; developing a unique ethos which distinguishes the activity from all others; and having people start to identify themselves through the activity.
Elite New Zealand bodybuilders fit these characteristics because the bodybuilding hierarchy in New Zealand appears to be less distinct than in Southern California. There is currently only one professional who represents New Zealand and is paid for competing. Other New Zealand bodybuilders may spend a considerable length of their time and energy on the sport but get no direct financial reward. Some of these people may not compete at all.

Stebbins (1992) states that the development of a career is characterised by distinct phases: a *beginning* and associated development to a point where a participant can competently and relatively easily perform the activity; *establishment*, where the participant becomes a high level performer of the activity; *maintenance*, when participants are at the peak of their careers and gain maximum results with minimal costs; and *decline*, where a participant may be forced to stop performing. During each stage, participants have to continually make progress and overcome contingencies which slow or halt such progress.

The concept of a career was also noted by Matza (1969), specifically in relation to *deviant* acts, particularly drug use. A potential drug user must develop an affinity with the act and become *turned on* or converted to undertake it. Once the *invitational edge* (Matza, 1969) has been overcome and the individual has undertaken the act, they must constantly re-evaluate how much the benefits and costs of the actual doing matches up with their expectations before the act was undertaken. Although Matza’s career concept may broadly be applied to the bodybuilding career, it may be more usefully used as a partial explanation of drug use in the sport.

A third concept which may prove useful in interpreting bodybuilders’ behaviour is locus of control.
Locus of Control

In psychology, cognitive theorists argue that the way people think about, or label an event, can play a role in influencing the person’s subsequent behaviour under different circumstances (Franken, 1988). The theory of locus of control suggests that behaviour to a stimulus is mediated, in part, by an individual’s attributions of causation. Rotter (1966) provided a springboard for research into locus of control by developing a scale measuring how much an individual perceived a reward to an event was contingent upon their own actions or environmental influences.

The way in which an individual attributes causation to an event, i.e., internally or externally, can influence a person’s motivation to achieve at a task, their subsequent performance and competence at that task and influence their state of arousal, including levels of aggression (Franken, 1988). Self-esteem may also be affected by internal and external attributions (Mansell, 1985), although it is not clear whether this is because of locus of control or the resulting achievement or non-achievement of the task. Differences in personality and situational variations may also influence locus of control (Mansell, 1985).

Athletes tend to score higher on internal than external attributions suggesting they have a greater sense of control in their own lives than the average person (Mansell, 1985). She concludes that an athlete’s stronger belief in their own control is a determinant of success in the sport they play. It is not clear, however, whether internal attributions are a significant characteristic of elite level athletic success, or indeed, if such perceived control in a particular context, such as sport, remains when the athlete is in a different context i.e., whether attributions are dependent on innate personality or learned. Furthermore, it is difficult to know whether bodybuilders are representative of athletes and, therefore, whether such results on locus of control can be applied to them.
It remains, therefore, unknown whether bodybuilders tend to have particular personalities which are inclined to make internal attributions and which, thus, attracts them to bodybuilding, or whether the values of the bodybuilding sub-culture teaches them to make internal attributions about their progress in the gym and/or in a wider context. This will be addressed in the data analysis (Chapter 3 in regard to paying dues). Litt (1988) found that regardless of a person’s score on the internal/external scale, individuals who tended to benefit most from actually having control in certain situations are those who feel most confident that they can exercise it. The bodybuilding sub-culture may therefore provide an environment where athletes can feel confident in exercising control over their bodies. As will be discussed in a later section on drug use in the sport, and in the data analysis Chapter Four, internal or external attributions may explain some of the values expressed by bodybuilders, particularly the ideas of individualism and expectations of success.

Attributions may also affect the way bodybuilders make decisions about drug use or non-use.

Having focussed so far on some of the broader issues which may be relevant to bodybuilders, it seems appropriate to now direct attention to some of the issues which more immediately affect their lives on a day to day basis. First, discussion will focus on the demands of the sport.

The Bodybuilding Season.

Different phases of the bodybuilding season involves bodybuilders exercising precise physical control over their bodies. Competitive bodybuilders have between two and four phases to their year. Most of the year is spent bulking up or in “hypertrophy phase” (Bamman, Hunter, Newton, Roney & Khaled, 1993: 383). This essentially involves using resistance training to build muscle tissue and
size, but can also involve refining their physiques; building up, or *sculpting* particular body parts to improve the body's overall appearance in terms of balance or symmetry. To aid this process, bodybuilders may alter their diets (Bamman, *et al.*, 1993) or take drugs.

The major New Zealand bodybuilding contests are normally held in September or October. Competing athletes have a pre-contest phase of approximately twelve weeks (Bamman *et al.*, 1993) for the purpose of reducing body fat and enhancing their skin tan to maximise the visual effect of their muscles. The precise length of the pre-contest phase, however, may be different for each athlete. During this twelve week phase, bodybuilders systematically reduce calorie intake (Kleiner, Bazzarre & Ainsworth, 1994) and resistance training work, while increasing aerobic activity and tanning treatments.

To aid fat reduction and to minimise the associated muscle reduction which may occur with the sometimes harsh dieting, athletes also change the proportions of the food groups ingested: from mostly carbohydrates to mostly proteins (Bamman *et al.*, 1993; Kleiner, *et al.*, 1994). Discussions with bodybuilders indicate that they may precisely measure and weigh food to more accurately calculate the proportions of food groups and total calorie intake. They may also use drugs such as stimulants or diuretics. Some athletes may carbohydrate load immediately prior to a contest in order to give a fuller appearance to the muscles. Bamman *et al.* (1993) report this phase as occurring seventy-two hours prior to competition.

Immediately after a competition, bodybuilders may gorge themselves with high fat foods and may return to their hypertrophy phase body weight within three days (Robert*, 1996, personal communication; Jane†, 1997, personal communication). My respondents suggest that this is particularly common among

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*This is a pseudonym for an elite level bodybuilder who did not wish to be part of this study on a formal level.
less experienced bodybuilders or amateur bodybuilders and arguably is the result of the relief felt by the athletes at no longer having to diet. In this sense it demarcates the athletes *letting go* of control.

The professional athletes, however, tend to control their body weight and fat-free mass more rigorously throughout the year and consequently their pre-contest phase is characterised by smaller changes in body weight and fat compared with the amateurs. Professionals, therefore, exercise greater control over their bodies than the amateurs and appear to shift more easily between the phases of the bodybuilding season. By living more of a bodybuilding *lifestyle* in this way, the professionals appear to be more intimately involved with their bodybuilding careers. This appears an obvious point with respect to professionals, since they are paid for their sport, but it might equally be applied to distinctions between amateurs and *'gym rats'* in New Zealand.

**Bodybuilding, Drug Taking and Health**

Such attention to detail by elite level bodybuilders in controlling their bodies to obtain a *winning look* on stage, seems to be generally viewed by the public and social scientist as unhealthy. These features of bodybuilding lifestyles attract particular criticism: the development of a very large musculature, the dieting in the pre-contest phase (perhaps associated with post-contest bingeing) and drug use\(^\text{10}\).  

\(^{10}\) Jane is one of the respondents in this study.  
\(^{11}\) Drug use may be for muscle building, dieting, counteracting the toxic side-effects of drug use or masking drug use in the event of a drugs test.
Development of Large Musculature.

There is some debate as to whether a hugely muscled body is healthy or not. Anecdotal evidence suggests that large muscles may interfere with flexibility. This, however, is refuted by Rasche (1989), who states that musculature does not need to interfere with flexibility as long as the athlete simultaneously trains for both components of fitness. Anecdotally, the elite level bodybuilders seem to do this.

Pre-Contest Dieting.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that harsh dieting can be both a psychological problem and have unhealthy consequences for the athlete (Bamman et al., 1993). Side effects of dieting alone (before diet related drug use is considered) may be a decrease in strength (Bamman et al., 1993), vitamin and mineral intakes below amounts estimated safe and adequate in a healthy diet (Kleiner et al., 1994) and menstrual irregularities in women contestants (Kleiner et al., 1994). The psychological problems regarding dieting may be because of the monotony of the food intake and training on reduced calorie intakes (Kleiner et al., 1994).

Bodybuilders And Drug Use.

Bodybuilding has traditionally been associated with the use of drugs (Todd, 1992, in Berryman & Park, 1992; Fussell, 1991) and the use of performance-enhancing drugs across all sports also appears to be rising (Waddington & Murphy, in Dunning & Rojek, 1992). It seems appropriate, therefore, to address the issue of ergogenic aids in some detail.

“Drugs are chemical substances which by interaction can alter the biochemical systems of the body” (Mottram, 1988:2). Interaction occurs with a
receptor cell and may have two effects, (1) that of an agonist which mimics the action of an endogenous chemical, for example that of a neurotransmitter to elicit muscle contraction. (2) Antagonists produce the opposite effect, occupying receptor sites and preventing endogenous chemicals from operating. Side effects from drug use are produced because the interaction of the drug with the receptor sites is non-selective. That is to say, all receptor sites will be stimulated not just any targeted ones. Drugs, therefore, have effects which are simultaneously desirable and not desirable; “a completely non-toxic drug does not exist” (Mottram, 1988, p11).

In the third century, the Greek physician Galen, first documented the use of stimulants by athletes of the time in order to increase their performances (Mottram, 1988; Thein, Thein & Landry, 1995). Substances believed to enhance performance were also used at the Ancient Olympic Games and by Ancient Egyptian athletes, while stimulants were used by Roman gladiators and knights in medieval jousts (Waddington & Murphy, in Dunning & Rojek, 1992). Periodic reports describing the use of caffeine, strychnine, ether and alcohol appeared between the mid-nineteenth century and the 1930’s (Mottram, 1988; Yesalis, 1993), especially marathon runners using a mixture of alcohol and stimulants to reduce fatigue and sensations of hunger (Thein et al., 1995).

More regular reports of drug use in sport appeared around the time of the Second World War. During this time, drugs were administered to combat troops in order to enhance their mental awareness and to delay the onset of fatigue (Eitzen, 1984; Mottram 1988; Yesalis, 1993). These drugs were amphetamine-like central nervous system stimulants which in the 1940’s and 1950’s also became the drug of choice for athletes, particularly cyclists (Mottram 1988; Yesalis, 1993).

The first synthetic anabolic steroid was produced in 1955 by John Zeigler, an East German track and field coach and chemist. This was a modified testosterone molecule called ‘Methandrostenolone’ and subsequently marketed as
Dianabol\textsuperscript{12} by Ciba Pharmaceuticals (Eitzen, 1984; Lamb, 1989; Mottram 1988; Todd, 1992, in Berryman & Park, 1992; Yesalis, 1993). Bodybuilders and power lifters were the first athletes to use and experiment with these steroids, and they were quickly followed by \textit{throwers} in track and field events (Yesalis, 1993).

By the 1960's, the use of performance enhancing drugs proliferated, aided by the cultural liberalisation which was occurring at that time (Trenberth & Collins, 1994; Todd, 1992, in Berryman & Park, 1992) and because of a leap in technological advancement in the drug field. "The search for more potent, more selective and less toxic drugs resulted in a vast array of powerful agents capable of altering many biochemical, physiological and psychological functions" (Mottram, 1988:2).

More recently, it is apparent that a wider assortment of athletes from various disciplines use and experiment with drugs, including anabolic steroids, which are used to increase muscle bulk and strength (Beel, Nicholson & Scott, 1995; Francis, 1991; Peny, Wright & Littlepage, 1992; Todd, 1992, in Berryman & Park, 1992). Some evidence suggests that steroids are also increasingly being used by recreational athletes (Beel, Nicholson & Scott, 1995; Evans, 1997; Gridley & Hanrahan, 1994; Taylor & Black, 1987) and school children (Burnett & Kleiman, 1994; Melia, 1994; Williamson, 1993; Wang, Yesalis, Fitzhugh, Buckley, & Smicklas-Wright, 1994; Yesalis, 1993). These people may use drugs because they have jobs which require physical strength or they may simply wish to improve their appearance.

Although called anabolic steroids, all steroids have both anabolic (muscle building) and androgenic (masculinizing) effects, hence the more correct term of anabolic-androgenic steroids (Lamb, 1989; Yesalis, 1993). For the sake of

\textsuperscript{12} Dianabol was taken off the market in the early 1980's (Lamb, 1989), but anecdotally is still available.
convenience, this work will simply use the term anabolic steroids. Anecdotal evidence suggests that athletes and coaches are aware of the differing anabolic and androgenic effects of these drugs and it is claimed that certain brands of steroid are used by different types of athletes at different times of the year, depending on the amount of anabolic or androgenic effect such brands are perceived to have (Francis, 1991; Todd, 1992, in Berryman & Park, 1992). This may be an especially important consideration for the female athlete who would presumably want to control any masculinizing effects of drug use.

The increasing proliferation of anabolic steroid use, to include a wider variety of people than athletes, is indicative of the influence of consumer culture and the body project. It also, perhaps, illustrates the increasing development of a class of user who does not adequately understand the use of such drugs as part of a rigorously planned athletic training regime.

Bodybuilders\(^{13}\) seem to be more aware of the toxic side effects of anabolic steroids (Beel, 1995) and the need to control these effects helps explain the athletes’ cyclical use of the drugs and perhaps the high incidence of associated drug use or polypharmacy. Athletes are reported to be taking a wide variety of drugs including veterinary steroids (Bever & Lowry, 1987; Evans, 1997; Perry, Wright & Littlepage, 1992; Todd, 1992, in Berryman & Park, 1992), growth hormone, human chorionic gonadotrophin and insulin (Evans, 1997); stimulants of various types (Evans, 1997; Perry, Wright & Littlepage, 1992) and thyroid hormones (Evans, 1997; Francis, 1991; Perry, Wright & Littlepage, 1992). Apart from trying to combat steroid side-effects\(^{14}\), drugs may be used in different phases of the bodybuilders’ year in order to aid bulking up with lean muscle tissue, reducing body fat in the pre-contest phase or masking drug use in the event of a drug test.

\(^{13}\) Beel (1995) also reports steroid users among the general public as being more aware of the side-effects.
\(^{14}\) Such as the use of Tamoxifen to control gynecomastia or diuretics to control the water retention sometimes seen as a result of steroid use (Perry, Wright & Littlepage, 1992).
Physical and Psychological Effects of Anabolic Steroid Use.

Although there is much anecdotal evidence supporting the ergogenic properties of anabolic steroids, rigorous scientific studies undertaken using human subjects have yielded results which are confusing and conflicting (Lamb, 1989; Lombardo, 1993). Results of investigations into the ergogenic properties of anabolic steroids are divided almost equally between those studies finding an effect and those which do not (Yesalis, 1993). The difficulty of controlling for a number of factors in such experiments may explain the variability of results. These include the weight training experience of the subject, the intensity of training, dietary controls, dosage of drugs and specificity of training methods (Lamb, 1989; Yesalis, Wright and Lombardo, 1989). However, Lamb (1989) concludes that there is no systematic pattern in these variables which could explain the differences in strength gain.

Furthermore, the literature appears divided on the subject of the mechanisms for any effects anabolic steroids have. One suggestion is that males and females respond differently to anabolic steroids. Changes in sport performance in males may be due to effects on the central nervous system, rather than effects on the muscle tissue (Stone & Lipner, 1980). Females, however, may be able to improve sport performance because of the drug’s action on the muscle fibres through protein anabolism (Stone & Lipner, 1980), therefore increasing the rate at which muscles can grow. Alternatively, anabolic steroids may work by reducing protein catabolism (Nevole & Prentice, 1987: 297), thus slowing the process of muscle tissue breakdown under harsh training.

An alternative suggestion is that anabolic steroids have effects on the brain which enhance or may even be wholly responsible for the ergogenic properties of the drugs (Brooks, 1980, in Yesalis, 1993; Moura, 1984). Some of this effect may even be attributable to the attributions people make about the effects of the drugs.
Scientific studies using human subjects with existing androgen deficiencies show mixed results in terms of mood changes (Bahrke, in Yesalis, 1993). The studies involving otherwise healthy individuals are more emphatic with much evidence of emotional instability (Bahrke, in Yesalis, 1993; Perry, Yates and Anderson, 1990; Pope and Katz, 1994).

The stimulating effects of anabolic steroids on the central nervous system may be responsible for an increase in mental alertness, elevation of mood, improvement of memory and concentration, as well as reductions in feelings of fatigue (Yesalis, 1993). These effects are all useful to athletes interested in improving sport performance. Scientific studies of anabolic steroid-using athletes confirm that some athletes report feelings of euphoria, well-being, positive self-image and confidence (Schwerin & Corcoran, 1992; Sylvester, 1995). Schwerin & Corcoran (1992) also note how these effects may be partly due to how athletes perceive other people will view their drug use.

While the mechanisms for the positive effects of anabolic steroids remain unknown, there are proven negative effects from use. The general side effects of using androgens like testosterone include oedema, jaundice, hepatic carcinoma, acne, peliosis hepatitis, reduced HDL-cholesterol levels, hepatocellular carcinoma (Mottram, 1988; Nevo1e & Prentice, 1987; Street, Antonio & Cudlipp, 1996), as well as stunting of growth and permanent virilizing effects (Lamb, 1989), especially if administered to children (Friedl, in Yesalis, 1993). There is also an association with specific physical injury to muscle tendons (Laseter & Russell, 1991).

There are sex-specific side effects associated with anabolic steroid use. Side effects in women include acne, growth of facial hair, deepening of the voice, menstrual irregularities (Mottram, 1988; Nevo1e & Prentice, 1987) and decrease in breast size (Nevo1e & Prentice, 1987). Long term use of androgens in females may produce mammary carcinoma, male pattern baldness, prominent musculature and
veins and clitoral hypertrophy (Mottram, 1988). Specific side effects for males are gynecomastia\(^{15}\) (Evans, 1997; Frankle & Lefers, 1992; Perry, Wright & Littlepage, 1992; Strauss, Wright, Finerman & Catlin, 1983) and testicular atrophy\(^{16}\) (Alen & Hakkinen, 1985; Frankle & Lefers, 1992; Pope et al., 1994; Silvester, 1995).

Scientific studies also report psychological changes while athletes use steroids. Athletes may experience changes in sleep patterns (Todd, 1992, in Berryman & Park, 1992), changes in aggression (Berryman & Park, 1992; Frankle & Lefers, 1992; Strauss, 1984; Todd, 1992, in Berryman & Park, 1992), irritability and changes in libido (Frankle & Lefers, 1992; Strauss et al., 1983; Todd, 1992, in Berryman & Park, 1992). Steroids may sometimes be the cause of violent affective and psychotic syndromes (Perry et al., 1989; Pope & Katz, 1994; Silvester, 1995). As noted above, however, athletes using steroids may report very positive feelings of well-being (Schwerin & Corcoran, 1992; Silvester, 1995).

In the research studies on steroids, there has been little attempt to factor out environmental factors, interactive effects, stress and the practice of stacking, or polypharmacy where the athlete uses, perhaps, very large doses of several types of steroids, perhaps in conjunction with other non-anabolic agents such as Thyroid hormones, Ephedrine or Tamoxifen (Evans, 1996; Francis, 1991; Taylor & Black, 1987; Todd, 1992, in Berryman & Park, 1992; Yesalis, 1993). It is, therefore, difficult to say whether the psychological changes seen in weight lifters using anabolic steroids would not have occurred anyway as a result of weight training. These studies (e.g., Ward, 1973 in Yesalis, 1993) also seem to ignore the fact that many bodybuilders may be highly aggressive under normal conditions, whether or not they use anabolic steroids. Furthermore, there does not seem to be any control

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\(^{15}\) Gynecomastia is the development of breast tissue in males. Anecdotally, this is a particularly common problem for elite bodybuilders using steroids.

\(^{16}\) Testicular atrophy is shrinking of the testicles and is a particularly common problem for elite bodybuilders using steroids.
or measure for whether these athletes were aggressive before they started weight training.

It should be noted that the negative side effects of drug use is common to all drugs, not just anabolic steroids. In the same way that among the general population using other types of drugs, the effects can be controlled, so it should be possible to control the effects of anabolic steroids. Scientifically, attempts have been made to minimise the harm caused by athletes using drugs, especially bearing in mind that some athletes take very large doses of several types of steroid and that completely eliminating drug use in sport is probably impossible (Perry, Anderson & Yates, 1990).

Miller (1994) demonstrated that on a highly regulated prescription basis, steroids could be used with minimal or no side effects, while still allowing the athletes to achieve their goals. Frankle and Leffers (1992) used an intervention program based on laboratory tests, treatment of detectable problems and counselling to minimise the side effects caused by steroid use. The results suggest that anabolic steroids can be used to enhance performance with careful controlled use, regular medical checks and ongoing treatment17 of any problems which arise.

Street, Antonio & Cudlipp (1996), therefore, suggest that the problems associated with anabolic steroid use have been overstated. The rationale for such a statement is that in the last fifty years, during which time androgens have become more widely available, there has been little evidence to show that their use causes any long term harm to the athlete. "Moderate doses of androgens results in side effects that are largely benign and reversible" (Street et al., 1996: 421). However, this conclusion may be a result of a lack of longitudinal studies on the impact of steroids.

17 Ironically, this may include the use of drugs, for example Tamoxifen to control gynecomastia.
The seemingly widespread use of anabolic steroids seems to contradict the health benefits from bodybuilding which are heavily promoted by the sport’s governing bodies (Klein, 1986). It seems less of a contradiction, perhaps, when it is considered that the use of drugs in the general population is proliferating and that there appears to be the possibility of using anabolic steroids safely. Ultimately, conclusions about anabolic steroid use in bodybuilding might be dependent on whether the athlete is controlling their drug use or vice-versa.

Most professional body builders view themselves as experts on nutrition and kinesiology (Klein, 1986). Even among the ranks of the amateurs and gym rats, somebody in the gym will appear to have expert knowledge in these areas and in the area of drug use; information that is quickly disseminated in the gym (Ballard, 1995). For bodybuilders, such knowledge gives them abilities to manipulate the body which they describe in a mixture of spiritual and purely management terms. “Self-mastery is the goal. Experiencing each repetition and calorie in terms of an overall plan for physical transformation is the means” (Klein, 1986:122). How much of the body building experience is spiritual and how much is rational varies between individuals (Ballard, 1995) and is, perhaps, dependent upon the level at which the athletes are competing and the length of time they have been bodybuilding.

Although this knowledge is mocked as pop-kinesiology by Klein (1986), there seems little doubt that body builders are able to manipulate both bulking up and cutting up more effectively than the general public. It is the self-mastery (Klein, 1986) to sculpt the body in any way the individual chooses which bodybuilders feel differentiates them from non-bodybuilders and the public at large. Certainly, all of these abilities seem to be currently valued by society, as evidenced by the increase in body projects as part of consumer culture, discussed at the beginning of this chapter.
Knowledge of drug use, as well as use itself, is seen by bodybuilders in varying degrees of necessity as part of the process of physical transformation. Drug use can represent a water-shed in a bodybuilder's career and may, therefore, also be a source of status among the athletes. Studies of drug using sub-cultures have noted hierarchies of knowledge regarding use of substances and their associated effects (e.g. Goode, 1970; Stuck, 1990). In this sense, drug use among bodybuilders may be better understood in the context of the development of a career path through the sport. Drug use certainly appears to bring bodybuilders together socially. Klein (1986) notes that the few conversations between bodybuilders in California are invariably about drug use, and drug deals are scarcely concealed.

Furthermore, expert knowledge may allow bodybuilders to control their drug use, and the potential for associated side effects, more effectively. This is because there is a considerable amount of information and misinformation that changes hands between the athletes about drugs (Dr. Neil18, personal communication, 1997; Klein, 1986; NZSDA 19, personal communication, 1997). Professional bodybuilders, in particular, are especially interested in the latest drugs and the positive effects they will have, compared with the likely side effects which may have to be endured (Robert, 1996, personal communication).

Elite competitive bodybuilders appear to be particularly knowledgeable and do not like to experiment on themselves too much. This contrasts with lesser athletes and gym rats who appear far more ready to experiment and try new drugs without knowing the dosage and cycle lengths necessary to maximise the positive effects and minimise the negative effects (Fuller & LaFountain, 1988; Klein, 1986). It appears that the better (and perhaps more experienced) athletes are better able to control both their drug use and the knowledge associated with it, compared with the gym rats.

18 This name is a pseudonym for a registered doctor.
Athletes’ performances at the elite level depend heavily on the quality of available medical support (Francis, 1991; Waddington & Murphy, 1992 in Dunning & Rojek, 1992) and as such they may require the use of drugs simply as a necessity for good health in the face of the harsh and punishing training regimes necessary for modern performance (Laura & White, 1991; Waddington & Murphy, in Dunning & Rojek, 1992). Far from being cheats or needing drugs to compensate for defective or deviant personalities (Van Raalte, Cusimano & Brewer, 1993), elite athletes, including bodybuilders, who have chosen sport as a career, may be making a rational and informed choice to use drugs as part of a more healthy lifestyle.

In this way, elite athletes are also appearing to make internal attributions regarding their health and careers. Internal attributions include taking responsibility for the successes in their career path and/or controlling the effects of potentially dangerous drug use. Anecdotally, this view is supported by some evidence that qualified medical practitioners may want to prescribe performance-enhancing drugs to benefit the health of the athlete, or at least minimise any harm athletes might cause themselves by drug experimentation (Bourdreau & Konzak 1991; Francis, 1991; Laura & White, 1991; Wayne20, personal communication, 1997; Ally21, personal communication, 1996).

The Social-Psychology of Bodybuilding and Weight Training.

Most of the psychological literature on bodybuilders and weight lifters has focussed on the individual’s need to lift weights and build muscles beyond what is

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19 The New Zealand Sports Drug Agency.
20 One of the respondents in this study.
21 This is a pseudonym for a New Zealand representative track runner whose doctor approached “her” regarding a prescribed steroid programme for running.
considered to be normal. The psychological literature tends to view bodybuilders and weight lifters, especially males, in a negative way.

There have been very few studies that have examined the personality and psychological factors of weight lifters and the changes in these variables over time as a result of weight training. Some studies have concluded that for men weight lifting is an attempt to compensate for feelings of inadequacy, (Bahrke, in Yesalis, 1993). Henry (1941) found that male weight lifters tended to be more introverted, hypersensitive and hypochondriac and felt inferior to other males. Thune (1949) found that the desire to be more masculine was the primary rationale for undertaking a weight training program. Harlow (1951) found that weight lifters felt significantly less masculine and had feelings of inadequacy, rejection, dependency and homosexual tendencies. Wang, Yesalis, Fitzhugh, Buckley & Smiciklas-Wright (1994) argued that adolescent males undertaking weight training perceive themselves as having less than average strength.

Similar results are found in the sociological literature. Tauri (1995) suggests men bodybuild to feel more masculine, while Klein, (1992; 1993) and Fussell (1991) suggest that men bodybuild to feel hypermasculine and invulnerable. Invulnerability is achieved by increasing physical size to such an extent that it becomes a defence against their own psychological weaknesses (Fussell, 1991; Klein, 1993). Other studies suggest male bodybuilders are deliberately accentuating male brutality in an attempt to fulfil a certain notion of masculinity and/or virility (Johnston, 1995; 1996), but “are really just big girls” (Martin, 1997 in Sunday Star Times, 30 March, 1997). De-Man and Blais (1982) found that males competing in highly individual sports (such as bodybuilding) feel more alienated than athletes competing in team sports. Furthermore, the sport of bodybuilding has been found to have the highest incidence of people with a distorted body image (Obel, 1996).
Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, different results are obtained in the psychology and sociology literature, when comparing male and female bodybuilders and weightlifters. Bahrke (in Yesalis, 1993) suggests that there are better psychological health benefits for female weightlifters than male weightlifters. Females competing in individual sports (including bodybuilding and weightlifting) tend to have higher self-esteem than females in team sports (de-Man and Blais, 1982). Furthermore, it is sometimes argued that female bodybuilders are helping to improve the status of women not just in their chosen sport, but in wider society, by building muscular bodies which break down traditional stereotypes of what is considered male and female, (Johnston, 1996; Martin & Gavey, 1996; Obel, 1996).

Such differences in the conclusions of these studies in regard to male and female bodybuilders, seem to indicate the intrusion of political correctness into the interpretations of research results. Research seems to view female bodybuilders as undertaking an activity which is viewed as empowering. Although males too are empowering themselves via bodybuilding, the emphasis on why seems to be different in the cases of males and females. It is assumed that males feel the need to empower themselves because of personal weakness, females because of the influence of male dominance, rather than their own frailty. Whatever the reason, there seems to be some contradictions when discussing the sport of bodybuilding and its associated practices.

More generally, Marxist analysis of sport and the body focuses on alienation and how sport recreates or mirrors capitalist society. Such studies focus on how the body becomes viewed materialistically (Perrin, 1994), or as a machine to be controlled (Duquin, 1994), perhaps for the purpose of a body project. Klein (1992) suggests that bodybuilders are the most ruthless athletes at objectifying their bodies, by their use of mirrors and language in the gym. Studies such as Klein’s conclude that this propensity for objectification of the body and the associated development of the bodybuilding sub-culture, has negative impacts on the people.
who participate in it, because such objectification results in alienation from their own bodies.

**Conclusion.**

Bodybuilders and their sport seem to have been maligned by the psychology and sociology literature and by the, arguably, limited perspectives used to examine them. The few studies of these athletes may, therefore, represent a very partial explanation of why bodybuilders and weight lifters become involved in these sports. Furthermore, the brutal, alienated, insecure homosexual male may represent only a small fraction of the bodybuilding community. In fact, other personality types represented in Southern Californian gyms include highly “aggressive, self-assured and/or competent individuals who see bodybuilding as an ideal vehicle for their need to achieve” (Klein, 1993: 118).

Using largely the ideas of the leisure career and locus of control, the analysis chapters will examine how bodybuilders may immerse themselves in different ways and to differing extents in the practices of the bodybuilding subculture. The possible reasons for the differing levels of involvement or commitment in the subculture will then be examined within a framework of control; how much the athletes feel they need to control, or are actually in control of their environment, both inside and outside of the gym.
Chapter 2.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY.

Introduction.

The literature review presented in the preceding chapter shows that the bodybuilding sub-culture and the use of anabolic steroids are complicated issues that have not been fully explored. Furthermore, very little ethnographic research on steroid using sub-cultures, including bodybuilders, has been conducted in New Zealand, although some impressionistic reports are available (e.g., Gregg, 1996).

The current research focuses on elite level bodybuilders in New Zealand and does not assume, a priori, that bodybuilders are brutish, weak, insecure, or exploited. This research is particularly interested in how the athletes themselves view their own bodies and health, especially in relation to anabolic steroid use and pre-contest dieting and how this relates to their commitment to a career of bodybuilding. This is considered within the contexts of the heavy promotion of health and individualism by the NZFBB and NABBA and the harsh realities of cyclical drug-taking, dieting and cultivated political affiliations (including involvement in the gym hierarchy) which appear to be at least partly necessary for competitive success in the sport.

Before proceeding with the research questions, I will detail my choice of research design.
Qualitative vs Quantitative Research Design.

Although the aims of social research vary significantly depending on the research project, Sarantakos (1993) suggests the following general aims:

“To explore social reality for its own sake or in order to make further research possible; to explain social life....to evaluate the status of social issues and their effects on society; to make predictions; to understand human behaviour and action; to offer a basis for a critique of social reality; to emancipate people; to suggest possible solutions to social problems; to empower and liberate people; to develop and/or test theories.”

(Sarantakos, 1993: 16).

Researchers can achieve any or all of these goals (depending on the research) using a variety of methods which fall very broadly into two categories, quantitative and qualitative research designs. Researchers must commonly choose a combination of methodologies to achieve their aims.

Quantitative research refers to research based on the principles of positivism and neopositivism (Sarantakos, 1993). It employs the use of quantitative measurement of data and the use of statistical analysis. Arguably the most important part of this research, and a precursor to success using this method, is in the research design developed before the research begins (Sarantakos, 1993). Due to the limited work undertaken on bodybuilders and the confusion surrounding the use of drugs in sport, I felt that there was very little basis on which to design a research questionnaire. Furthermore, past research (e.g., Ballard, 1995) which attempted to duplicate overseas work by Schwerin & Corcoran (1992), failed to produce any useable results in New Zealand.
Positivism is a position which “sees the establishment of quantitative laws as the essence of sociology, and to this end sees all reality as that which is measured by scientific measuring devices” (Rossides, 1978:529). Quantitative research, therefore, is designed using the principles of positivism, to minimise the biases of the researcher (Sarantakos, 1993; Singleton, Straits & Straits, 1993). Results from this type of research allow conclusions to be drawn about an entire population based on the results from a representative sample (Sarantakos, 1993; Singleton, Straits & Straits, 1993).

Experience with bodybuilding and power lifting communities in New Zealand and England, work with the New Zealand Sports Drug Agency and my own experiences regarding the decision to use anabolic steroids, have given me insights into how differently people can view the issues of drug use in sport when they consider the issue beyond the publicly acceptable drugs are bad! This lead me to consider the problems of gaining a representative sample of bodybuilders. Researching the drug issue quantitatively, could, therefore, defeat some of the objectives of researching social issues mentioned above; namely explaining social life and understanding human behaviour and action.

Furthermore, I felt that using a quantitative method would risk reproducing the academic work which re-enforces the idea that drug use is bad and that athletes who use drugs are fundamentally flawed in some way. Such research seemed in some ways to directly contradict my casual observations and experiences over the last thirteen years. Although one can always meet the flawed athlete, they by no means represent all athletes.

Qualitative research refers to a number of research methodologies, based on diverse theoretical principles (Sarantakos, 1993). This research method uses non-quantitative data collection techniques producing descriptive data (Bogdam & Taylor, 1975) designed to describe reality as experienced by the respondents
(Blumer, 1969; Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Sarantakos, 1993), in this case, bodybuilders. This type of research focuses on the research setting (the gymnasium) and the individual(s) within such settings (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). It also lends itself be used for *exploratory* studies, when there is not enough existing information about a research subject (Sarantakos, 1993) to adequately design a rigorous quantitative study.

Unlike other organisms, or more inanimate objects and substances, there is a large difference between the way humans act in public and the way they feel (and therefore act) in private (Blumer, 1969). Arguably, this difference becomes more important when dealing with specific sub-cultural groups, who may wish to differentiate themselves from mainstream society. In such circumstances, the role of the researcher is to penetrate the outer and inner lives of people within the sub cultural group, "...to ascertain opinions, attitudes and values that [are] on the surface as well as the...ideological trends that [are] more or less inhibited and reach the surface only in indirect manifestations" (Young & Schmid, 1966:216).

In order to achieve the aim of penetrating the outer lives of the subjects, qualitative researchers must reject the idea of positivism, since this requires the researcher to distance themselves from the people being studied (Sarantakos, 1993). Furthermore, treating humans quantitatively as statistical aggregates means that a researcher loses sight of the subjective nature of human behaviour (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975) and therefore the meanings associated with their behaviour. Closeness, and the intimate involvement of the researcher and the research subjects, is thus one of the fundamental principles of qualitative research (Becker, 1969, in McCall & Simmons, 1969), since social reality cannot exist objectively (Sarantakos, 1993). The researcher, therefore, has to experience and interpret the worlds and lives of those being researched (Becker, 1989; Blumer, 1969; Sarantakos, 1993) in order to understand them.
Ethnography.

Ethnography is a specific form of qualitative research. Hammersley & Atkinson (1995:1) describe it as involving "...the ethnographer participating overtly, or covertly, in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions...collecting whatever data is available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research". However they go on to explain that the distinction between ethnography and other forms of qualitative research is not clear.

My research practice had ethnographic characteristics. I undertook specific interviews with the subjects and asked questions about the respondents' personal lives and background. I sometimes trained with the athletes and had casual conversations with them from time to time, both in and outside the gym. I attended four bodybuilding contests; two NZFBB South Island Championships, a NABBA South Island Championship and a NABBA Christchurch Classic contest. On two occasions I was allowed backstage as an observer and became a helper\(^1\) for one or two of the athletes who were known to me. This allowed me to observe them and the other athletes interact with each other in competitions without overtly interviewing them. I could not, however, participate in respondents’ lives fully for an extended period of time, so in this respect my research practice was only partly ethnographic.

The Research Questions.

The majority of the literature on bodybuilding and anabolic steroids is related specifically to the United States or Europe, and more recently Australia.

\(^1\) Helping the athlete touch up their tan, put on heat rubs and *pump up* pre-contest.
Furthermore, the existing research already undertaken with bodybuilders as subjects appears to have focussed largely on semi-competitive athletes or the general fitness club user. Presumably this is because of the difficulty in accessing the elite competitor. This raises questions about the applicability of overseas findings to New Zealand and to the elite level athlete. As noted in the literature review, elite level bodybuilders represent a distinctly different group within the gym and may have very different attitudes towards drug use as well as having access to different or more detailed information about their efficacy and side effects.

How elite bodybuilders' make sense of the apparent contradictions associated with dieting, drug use and health was the primary focus for the initial interviews of this study. Responses from these interviews led me to consider wider processes. The gym hierarchy and the athletes' position in it may provide insights and be relevant factors in terms of how information regarding diet and drug practises is communicated and the subsequent attitudes of the athletes about anabolic steroids and their use. Using the frameworks of the leisure career and locus of control, I hope to explain why information flows through the hierarchy and its subsequent effects on attitudes towards health. A copy of the initial set of questions and prompts used in the first set of interviews is included in Appendix 1.

Qualitative Interviews.

Interviewing took the form of semi-structured interviews which were of approximately one hour's duration. Some interviews stretched to two and a half hours and included material not on the tapes. This extended time reflected some of the bodybuilders' willingness to take part in the study and offer sometimes quite sensitive information about the rigours of their sport, including illegal drug use. It also showed how nervous they were about talking with the tape switched on.
The interviews were recorded using a small tape recorder and microphone which the athlete was able to control. It was hoped that this would make the athlete feel more comfortable talking about potentially sensitive topics, since they could control when the tape recorder was switched on and off. In reality the tape was only switched off for a total of a minute or so over the course of all the interviews. As noted above, however, the athletes sometimes became much more talkative once the tape was switched off after the interview had officially concluded.

The Sample and Methodology.

The potentially illicit nature of some of the subject matter, coupled with the small number of elite bodybuilders in New Zealand, means that a random sampling frame is impossible to obtain. A snowball sample was, therefore, used in this study. Initially a courtesy letter explaining the nature of the research was sent to the President of the NZFBB, to inform him of my actions and potentially gain support and perhaps obtain contacts with elite level bodybuilders. The President, however, seemed to want to distance himself from the study and unequivocally divorced himself from giving support. I therefore sent a follow up letter confirming that I would be continuing with the research and included a copy of the research proposal to provide further information and hopefully alleviate any fears the NZFBB had. This was done in the hope that the NZFBB would not take steps to actively impair the research in any way.

The original sampling frame was designed to include a mixed gender group of ten elite bodybuilders. For the purpose of this research, ‘elite’ was defined as any bodybuilder who had placed in the top three of their weight/height category at a competition corresponding with the New Zealand National Championships or higher.
It was initially thought that the population size, along with the financial constraints imposed on the study, would make it impossible to get ten interviews using this strict definition. 'Elite bodybuilder' was therefore re-defined as any individual who had won their division in a contest corresponding with South Island Championships or better. This definition included the figure class in female bodybuilding. In New Zealand, lowering the standard of elite competitor in this way creates a problem in that individual athletes may enter and win competitions at South Island level (especially in the novice section) and yet not appear to be bodybuilders as the general public might imagine. In this way, distinctions between levels in the New Zealand bodybuilding hierarchy appear to be blurred.

More positively, although the necessity to reduce the standard was an initial disappointment, it was hoped that the inclusion of a wider range of athletes would help to reduce the potential for the bias that might occur as a result of obtaining information only from those who knew each other personally. In reality, however, this process probably made little difference in reducing such bias because the elite level bodybuilding community in New Zealand is so small that all respondents are likely to know each other, no matter what precautions are taken.

Such was the enthusiasm of the research respondents, however, that I managed to obtain a group of eight exceptional bodybuilders, who had all competed and won national titles. None of the athletes were novices at National or Australasian level. Most had competed overseas and some athletes distinguished themselves by winning such events.

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2 Evidence of this appeared at a competition in Christchurch where members of the rival governing body were guests of the competition organisers to present prizes to winners.

3 Unfortunately I am unable to give further details of exactly how well these bodybuilders have done domestically or internationally for fear of them being recognised. The security of the respondents is something I take very seriously and is discussed in a later section on security.
Existing contacts with elite level bodybuilders made possible two interviews with current competitors. These athletes passed on the names and phone numbers of other athletes they thought would be useful to the study and who they thought would be willing to take part. Contact details needed to be obtained from only three bodybuilders, such was the willingness of the athletes to take part. Only two athletes approached by the researcher did not wish to participate in the research. One did not actually consider himself a bodybuilder, yet entered competitions and had placed in the top three at several National competitions. The other had a personal relationship with a friend of mine and, I suspect, did not want to run the risk of me passing on personal information about him during any social contact.

Eight semi-structured in depth interviews were undertaken using these respondents. Before each interview, the athletes were informed of their rights (the issue of rights and informed consent is discussed in the section on security). Interviews were taped, as mentioned earlier. Once the interviews were closed, respondents were given a consent form to sign which showed that they had been informed of their rights. The consent form was in accordance with the wishes of the Lincoln University Human Subjects’ Ethics Committee and simply contained the information which had been recounted to the respondents at the beginning of the interviews. (A copy of the consent form can be seen in Appendix 2).

Respondents were also told that they may be required for further interviews or a focus group discussion if the preliminary analysis of the data indicated that this was warranted. Focus group discussions would have been used if the preliminary analysis yielded limited or particularly contentious information. In actuality, the interviews were very successful and did not contain anything the researcher thought to be particularly contentious. This was probably at least partly the result of the interviews going quite well in terms of my being able to develop a rapport with the subjects. Three re-interviews were undertaken based on a preliminary analysis of all the data obtained. These re-interviews were designed to provide further evidence
of the relevance of the concepts of serious leisure and locus of control to bodybuilder’s behaviour. The questions asked can be seen in Appendix 3, although the exact form and order of the questions was largely led by the respondents.

All interviews were immediately transcribed and a brief preliminary analysis performed with the help of N.U.D.I.S.T. software. Transcripts were sent to the athletes as soon as they became available and none required alteration (the reasons for the transcripts are discussed in the section on security). The final analysis was performed with the help of N.U.D.I.S.T. software. After the thesis had been handed in, a two page executive summary of the basic findings was prepared and sent to all of the respondents as a courtesy gesture, a way of thanking them for their participation.

**Ethical Considerations and Security.**

The final part of this chapter addresses the ethical considerations regarding this project and the potential for it to cause harm to the groups of people involved with it. These issues are particularly important given that in part, the study focuses on what is considered to be an illegal activity: the use of illegal ergogenic aids. The risk of harm is compounded by the fact that the elite bodybuilding community in New Zealand is very small, currently with only one professional bodybuilder representing the country. Identifying individual respondents from this research might, therefore, be a simple task to someone with basic knowledge of the bodybuilding community and a willingness to find them.

Ethical issues can be grouped in different ways. One example may be grouping ethical considerations according to the different phases of the research process (Dane, 1990). Hammersley & Atkinson (1989), however, suggest that the issues surrounding the ethics of research can be considered under five basic
Informed Consent,

The basic principle of informed consent is that research subjects should have a genuinely free choice to participate in the research or not (Dane, 1990); in the light of comprehensive information about the nature and purpose of the research (Homan, 1991, 1992). The definition of what is informed, what is consent and what is comprehensive is difficult, however, and appears to vary between organisations, circumstances and countries (Homan, 1991, 1992).

Homan (1991:71) suggests that consent and being informed embrace two elements common to most definitions. On being informed, the researcher must ensure:-

- That all pertinent aspects of what is to occur and what might occur are disclosed to the subject.

- That the subject should be able to comprehend this information.

In gaining consent, the researcher must ensure: -

- that the subject is able to make a rational and mature judgement
- that the agreement to participate should be voluntary, free from coercion and undue influence.

In this study, however, there were potential problems associated with gaining informed consent during research. In trying to fully inform respondents, I was not initially in a position to relate everything there was to know about the
nature of the research. This was because at the beginning of the study, I was not aware of exactly what form the study was to take. This point is also noted by Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) in relation to exploratory research. Such open endedness of the study is a characteristic attraction of taking a Grounded Theory approach.

Alternatively, a researcher in any research may not foresee some of the potential problems (Homan, 1991). In this research, the only unforeseen difficulty was that some of the respondents were unable to participate in interviews during June, 1997 because they were competing elsewhere.

As part of the effort to fully inform respondents, the Lincoln University Human Subject's Ethics Committee required a consent form to be signed which outlined the subjects' rights. A written consent form was, therefore, prepared (see Appendix 2). Although the subjects were verbally informed of all their rights before the interviews commenced, they were not, however, shown the form, or informed of the need to sign it until after the interviews were completed. This was because I feared the participants were placing themselves in danger by signing such a form, as it provided written evidence of who was involved in the study.

The foreseeable danger to the respondents was that the consent form effectively provided a list of those who took part in the study, thus potentially nullifying the effects of disguise used in the study and, therefore, breaching the promises of confidentiality. Respondents were therefore recommended to use a pseudonym for the consent form. Given the risks of offending respondents while attempting to fully inform them (Homan, 1991), I considered that explaining such an opinion to respondents would represent too much information for the respondents to comprehend fully and would detrimentally effect the interviewer/interviewee relationship and the subsequent type and quality of data gained (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1996).
The subject of the consent form was, therefore, broached after completion of the interviews. Some of the bodybuilders did not sign their names at all while others used pseudonyms. The more experienced athletes did, however, use their real names on the form. One of them pointed out that they could be identified as having taken part in the study, but exact quotations could still not be attributed to any one athlete. In this sense, the athlete felt safe enough to use their real name. This point is also noted by Dane (1990).

**Privacy.**

Under normal circumstances, an attempt is made to protect the identities of specific participants. The problem for researchers is in deciding what are public and private places and information, and how these distinctions effect the subject’s right to privacy and the public’s right to know (Homan, 1991). Definitions of private and public seem to vary depending upon who is involved, where the information was gained and who the intended audience of the research findings are (Hamersley & Atkinson, 1996). For the purposes of this study, therefore, the issue of privacy is examined in the next section under Confidentiality and Anonymity.

**Confidentiality and Anonymity.**

Researchers may attempt to protect the subject's privacy by guaranteeing confidentiality or anonymity. Anonymity involves the researcher not being able to identify the responses of the research subjects (Dane, 1990, Singleton, Straits & Straits, 1993) and is usually only possible in surveys using self-administered questionnaires (Homan, 1991; Singleton, Straits & Straits, 1993).

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4 For example, whether the study involves children seems to change the definition of public and private (Hamersley & Atkinson, 1996).
Most often, and especially in ethnographic studies, the researcher can identify the participants (Dane, 1990). In such cases, “the principal means of protecting research participants’ privacy is to ensure confidentiality” (Singleton, Straits & Straits, 1993: 485). The confidentiality of respondents in this study was protected in a number of ways. The names of people, places and other identifying information was removed from the data as soon as possible (Singleton, Straits & Straits, 1993). This includes the interview transcripts as well as the thesis itself. Pseudonyms are used (Homan, 1991; Singleton, Straits & Straits, 1993) in the thesis and were used when transcribing. Furthermore, respondents were informed that I would not divulge identifying information without their written permission (Singleton, Straits & Straits, 1993). In the analysis chapters of this work, the reader will be notified where a pseudonym or disguise has been used by the use of italics, speech marks and foot-notes.

All transcripts, consent forms and interview tapes were kept in a locked cabinet at Lincoln University. The records of who the respondents were and the pseudonyms they had assigned to them were kept at my house. At the end of the study, all tapes and the transcripts of interviews I had in my possession were destroyed. The signed consent forms were handed to my supervisors.

There are some problems associated with using such methods to protect respondents. The accountability of the researcher is affected by keeping the identities of the respondents unidentifiable. Results become less accessible to the scientific community and are not able to be checked and scrutinised (Homan, 1991). It may also prevent other researchers undertaking longitudinal studies on the subjects, undertaking other studies using the same subjects or “making linkages across files” (Oyen, 1976 in Homan, 1991: 148). In defence of this study, however, I would argue that the elite New Zealand bodybuilding community is so small, that it is highly likely any researcher undertaking work on elite level athletes in New Zealand will associate with the same athletes.
Consequences for Future Research.

Researchers gather information largely for their own “professional self-interest” (Homan, 1991: 110). Such self-interest may lead to a responsibility of researchers not to damage the research environment for future studies (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1996). This may be especially important in cases such as this, where there are very few research subjects. Consideration to the research environment was guided by the Lincoln University Human Subjects’ Ethics Committee. It should be noted, however, that there may be an “...irreconcilable conflict between the interests of science and the interests of those studied” (Becker, 1964 in Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995: 275). In this way, it can be suggested that a hostile response from interested groups might be the hallmark of any good study (Becker, 1964 in Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), since it cannot be assumed that the researcher and the researched will always view the study in the same way.

Considering these ethical issues, permission was sought from the Lincoln University Human Subjects Ethics Committee to undertake this research, and was approved.

This chapter has outlined the research objectives and methods used in this thesis. It has also outlined the ethical considerations pertinent to this study. The next two chapters represent the analysis and they focus on the results of the interviews. Chapter Three examines the bodybuilding sub-culture.
Chapter 3.

Analysis of The Bodybuilding Sub-Culture.

Introduction.

This chapter focuses on the bodybuilding subculture, specifically, sub-cultural issues related to the gym hierarchy and the athletes’ position in it. The issues relevant to this work are, firstly, the bodybuilding lifestyle and the athletes’ commitment to the lifestyle, including paying dues to the sport and fraternising with non-bodybuilders or bodybuilders of lesser status. Second, using the concepts of the leisure career and locus of control, this chapter will show how the gym hierarchy and the bodybuilding lifestyle influences elite athletes’ attitudes towards their health, including the use of drugs and dieting techniques.

The Gym Hierarchy.

The governing bodies of bodybuilding actively promote the idea that anyone can build or improve their mental and physical health through weight lifting. The elite bodybuilders in this study, however, view bodybuilding and weight training as different matters and are, therefore, cautious about contact with non-bodybuilders and the information/knowledge they give to them.

According to the athletes interviewed in this study, the reason for their reticence appears to be quite practical, in that they think that large numbers of people want to look like bodybuilders, but most do not have the required qualities to
achieve it. For example, the average person is seen to not have enough commitment and dedication to the sport (this is discussed in a later section of this chapter). Joseph\(^1\), describing his early experiences in bodybuilding, hints at the problems faced by gym rats trying to get access to elite level bodybuilders:

\[I \text{ mean three years ago I would never of even talked to him} \]
\[\text{because I mean he'd just look at me and just think oh yeah} \]
\[\text{just another wee bodybuilder, you know? There's} \]
\[\text{thousands of guys out there who want to do bodybuilding,} \]
\[\text{but none of them got the dedication.}\]

New athletes are required to prove themselves before they are accorded status and allowed the associated access to knowledge further up the gym hierarchy. As with rising up any hierarchy, this process may take some time and may not be smooth, as Joseph, again, illustrates:

\[\text{Once you've proven yourself....then they're oh this guy's} \]
\[\text{quite serious, I don't mind helping him. I don't mind} \]
\[\text{putting a bit in....These guys are always willing to give} \]
\[\text{advice...but they get asked for advice all the time, so} \]
\[\text{they're going to go oh ok do this, do that. But once} \]
\[\text{you've actually proven yourself, then they'll go oh this} \]
\[\text{guy's doing alright you know.... once you've proved} \]
\[\text{yourself they don't mind really helping you.}\]

Now that Joseph has more experience and, perhaps more importantly, is recognised as having such experience, he finds himself treating new people in the gym with the same scepticism:

\[\text{---------------------------}\]
\[\text{1 In keeping with the commitment to confidentiality mentioned in the previous chapter, all names have been} \]
\[\text{changed.}\]
So ummm...yeah I’m the same. Someone who’s proven themselves. Someone comes into me, joins the gym. Two days later comes up to me says I want to be a bodybuilder. I go ok yeah....this is what you want to do.......Six months down the track, either I won’t see them again or they’ll be in the gym training, but I’ll look at their training and go, yeah right! Or they’ll be making that bigger improvements I’ll sit up and take notice.

Even to the untrained eye, simple observation confirms the differences between people in the gym. People have different physiques, perhaps due to playing different sports, or perhaps because they are bodybuilders of different standards or weight categories. People may dress differently. Some prefer to wear clothing associated with the sports they play outside the gym. Some like to wear clothes that show themselves off, while others prefer to dress more discreetly. People also use the equipment in different ways, depending partly on what they are trying to achieve, partly on their experience and confidence with the equipment.

More detailed observation of bodybuilders confirms different attitudes towards the gym equipment and towards their own bodies. Among gym users, such a difference in attitude, as well as the differences in physiques creates a status hierarchy (Klein, 1986). Wayne illustrates some of the differences between novice and mature bodybuilders:

You find that a lot of your.....your muscle-heads if you like in the novice ranks who all of a sudden build some muscle....you know and they’re wearing about ten T-shirts and jerseys to look big...you know and this sort of thing and um... but you find that..... they’re basically immature bodybuilders.....in just the way they present themselves ok, and their manner. I mean this sort of thing around the gym (Wayne demonstrates a “typical” bodybuilder walk) right...strutting around and....yeah I mean....idiots...fucking wankers as far as I’m concerned.
But only, it's basically in the novice ranks, I mean...because it takes time to get to national level and start winning national titles if you're good enough to do that you tend to mature and you get used to the muscle that's on you and it's no big deal, you know? And you just become a normal person except that you train for bodybuilding and you compete and that's that.

Jane highlighted the difference in attitude and competitive standard between the true bodybuilder and the novice when describing a competition we had both attended:

...ok in novice level you've gotta expect they're going to be not hitting the mark, but they were way off, some of those people were like four, five weeks more dieting to do.....like they're balance isn't there yet, they're lacking in some parts - but that's novice grades... um..for me I wouldn't get on stage looking like that because that's not the level I want to be at.....

Such a difference in standard may be the result of lack of time in the sport². Alternatively, novice bodybuilders may have developed quite large musculature, and thus appear to be good bodybuilders to other non-bodybuilders, but remain inexperienced with regard to some of the more refined diet techniques used by the more experienced athletes. Wayne explains with reference to post-contest bingeing:

.....but I've seen guys eat until they throw up after a contest.....I mean again... novices right...and some open guys who are a bit clueless... pre-contest they go into the supermarket and they buy up all this junk... and they have supermarket bags full of junk they're going to eat after the contest.

² A later section in this chapter discusses the concept of time and “paying dues".
The same applies to novice athletes who use and experiment with anabolic steroids\(^3\). For now, Wayne comments:

\[\text{the novices.....you know more is better, but it just doesn't work that way.}\]

Such distinctions between the novice and the mature bodybuilder appear to have been conveniently ignored by the public and social scientists alike. Although the sub-culture of bodybuilding binds the athletes together and separates them from the public at large, experience is still vitally important to the athletes within the gym hierarchy as a basis of according status within the bodybuilding community.

Experience also seems to play an important role in how individual bodybuilders lead the lifestyle, or how central they feel bodybuilding is in their lives. The next section describes the bodybuilding lifestyle.

**The Bodybuilding Lifestyle.**

Regardless of the public’s value judgements of the sport, bodybuilding as an activity is hard to define. Certainly among those who have been converted to irondom\(^4\), bodybuilding represents more than art, sport or the circus. It is not just a system for bodily improvement and is more than simply lifting weights. It is marketed in bodybuilding magazines and generally accepted among the bodybuilding community as a lifestyle which all people, regardless of genetically given body type, should undertake.

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\(^3\) A more complete discussion of bodybuilders and drug use is in a later section.

\(^4\) Irondom is a slang term for bodybuilding. In a technical sense it refers more to people who lift weights rather than elite competitive bodybuilders.
Involvement in and commitment to the lifestyle varies between individuals (see Chapter 4). The basis of the bodybuilding lifestyle, however, lies in the perceived health benefits of lifting weights, eating well and leading a healthy lifestyle both in and out of the gym. All of the bodybuilders in this study unequivocally view their sport as healthy for everyone. As Jane notes:

*I see myself as being incredibly fit and strong and healthy.*

Ian elaborated on why he considered bodybuilders to be healthy:

*...I think bodybuilding right up to about eight weeks out to a show ummmmm... is very very healthy..... because..... ummmmm......... it’s a lifestyle. Because what it does is it makes you, whether it’s sub consciously or what, you tend to eat really really well cos you’re conscious of the levels of protein, the levels of carbohydrates, the levels of fat. I’ve learnt an awful lot about my body and I’ve learnt an awful lot about supplements and things that I would never have known if I hadn’t been doing bodybuilding.*

Wayne went as far as suggesting that the lifestyle of bodybuilding should be a blueprint for public health.

*...I think our lifestyle is what a lifestyle should be...as far as......as far as exercise and correct eating habits. That’s what it should be. That’s why obesity is is epidemic proportions. You know we started the kids last year um...yeah started last year at gymnastics. There were kids of five and six, they’ve got cellulite around*
their arses... it's chronic. At five and six - and why? Because of bloody MacDonalds.
and K fried and the fast foods.....

The health benefits from the bodybuilding lifestyle are generally viewed by bodybuilders as being more than physical well-being. Although not phrased in exactly this way, many of the respondents felt that bodybuilding benefited them in terms of mind, body and spirit. Perhaps the best illustration of this was given by Jane:

....bodybuilding is not just a sport for me that I'm good at it, it's actually part of my genetic...(pause)...structure. It's.... I believe the reason I got into it was because it was meant to be.... this is my line of work, it's what I'm good at. It's a passion. It's there. It's like everything complete ok...And (I) just got into my own power. Became strong mentally and physically.

Jane’s comments about “getting into my own power” is reminiscent of the sub-cultural value of ‘rugged individualism’ that Klein (1986) observed. ‘Individualism’ and ‘own power’ also suggest that bodybuilders are making internal attributions about their success and failures in the sport and, perhaps, their lives. Although locus of control is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, the next section outlines how the bodybuilding concept of paying dues may be a sub-cultural mechanism for either teaching or re-inforcing internal attributions or individualism.

**Commitment and Paying Your Dues.**

To fully appreciate the mental, spiritual and physical benefits from bodybuilding, athletes must pay dues to the sport. Paying dues is like a job
apprenticeship and involves training hard in the gym and learning about bodybuilding techniques and, perhaps more importantly, values. Jane notes:

*I think it's a very simple sport. It's something you go at very low key just put your time into it. You pay you're dues and the results come if you're sensible about it. There's no secrets to this sport. It's just dedication.*

An athlete who is perceived to have paid their dues is accorded more respect than other athletes, as Jason noted reflecting on an occasion when he was beaten in a competition:

*The guy who beat me at a particular show when I don't think he should have..... he..... he worked hard, he'd done his dues you know? He was deserved of his trip one hundred percent.*

Unlike a job apprenticeship, however, a bodybuilder may be successful at the sport, by winning national and international titles, but may still be required to pay dues. Paying dues is, therefore, a complicated sub-cultural construct. The construct seems to be linked with both physical and psychological aspects of the sport. Physically, paying dues means putting in the time and effort to build better bodies. Psychologically, it means the athlete possesses certain personality traits; namely patience to build their body, commitment and/or dedication to the sport and, perhaps, their own body projects. It may also be judged in more nebulous terms such as being generally a *good* person and being deserved of the body they have created.
Physically Paying Dues.

Bodybuilding dogma and medical fact suggests that bodies need time to respond to a training stimulus. Good bodybuilders regiment their weight training programmes (and diet and drug protocols) to maximise rest periods and workout periods for each body part. Jane points out:

> You have to develop the muscle and that takes... you can’t do that over night. It takes years to achieve... The gains are very slow and to keep them they’ve gotta be slow gains because, you know anything that comes on too quick can leave you just as quick.... I said you just go and tell them come and live my life for the last five years and they’ll get good results too.

On a practical level, taking time and paying dues to develop their bodies was viewed by the athletes in this study as a safe way of bodybuilding. Zoe noted that people who sought to make quick improvements risked negative effects to their health from ill-considered drug use and harsh dieting:

> And..... they rather than looking at a long term solution..... to improving their structure, they look for the short term and ummm, their accelerated improvement.... accelerates the chances of things going wrong.

In some way or another, all the athletes in this study said similar things regarding payment of dues to the sport. Although Zoe was talking specifically about drug use and diet, her thinking could also be applied, for example, to issues of overtraining. That experienced athletes, who had paid dues, trained smarter, not harder was a common claim, as Jane and Ian noted:
(Jane): Before I got smart....I used to train up to seven
days a week sort of like an hour, hour and a half. Now I
train only for four days a week for about forty to forty-
five minutes and that’s all I need to do.....cos I’m smart
now.

(Ian). I’ve learnt that hard, I’m thirty-four but I tell you
there’s not a lot of younguns....out there that can keep
up with me still. And I refuse to let...get old and I’m just
getting smarter that’s all it is.

Psychologically paying Dues.

It seems fairly obvious that an athlete who is required to take an extended
period of time to achieve results will be a patient athlete! The athletes in this study,
however, also linked the sub-cultural values of patience, paying dues and gaining
success, with the idea of commitment. Commitment can be applied in a physical
sense to the training regime and diet programme used by the athlete. Wayne said:

I mean it’s like any sport....You know umm....if you’ve
got good genetics then that means a high level of the fast
twitch fibre, which is basically your muscle building
fibre.... ummm.... and really just your commitment to
your training and your diet.

In another sense, commitment also seems to relate to being committed to the
bodybuilding sub-culture and lifestyle. Jane pointed out:

I mean when you live this sport, if you want to be really
good like any top athlete in any sport, you probably...we
see a lot of swimmers don’t we... they get up at bloody
four o'clock in the morning. How many people can even relate to that? Now that's their commitment, that's just one thing that they do that's different. And that is how they get to be the best. They don't go out at night, they don't go partying. They do all the things to make them good at their sport. And that's what I did, you know I have a goal to achieve, I've got a desire and then, probably that's what all winners and successful athletes are about. They want something, they do what you have to do to get it, and that's just my choice.

Once again, Jane's insistence regarding her choice seems to illustrate the internal attributions she makes regarding her considerable success in the sport. Such internal attributions, however, also seem to reveal themselves in a wider context in terms of personal integrity. Bodybuilders seem to equate the ideas of personal integrity with being able to be patient and pay dues. It is also seen by bodybuilders as being worthy of esteem and status in the gym hierarchy. Although there were no clear indications from these respondents of what constituted a good person, the bodybuilding sub-culture seems to reward people who are seen to be good people. Being a good person might be important for competitive success, perhaps because of the subjective nature of judging. Perhaps judges look more favourably upon those athletes who have been good to bodybuilding, or who are widely perceived as being good people and, therefore, worthy of success.

These ideas of being good and deserving success may also be more generally applied to the athletes' lives outside of the bodybuilding sub-culture, as Jason describes in regard to his considerable competitive and business success:

.... I like to think I've always done things with a lot of integrity and I've always liked to think I've been a pretty good person so things kind of fell together quite nicely

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5 This is discussed in Chapter 4.
and developed from there. I mean I do believe there's a lot of uhhmm, well it's not luck..... it's different from luck..... I don't believe in luck. but I believe in....ummm.... yeah it's kind of more like a Karma thing. Things do happen for a reason, it's definitely not luck..... I don't think you ever get move than you deserve, but I got a damn good share and I'm still going to get more.

Paying dues to the sport of bodybuilding can be defined in both physical and psychological terms and appears to have different functions. Firstly, it may be a process whereby athletes learn to make internal attributions about their expected successes in the sport or re-inforce the internal attributions they naturally make. It may also act as a subjective way of differentiating bodybuilders, and according status, within the bodybuilding hierarchy.

As was illustrated at the beginning of this chapter, like any hierarchy, status differentials are also a way of controlling access to sensitive information about bodybuilding. It seems likely, therefore, that the internal attributions made by these athletes, coupled with their status in the bodybuilding hierarchy, will influence their attitudes towards health, particularly diets and drug use. Given the above quotations, their attitudes to diets and drugs will obviously have a bearing on whether or not they chose to use drugs and the potential costs this may have. This is the subject of the next section.

**Attitudes Towards Health; Diets and Drugs.**

The previous sections have noted how the bodybuilding lifestyle is intimately tied up with values regarding health and integrity. Health norms in the bodybuilding community usually manifest themselves in a positive fashion allied to
strength and spiritual self-improvement. For some athletes, health considerations also revolve around the actual and/or potential negative consequences of pre-contest diet practices and drug use. Drug use and diet potentially represent exceptions to the health benefits of bodybuilding, and affect competitive success.

Diets and Health.

Jane illustrates how dieting errors can effect how people look on stage and thus their competition performance:

....They look scrawny cos they've had no time, they've dieted too hard, they've sacrificed their hard gained muscle cos they've become catabolic and they lose all their condition and you can see it on stage. They can't pump up properly. The muscle should look nice and thick and full and healthy....

Jason and Zoe detailed common dieting mistakes, especially among the novices and the inexperienced:

(Jason)....well we could get move specific like you know people dropping their calories too far. That's probably the most obvious dieting problem, people drop their calories too far and their metabolism slows right down. For the first few weeks they lose fat and then after that they stuff out.....

(Zoe).... or else they increase they increase their carbs too much in the last so many days of the diet thinking ok it's all over now, let's go...

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* These issues will also be discussed in more detail later, in relation to Locus of Control.
Contrary to what the public might think, such errors do not result from the rigours of bodybuilding. Dieting errors appear to be the result of a lack of knowledge or inexperience, rather than being the result of bodybuilding as an unhealthy practice. As Jane describes:

*I basically think that a lot of people are just plain bozo's, they don't know anything about the sport, they seem to think that you've gotta he really... rigorous with your dieting and your training...and (then) you tell everybody about it.....*

Jane’s comments about telling everybody about the rigorous diet and training alludes back to the sub-cultural construct of paying dues. In this sense, the athletes who make mistakes in the sport have simply not learned, or paid dues. This also reinforces the sub-cultural expectation of individual success in that, eventually, good bodybuilders will learn the right ways of dieting and training and ultimately achieve success.

Among the elite level athletes of this study, who presumably have paid their dues, there are varying perceptions regarding the difficulty of the diets. The dieting process is usually characterised by monotony and boredom rather than difficulty or harshness. Even when dieting, elite bodybuilders will still tend to eat more than the average person and eat better quality food. As Steven points out:

*...what you're trying to do is sit at a stage where you burn fat...so I'll be taking in a sufficient amount of food, I'll be eating more food on my diet than people eat during a normal day...*
Joseph also comments about the importance of eating lots of food, even when he doesn’t feel like eating. To him, diets are simply a necessary process which need to be got through in order to look good on stage:

"...as I hit that ten week mark and I’ve got to start dieting, I just. It’s it’s like going to the toilet, it’s got to be done. You know I eat and I don’t care even if I’m not hungry, I’ll eat."

When done properly, by experienced competitors, diets were viewed, at worst, as being unnatural, but they were never considered to be unhealthy. The normal side effect of dieting was tiredness and the associated negative moods, and not being able to eat certain types of foods. As Sharon illustrates:

"Yeah, if anything I get a hit absent minded. Really tired. Very very tired."

Steven used the phrase lack of food, but as will be illustrated later, he meant lack of certain types of food, particularly fatty foods and sugars:

"...but basically when it comes to dieting time, you do get a bit grumpy...because there’s lack of food...."

Any noticeable differences between respondents over the perceived difficulty of pre-contest dieting appeared to be related to the experience of the athlete. The less experienced athletes found dieting the hardest, while the most experienced found it to be quite simple, in the sense that it did not really interfere
with their everyday lives outside the gym. Although he has achieved a great deal in his bodybuilding, Steven appeared to be one of the most inexperienced in terms of time in the sport. He felt:

*Ummm..... dieting's really really hard..... diet is probably the hardest thing. Anyone can do bodybuilding, but not everyone can do the diet.*

However, he went on to say:

...I find my diet a lot easier than what I see around me, like what everyone else is eating. Like I couldn't do some of the diets that these other. Like I wouldn't be competing in bodybuilding if I was eating some of the foods some of them are eating. Cos I still treat myself right through, and my condition's,.....better better than.... if not the same as guys that are strict all the way through......But, ummm, yeah I mean I find doing bodybuilding...fun. Even during the dieting time where I am tired.... ummm...it's just....I can handle it.

Allowing himself *treats* and not taking his diet as seriously as other competitors shows that although still relatively inexperienced as an elite level athlete, Steven's diet regime affects his life less than, perhaps, a novice's diet. It could also be argued that not allowing the diet to effect his normal life may be part of the reason why he is successful at the elite level.

*Joseph is a very highly ranked bodybuilder, but still relatively inexperienced at the level at which he competes. He described how he felt dieting may affect him on occasion, but that it was simply a passing phase that could be*
worked through. In this way he was also making an internal attribution about the ultimate success of the dieting process:

*Ok yeah there was some shit times on the way..... There was that time when I walked into MacDonalds and just wanted to stuff myself silly. But I didn’t do it and I’m glad I didn’t do it cos this is what I look like now.*

Wayne, Jane, Zoe and Jason are the most experienced and most successful athletes in the group and they believe dieting to be not very difficult and largely psychological. Wayne felt that any difficulty perceived by the athlete was of their own making:

*See people think too much..... take this out of their diet and it starts playing with their mind. They’re sitting there at night going....hungry. But they’re not hungry, they’re just bored. They’ve got a food taste in their mouth, it’s mental. It’s all mental.*

Although preferring to use the word *intuition* rather than psychological, Jane illustrates how for her, diet is a state of mind that she is responsible for, and that does not have to interfere with her life. Although she is very aware of the types of food she is eating (proteins, carbohydrates and fats), she always eats what she feels like:

*....I know intuitively what I should do. I’ll get up one day and I’ll know for some reason just instinctively I’ve gotta eat mega food and I’ll you know eat three or four thousand calories on a day when some people are eating*
five hundred to get their body fats down, and I just know it's not going to hurt me. Some people are scared to listen to their bodies....

It should be noted however, that Jane's idea of *mega food* is not Macdonald’s or K-fried. Three or four thousand calories will be made up of low fat carbohydrates. In this sense her ideas of eating what she wants still may differ from the inexperienced bodybuilders or the general public.

Zoe and Jason felt that they had never taken dieting as seriously as some bodybuilders, despite their ongoing success. This is because they felt having a diet as the central focus of their lives could potentially interfere too much with other things in life that they wanted to do. They felt they were always able to get around bodybuilding problems and compromise a little on the things they had to do to be successful. This strategy obviously worked for them as Zoe, particularly, is an exceptional athlete:

*(Zoe):* if opportunity arose for you to take a holiday.... and you go geez, dieting, can't go on a holiday...Oh ok like if you get a free trip somewhere or something like that. Are you going to say oh no, fuck it?... You know, I can't eat so I'm not going? I mean please.....

*(Jason):* Yeah, take your work with you....you can eat sushi at every single meal if you wanted to. Or just some oat meal in the morning, and sushi for lunch, sushi for dinner and that's your diet.....

*(Zoe):* I think other things.... can run in parallel, but we are not... normal. Like.... ummm...I'm probably the only person I know that doesn't do a strict, serious, full-on diet. And I sure as hell put the hard work in, but I just don't put it in in the same way.
From these quotations it is possible to conclude that the public’s perceptions and the scientific studies regarding the negative effects of bodybuilders’ diets, may be overstated, and may only be relevant in the context of novices. Poor health from dieting may be due to an error resulting from stupidity, bad advice, inexperience or a combination of the three. The sub-culture seems to explain such errors in terms of non-payment of dues rather than as a particularly negative aspect of the sport. The experience of the athlete seems, therefore, to have an influence on their propensity to make such errors.

Furthermore, athletes’ experience in the sport seems to be an indicator of the attributions they make about their diets. The more experienced athletes make the most internal attributions; diets are all mental and are therefore under the control of the athlete. The inexperienced athletes, however, tend to make external attributions, viewing the diets themselves as difficult.

**Drug use and Attitudes to Health.**

Drug use is an activity which is commonly associated with bodybuilding and potentially contradicts the images of good health bodybuilders are proud of. Although all the athletes in this study use drugs of some sort\(^7\) to help them with their training and dieting, the use of anabolic steroids is lower than what might be expected from a group of elite level bodybuilders.

All of the athletes had seriously thought about the issue of anabolic steroid use to some degree. As with dieting, the attitudes towards drug use seem to be partly related to the athletes’ experience in the sport and how much they have paid their dues. Some of this may be related to the fact that the bodybuilders in this

\(^7\) Drugs in the strict definition of the term outlined in the literature review. Many of the drugs used, including certain diuretics and pain killers, are considered legal by the bodybuilding federations and International Olympic Committee.
study all felt steroids were only essential in overseas competitions or in the open categories. Sharon said:

*ummm.... in all the major competitions overseas, if you want to do well, you do steroids. You have to to be competitive and it's... ummm...it's here in New Zealand. It's so widespread that if you want to be competitive in certain weight categories, then you have to do steroids And you know some of these people... bodybuilding is their life.... it's the sport that they sort of love and, you know, if you're constantly going to get beaten by somebody who's using steroids, then you....as far as I'm concerned, you're in a position where you have to do what it takes.... or leave the sport, and that's not an option for some people.*

Similar sentiments were echoed by Jason who talked about how using different types of drugs for winning certain shows was essential. Drugs had to be used for both building muscle and dieting:

*I think to win...yeah to win the big physique, major physique shows...... ummm.... it's..... it's just my opinion, like I can't speak for everybody because this is just my opinion. To compete internationally...at a high level, in the physique divisions, men and women, yeah.... you know whether it's ummm both sides of it, to get big and to get cut, it's being used.*

Jane spoke of the decline in standard of competitors at one of the major overseas bodybuilding shows when drug testing was introduced. To her, this illustrated the need for drug use in order to be a success at the bigger events:
...and that's what happened when they decided to drug test at the Olympia level. For two years the quality dropped, people didn't compete.

The most experienced respondents presented anecdotal evidence of hypocrisy and double standards among all levels of sports’ governing bodies, regarding drug use and drug trafficking. They saw the issue of drug use in sport to be a political game played by the governing bodies of bodybuilding and the Intentional Olympic Committee. Wayne felt:

......but it's it's......everywhere. Um...because people are going to use it anyway and you've got some pretty clued up doctors out there. I mean most good doctors and sport doctors in the States, who are linked with international teams will get any athlete they like past a drugs test. They're miles ahead...... So I mean the testing itself as far as the drugs are concerned is just a.......I don't know why (they) do it. I really don't. You know?

Jane echoed these sentiments, and felt that drug use was, therefore, a matter of an athlete's personal choice:

Drugs are in the sports and I wouldn't like to be judgemental as to say who was taking them or who wasn't, but it's an individual thing, it's not going to be able to be stopped because there's unfair judging (testing) and unless they do random judging (testing) throughout the year, which you can't afford, they spend $300 per test. The federation, neither of them can afford to do it, so (they) don't test, because it's it's hypocrisy to test. Because you can be taking drugs and still come up with a clean test by taking a blocker, or it depends what you take. You can stop it six weeks out and it won't be in
your system. Well I mean it's a joke...you know? Let's get real, it's a joke.

Personal choice is linked with individualism which, as has been illustrated, is an important sub-cultural value among bodybuilders. In the context of drug use, it may also serve as a neutralisation technique to skirt around the issue of the legality of use in the sport. Experience in the sport, or payment of dues may also have an influence. Steven felt that illegal drug use was not an issue to him, because he did not take the sport so seriously as to feel that he needed to risk his health to be successful. His relative inexperience also means that he has been able to achieve success in New Zealand, and to a degree, overseas, without the use of such drugs as anabolic steroids. He knows that in the future, if he wants to continue succeeding in the sport, he may have to re-consider his views.

Sharon, another relatively inexperienced athlete, believes that drug use, including anabolic steroids is a bad thing in sports but, interestingly, not a bad thing outside competition. For her, drug use versus non-use is a question of a competitive code of conduct which all athletes should adhere to:

oh I think it's just a code of ethics that sports people should adhere to. You know ok...I'm old fashioned I suppose.

She clearly had difficulties, however, rationalising her concept of fair play:

...I for example....have a genetic advantage. I put on muscle very quickly. Ummm that's not to brag, that's just my genetics. The hard cold facts are I got results very quickly and that that's a natural thing that I had.
Now if I was a real bean pole... who didn’t have that advantage, then I could make it a level playing field if you like by taking steroids..... so it’s a very interesting quandary isn’t it? Levelling the playing field. I don’t have great genetics therefore I’ll use steroids. It’s very interesting. The bottom line for me is more to do with health and..... honour. It it seems to me..... immoral to cheat. I still see it as cheating.

Like Steven, she felt she had to re-evaluate her position on the issue of drugs. In order to do this, she has removed herself from the influences of the bodybuilding sub-culture by putting herself into semi-retirement until she can decide what is acceptable and unacceptable to her:

...I’m not dealing with it very well at all. At the moment I’m sort of just training away very quietly, just doing my own thing. I’m wondering if the next time I compete, I don’t do diuretics, and I don’t shred up... as much and I just go back there and say hey this is a natural body that’s worked out in a gym and this is what I am. I’m wondering if I can do that.... if I’ve got the balls to do that. Who knows?

Although not the most successful bodybuilder in the group, Ian has been in the sport for a long time and arguably, therefore, ‘paid more dues’ than Steven or Sharon. He has evaluated steroid use for himself in terms of the potential for unhealthy side-effects versus his chances of competitive success at certain levels:

I've considered it.... I must admit I've considered it very very carefully, but I haven't gone that far into it cos I think I'm thirty-four years old. I'm never going to be at the top of my sport cos I'm too tall and I haven't got enough body weight. Ummmm, to me I've got an average
shaped body that I can fine tune to look reasonably good on the day but I'm not the same as what.....If was a similar physique to Joseph then I'd consider it, cos he's got a future, and as long as he does it right with a doctor, then I think he's going to do pretty well. Ummm, but for a guy like me, how much weight can I put on to my size physique? Well yeah I could probably put on quite a bit, but at what risk? And at what cost?

As Ian mentions, Joseph also considered the use of anabolic steroids very carefully and made the choice to use drugs in order to win certain competitions:

....generally there's certain aspects of the sport that unfortunately I've had to get into which aren't that healthy....Drugs. It's not something I want to do but I had to sit down at the end of "1985" when I got third at the "Muscles" and looked at the two guys who got first and second and go well hey either I can give up the sport now... or I can...... maybe not join in to what they were because they..... to me there's a big difference between use and abuse....

The relationship between drug use versus drug abuse was common among those athletes who were using anabolic steroids, and/or who were very experienced in the sport. Ian thought that as long as a doctor was involved, then the athlete was not abusing their body; sentiments echoed by Joseph. Wayne felt that the inexperienced bodybuilders, or bodybuilders who were fundamentally never going to make it further up the hierarchy were the most likely bodybuilders to abuse their bodies by using drugs:

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8 "1985" is a disguised date and "Muscles" is a disguised competition.
...and they want to get bigger and bigger.....the thing is they think more is better-instead of cycling the stuff... right. They just keep on using more and more and more.... and that's when you get acne and bitch tits and all the rest of it you know? So um... there's the brainless ones..... the novices... oh there's some Open people who do the same...you know more is better, but it just doesn't work that way.

Use versus abuse of drugs may be another neutralisation technique used by bodybuilders. The concept of the drug hierarchy also serves a neutralisation function. Zoe argued that the issue of drug use is more than just about anabolic steroids. In this sense she feels drawing a line regarding what is considered moral and immoral, or legal and illegal is difficult, because all drug use is drug use. For her, she understands how to some people steroid use might not be seen as any different from other types of legal drug use:

.... it's on a continuum and we've all got our little line up there. Imagine going round....coffee drinker!! Stone that coffee drinker!!!

That everyone has their own ‘little line’ regarding drug use further exemplifies the values of personal choice in the bodybuilding sub-culture and, perhaps, the internal attributions the athletes make about the effects of drugs. According to Jason and Zoe:

(Jason): Well my opinion, ok there's another continuum depending how you look at it. I mean I would draw the line past the real mild recreational drugs. I mean marijuana would be where I draw my line after that. You know, diuretics, steroids are above my line.
(Zoe): but then the continuum splits up. Then you've got like recreational drugs which totally fuck your mind and then you could look at anabolics and the way of them actually helping the body, or aiding the body to go in a certain direction where other ones are simply destroying the body, like LSD, you know, blowing your brain out, so so you could say that this was better, the anabolic was a better line to go down than the, cocaine the LSD...

The idea of the drug continuum illustrates what appears to be the thought processes of all the athletes in this study. Although only two of the athletes admitted using anabolic steroids, all of the athletes used drugs of some sort to help them win competitions. Some respondents had difficulties expressing this apparent double standard regarding their use of different types of drugs. Sharon said:

that's an interesting point because I find that even though I make... have made sort of a healthy choice not to use steroids, I used, in my first competition I did everything that I was told to do. I did use diuretics. In my last competitions I've used ummm... metabolic boosters and I've....yeah....ones that weren't banned. Ones that were legal. I've always said no I won't do anything that was banned.....but yeah, and I'm sort of.... so there's that sort of hypocrisy coming through there.....It's hard! It's a real quandary.

Although not admitting to anabolic steroid use, Jane admitted using a lot of stuff:

....oh I take um I take supplements. I take very good quality supplements...... And there's lots of supplements that you can work hand in hand with others that give you very good anabolic response.....I use Creatine and the first time I ever used it I put on a kilo and a half of
lean muscle mass... in eight weeks. So I mean..... define a steroid. You know it's a chemical thing that creates a situation and people I think generally assume that it makes you grow. It allows you to grow..... it doesn't grow for you make you grow in itself. You can't just take it and grow....I use a lot of stuff.

Ian was nervous about talk of drugs because he feels the public has an uninformed view of the issue. He feels that bodybuilding is commonly portrayed as being about drugs, when as far as he is concerned this is only a side issue. Whether to do with his nervousness, a genuine confusion, or a genuine differentiation for him, Ian illustrated the drug continuum firstly by denying all drug use and then admitting using banned stimulants:

.....uhhh I don't do drugs strangely enough. A lot of people think I do, but I don't do drugs..... I don't use drugs.... cos I don't like drugs. I think drugs is a bad thing Ok? Chemical drugs.... Ok, I use caffeine which is a banned substance9. And I also use a thing called Ephedrine, which is a banned substance...Ephedrine is a stimulant similar to what caffeine is and there's been some talk about it. There's been a lot of people been disqualified from events and so forth because they've used Ephedrine. I don't see that as bad because it's not a testosterone or anything like that which messes up your chemical balances and so forth....It's not a growth hormone or anything like that.

Ian also drew a similar distinction between oral and injectible anabolic steroids.

9 Caffeine is a central nervous system stimulant and is actually a controlled substance rather than a banned one. This means that in the event of a drugs test, athletes are allowed to have a certain amount of caffeine in their urine sample.
I think that people who do injectible steroids are nowhere near as bad as the people who do the tablet. ... oral is the cheat's way out. It's bad on your liver and so forth. ... Because it goes through your system, whereas injectibles go into your muscles and (are) soaked in by your blood system. And it's there and as long as guys like ummm, whoever, do it right. They get the blood tests done right and things like that. I think that's fine. It's like taking. Some people ummm smoke marijuana, that's a drug. I can't see that as bad at all as opposed to crack or heroin or something like that. Two different things. I guess I've got two different standards.

Wayne, who admitted steroid use, said that he felt anabolic steroids could be healthy if used correctly. Although not mentioned specifically, there appears to be some evidence of a drug continuum in his mind:

.....You've got to take into account too that steroids were developed for sports people.... I firmly believe that steroids...right; now not abuse, just the use, which means small amounts, is actually quite healthy....I think there's more pressure put on your system by booze than anabolic steroids.

Athletes are aware of how drugs are legitimately used by the public for health and recreation, and while drug use in sport is still widely regarded as unfair, they see themselves as having more legitimate reasons than most to use them.
Conclusion.

The status hierarchy in the gym and the associated difficulty of ‘getting in’ and advancement may help to explain some of the differences in attitudes expressed by bodybuilders in this study regarding drug use. Whether or not an athlete uses drugs, and no matter what sort of drugs they are using, there is certainly pressure felt by the athletes in regard to the issue of use versus non-use.

Any attributions these athletes make in regard to the control they have over drug use and the effects of the drugs appears to be linked with the experience of the athletes and payment of dues, rather than competitive success alone. What is unclear is whether the bodybuilding sub-culture, including the need to pay dues and achieve status within the gym hierarchy, places pressure on the athletes to illegally use drugs, or whether it serves the purpose of diffusing the pressure by giving them the techniques to combat some of the awkward questions raised regarding ethical and health considerations. This is addressed again in the next chapter in relation to the bodybuilding career.

The purpose of this chapter has been to illustrate, and understand more fully, the existence and values of the bodybuilding sub-culture, especially how bodybuilders gain status, rationalise and cope with the diet and drug practices of the sport. The next chapter on bodybuilding careers will also spend some time addressing some of these issues as they relate to bodybuilder careers and the effects such careers have on the athletes and the people around them as well as the levels of commitment required of achieving and maintaining elite level bodybuilder status.
Chapter 4

Analysis of the Bodybuilding Career.

Introduction.

The ideas of commitment and paying dues to the sport have been discussed in the last chapter in the context of the bodybuilding sub-culture. Although important, the level of involvement in the sub-culture is not wholly dependent on the athletes’ position in the gym hierarchy, or with payment of dues. Sometimes wider influences can affect how seriously an athlete views bodybuilding as a career. The bodybuilding career and the influences on it are the subjects of this chapter.

New Zealand bodybuilders, including the ones in this study, are not paid prize money for their competitive success and so cannot be considered to have bodybuilding careers in the sense of having a job. Chapter 1, however, discussed the work of Stebbins, which showed how certain leisure activities could be viewed as though they were a career, even though participants might not be paid for participation. Bodybuilding in New Zealand seems to fit Stebbins’ criteria for a serious leisure career.

Athletes firstly have to begin their careers and develop into competent performers. This is characterised by entry into the gym and experimentation with weight training. Second, they must become established as competitive bodybuilders. This is characterised by a shift in emphasis to taking the training more seriously and is distinguished by a more regimented training programme, diet and entering competitions. Third is the maintenance phase, which may be characterised by winning some of the bigger New Zealand titles, perhaps starting
use (or non abuse) of anabolic steroids\textsuperscript{1}; and competing (and in a few cases, winning) overseas contests. For a very few athletes, a realistic ultimate goal may be earning a \textit{pro card}, giving them the right to compete overseas in a professional show. Ultimately, bodybuilders must pass through the decline phase and, perhaps, leave the sport entirely. This may be a difficult decision to make and represents the final stage of the bodybuilder’s career.

These phases will now be examined in more detail as they are experienced by the respondents, linking it with values of the bodybuilding sub-culture and locus of control. I will show how the pressures of the bodybuilding career may challenge some of the internal attributions the athletes make and, therefore, challenge the sub-cultural value of individualism. The coping mechanisms used by the athletes will also be illustrated.

\textbf{First Entering the Gym; Becoming a Gym Rat.}

Initially, the bodybuilding career begins with an athlete being introduced to weight training. From the respondents’ comments, it can be interpreted that their introduction to weight training was ultimately a result of seeking control over events that were occurring in their lives. One such wider event the athletes spoke of was some form of physical injury, which required medical intervention. Other athletes sought to control psychological states they were in, while others hinted at undertaking body projects and, perhaps, controlling the way they interacted with other people. The respondents may have deliberately made a choice to join a gym,\footnote{Note that anabolic steroid use can occur at any stage of a bodybuilder’s career. For the athletes in this study, however, any steroid use was started during the maintenance phase. This in itself seemed to constitute part of the criteria for regarding their drug use as non-abusive because they had already achieved a degree of success \textit{naturally}.}

\textsuperscript{1}
or may have been prompted to do so by the actions of, or suggestion from, a friend or relative.

Injuries which could directly be attributed to the other sports they were playing at the time were mentioned by two of the respondents. Both these athletes had lower limb injuries and were given varying prognoses for recovery. For people who seek to control or at least influence their recovery from such injuries, bodybuilding seems to provide a means for such an influence, as Jason illustrates:

...I got a knee complaint and I didn't.....I was sprinting, been doing a lot of sprinting......and doctors told me I couldn't do any more sports and put stress on my leg, so ummmmm......so I couldn't think of what to do and ummm....ahhh a close friend of the family had an old weights set and he just suggested I start weight training and see if I enjoyed it......I did weights for my upper body. And then ummm.....started doing other sports as well later on...after I found out all the doctors were wrong.

Steve had a similar story:

I injured myself. Injured my knee playing rugby..... So basically I did that and then ummm when I injured myself, I was doing rehab in the gym.......Yeah, well basically I started on a conditioning program for my knee, and the actual muscles around that grew, basically.....straight away as in there was a big difference between one leg and the other leg as I was concentrating basically on one knee rather than the other...... and within sort of six months there was like an inch and a half, two inch difference on the legs, without...and that was the one that I had injured...... that started me into it yeah....basically from there I just went....bang....and then I didn't really slow down after that.
Ian did not have a specific physical injury, but felt that he needed to be strong for the other sports that he played. He claimed this was the reason for him starting weight training, especially after he had lost a lot of body weight during a lengthy trip overseas. In this way he wanted to effectively control both his body weight and sport performance. Although he is now considered an elite level bodybuilder, his primary motivation for bodybuilding is still the other sports he plays:

*I do a lot of other sport. Bodybuilding to me is not my main sport. "Go-Karting" is my major sport. That's what I really focus on the most and umm... bodybuilding has just sort of helped me out a little bit with my "Go-Karting"....

...so "Go-Karting's my major thing and through the winter time you can't get down to the "track" as much, so bodybuilding helps me with my strength. Power to weight ratio is everything.*

For athletes like Ian, strength is seen to be an integral part of their sports performance, even though the sport he plays is not normally recognised as requiring pure strength.

With other athletes, there is some evidence of bodybuilding being used as part of a body project. Jason and Zoe describe how bodybuilding and being strong are connected in a mixture of the sub-cultural value of health and their own vanity:

*(Jason): it's a healthy feel, you feel better and you feel stronger. You feel more able to handle things.*

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2 "Go-Karting" and "the track" are disguises for the sport Ian plays and its location.
(Zoe): ....Ummm, it stops Osteoporosis......it strengthens your tendons quite a lot, stops things breaking, falling off, and you often find that the older women......Women that don’t train, don’t look after themselves.....tend to get that middle age spread thing. And then women that do train, that carry on training into middle age, find that they harden up......So I mean if you have the choice of middle-age spread or extra hard looking. I mean I think I’m going to go down towards the extra hard looking.

(Jason): so for sure there is a vanity aspect in there, but the feeling of well-being and knowing that if...you know you’re going out to your garage and you need to pick up a heavy box, you’re going to be able to do it.

(Zoe): it sure beats liposuction!!

Joseph also hinted at a form of body project when describing how being big was just a way for him to be noticed. He described himself as being very extroverted and had always liked to be noticed by other people. An example he gave was that he had always been considered very muscular and remembered comments about this being made to him, by other children and their parents, while he was at school. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that he chose to build on this reputation or image by eventually taking up bodybuilding. In this way, there is some evidence of an ironic response to the value other people seemed to place on his muscularity:

Just the muscle, I just like the way it looks. I like to stand out....Um....awww... it’s just different. Some people want to be..... tall, some people want to be fast, some people want to score the most goals on the field, I want to be...(pause)...big!..... Everybody likes to be noticed in a positive way. People don’t like to be noticed in a negative way. But people like to be seen in a positive way and be noticed, and my way.....and no matter what people....you

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1 Joseph described how he did not have to actively seek attention from other people, but was simply recognised for an untrained physique which he could not hide.
know people say oh I don’t want to be noticed, but people always do something whether it’s the clothes they wear, or the hairstyle they have or... you know being a nice friendly person, being an arsehole.... everyone’s got something that makes them stand out from other people you know. And my thing is I like to be big. I enjoy getting complements off people, hey well how long have you been training? Someone grabs your arm and gives it a squeeze and hey wow that’s pretty cool. But no matter what you do...like that’s my thing to be noticed.

For Jane and Sharon, the introduction to weight training was a deliberate act to counteract situations or psychological states. In this way they seemed to be using bodybuilding as a tool to help them reclaim a degree of control over the events in their lives. Jane described her situation quite generally:

...it’s given me a power of a lot of confidence. I used to be a very insecure, very very shy person. I hated myself. I was suicidal. And (I) just got into my own power. Became strong mentally and physically...which allowed me to go into society with more confidence and assuredness.

Sharon described how she used weight training as a form of escape from her marriage problems:

....Ummm personally, I think I was actually quite angry about things. The relationship I was in was very unsatisfying, so I could channel a lot of that anger into my training and work really hard and that that was part of the fire that kept me going.
Having used bodybuilding to gain control over events occurring in their lives, the next phase of the career involves taking part in competitions. In this phase of the career, new challenges to their sense of control may appear and need to be overcome.

*From Gym Rat to Competitive Bodybuilder.*

As the athletes move up the bodybuilding hierarchy and become competitive bodybuilders, they may be faced with new issues which can change how central the bodybuilding lifestyle is for them and how much they feel they are still in control of their lives. This section examines how the athletes move up the gym hierarchy and it highlights the important issues facing them, particularly drug use and being increasingly exposed to political influences. Some of these issues may challenge the athletes' sense of control.

**Mentors.**

All of the respondents claimed that their shift from weight trainer to competitive bodybuilder was, in some ways, the result of accident which could be traced back to specific events in their weight training careers. Most respondents talked of a *mentor*\(^4\) who had watched them train in the gym and, for some reason or another, recognised their *good potential* as a competitive bodybuilder.

Mentors play a particularly important role for the novice bodybuilder which cannot be overstated. Mentors may themselves provide, or provide ways for the novice to access vital information on techniques regarding diets and drugs which

\(^4\) Such a person may or may not have previously been known to the bodybuilder.
are normally kept hidden from outsiders. This is important because incorrect information about drug use (such as cycling and stacking) and diet (dropping calories too fast) can be costly in terms of health, competitive success and, ultimately, the longevity of a bodybuilder’s career.

If the mentor did not provide this valuable information themselves, they could act as a go-between, introducing the new athlete to the right people in the gym. As was discussed in Chapter 3, part of the getting in process is dependent on payment of dues, or how well the newcomer has proved themselves worthy of the attention of the higher ranked athletes. Joseph described his deeper emersion into the ranks of the elite bodybuilders:

"Ummm....originally I approached Wayne. Didn't get a good response...this was when I was quite young. Then I became good friends with a guy called “Gus” from “Hard Core” gym and “Drew”.....yeah.....um.....sort of got a lot of advice off them um...used to go down to the old “Pro Core” shop every second day on the way home from the gym. Um...sort of got to know Jason on a you know sort of me being one of his clients sort of type thing...... and then as......as I started getting into the competing you sort of get to know the right people more; and people take a little bit more notice of you...."

While Joseph seemed to casually drift into elite circles, Jane, now an exceptionally good bodybuilder, felt she had some luck in finding a mentor. This luck resulted in an almost religious conversion to bodybuilding:

"So I went in the gym and I reckon it was just fate. That week there I happened to see on the wall at the gym,

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5 The names shown in inverted commas are pseudonyms for people and places not directly involved in the study. (Wayne and Jason are pseudonyms for respondents in this study).
which was at the "No Pro's"6, a bodybuilding group being started up and I thought oh this could be quite good cos a guy in the gym came and said to me that he saw potential as a bodybuilder cos I had a good shape. And I'd never even heard of bodybuilding....And that week I saw on TV a Olympia programme- women's bodybuilding and I looked. I saw it and I thought I had to be there. Decided then....I felt it. I knew I had to do it. It was just I dunno a connection and I.....that was it. Out went running and I committed myself immediately to it and that was it. It was just something I loved. I knew I would love it...... I knew it was me, and I knew I would be good at it.

The important role played by the mentor can challenge the novice bodybuilders' sense of how much they are in control of their bodies. Jason felt that new bodybuilders had to be very careful of who they sought advice from, while Zoe thought that the problem for the novice bodybuilder was that each person one talked to would have something different to say on a topic. Knowing what was the right advice, therefore, was very difficult for her. Sharon felt so strongly about the issue of drug use that she had to question some of the advice her coach was giving her, even though she was fortunate enough to have a very successful and well-respected bodybuilder as mentor and coach. Sharon said:

....yeah anyone coming in off the street, if they didn’t have their wits about them they could end up doing some really serious damage, you know?.....it’s very difficult!!....It is, it’s really difficult. I was looking at my coach sideways going this is what you do as a bodybuilder? But is it really healthy?.... And he was going no no this is fine this is fine, this is ok and you can do this amount of diuretics and it’s fine and it’s ok. And all I can do is trust him....

6 This pseudonym is the name of a gym.
The Drug Issue.

It is during this stage of their careers that the athletes in this study who used anabolic steroids had begun using. Such a decision to use or not use seems to represent a watershed in the careers of these athletes. The watershed may be more pronounced among the elite competitors, who, as Wayne and Joseph contend, feel they must spend more time making sure they have the correct combinations of drugs and the dosages which work best for them. Joseph describes how some people did not believe the effects he was getting with the drugs he currently uses:

Well the people that I talked to about it. I was put on it by a particular person who I’ve got so much respect for and who’s done it. He said look start off at the lower end you know, and see what works. I took this drug and got some amazing results...when I tried to get the drug, people were saying what the hell are you buying that for, it’s a girl’s drug you know?7

The decision to use steroids represents a significant development in the athletes’ career simply because of the difficulty of the decision. Part of the difficulty in hurdling the invitational edge, as Matza phrases it, may be the challenge such drugs present in regard to the control the athletes have over their own bodies. As the mechanisms for the actions of steroids and their effects remains unclear, the decision to use means that the athlete can never be in control of the drug’s effects and, therefore, their own bodies. Wayne recounted how he agonised over the decision to use anabolic steroids, and told of his doubts over his ability to control its effects, right up to the last second, when he swallowed his first pill:

7 In this quote, Joseph is talking specifically about the anabolic steroid Stanozolol. Wayne had very similar opinions regarding this drug, claiming that, in men, it was not a muscle builder as such, but made the muscles look harder. In this way, Wayne described Stanozolol as a pre-contest ‘finishing drug’ or ‘girls drug’.
...and then in the end I thought yeah ok what the hell. So you sit there with this tablet, and you think gad, is this going to kill me or what?....Seriously...the first time ever you sit there and you think......(Wayne forcefully pushes air out from his mouth) gulp! Down...there it's done!

Alternatively, drug use may also be a watershed in a bodybuilder’s career because of the perceived improvement in competitive success. In his own mind, at least, by making the difficult decision to use anabolic steroids, Joseph feels that he took control of his career and moved up another competitive level. He said:

The way I look at the moment at "twenty-three" is the how I envisioned....and before I decided that I would take drugs...is probably how I would have envisioned I'd look when I got to about "twenty-five".....And I told a lot of people that when I was "twenty-six", "twenty-seven" I wanted to go for the "Huge Muscles" overall title. Heavyweight title. Umm.....I would've been probably light heavyweight. I would now probably want to do that when I'm about twenty-three...About three years time I'd like to go for the "Huge Muscles" overall heavyweight title. And I do now want to get my pro-card. Ask me that four months ago five months ago, I'd have said yeah right, as if I can get a pro card, but now I want it.

It is interesting to note, however, that rather than knowing steroids would make him more competitive, he only realised his new potential once he had spent some time experimenting with different types of steroids, eventually getting positive results. His evaluations may be the result of the physical improvements gained while using a successful drug protocol. Another suggestion might be, however, as the literature review indicated, that the drug’s psycho-active properties could be

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*The ages and competitions appearing in inverted commas have been disguised.*
influencing the attributions he makes, increasing his tendency to make internal attributions about events in his life, including an ability to control success in his bodybuilding career.

It is unclear, therefore, whether drug use, specifically anabolic steroids, enhances feelings of power and individualism in the athlete, as the literature sometimes suggests, or represents a challenge to it. Perhaps it is because of such controversy that the drug decision becomes such a large issue for the elite competitor.

**Increased Political Influences.**

Politics plays a role in the affairs any organised group and this is no less so in the case of competitive bodybuilding. Politics is most easily observed in the ways contests are judged. Bodybuilders who compete, therefore, are far more exposed to political influence which seems in contradiction to the values of individualism the sub-culture prides itself on.

Jane and Jason talked of how they had personal experience of rigged shows, where the winners had been selected before the competition started. The selection of winners in this way, usually only in particular categories at the bigger shows, may be the result of a judge’s personal bias towards an athlete, for example choosing an athlete they coach, or, in one case pointed out by Jane, some type of sexual motivation. More commonly it is linked with the marketing of bodybuilding. The marketing aspect is especially relevant internationally in professional shows or in cases where a New Zealand athlete would be travelling and competing overseas. Jane comments:
I don't like it....that judging can be like that. It can be very political...... But I happen to know that it is very.....some are probably above the board but there are a lot that aren't and even at this level in New Zealand it's as much political as it is overseas, so it's who can bring the bucks in...who has got potential for doing well overseas like who's got a brain in their head....and they're not going to send somebody who's...thick as....because they just can't promote the sport.

Political influences such as this can obviously affect a bodybuilder’s career. One of the athletes in this study felt they could never win a big show in one of the bodybuilding federations simply because their face doesn’t fit. Although both Jason and Jane did not think that political forces had completely worked against them in terms of their overall bodybuilding careers, they both felt that politics had potentially affected their bodybuilding curriculum vitae in terms of individual titles. Jason comments:

I think I was dicked out of a “Mr. Muscles” trophy. I’ve been told so by a couple of judges that... that I was potentially robbed of the position through someone already being selected to go overseas. That’s why I ended up going as well and consequently did better than them when I went over. But ummm.... that’s by and by. You can’t really look back on that.

Getting A Job.

Probably because all bodybuilders in New Zealand are amateurs, the bodybuilders in this study all had other jobs outside their training. Most of them

9 Disguised competition.
had jobs related to, and relying on, their reputations as successful bodybuilders. In this sense, their other jobs may be simultaneously viewed as part of the development of their serious leisure careers, but challenge their commitment to the sport.

In the current fitness frenzied social climate, business opportunities are available for those bodybuilders with enough business sense to capitalise on them. Regardless of whether the athletes have formal qualifications from school or tertiary institutions, their bodybuilding success seems to represent qualification enough of their knowledge in the areas of fitness equipment, the body, exercise physiology, training principles and nutrition. This means that there is always a job opportunity for good bodybuilders able to cash in on their success, as Jason notes:

....doing one on one training for people, the diets and programs..... not... not a qualification. Back then there weren’t qualifications for it, it was just my own personal theory and practical knowledge I’d built up.

A common job among bodybuilders, therefore, is that of personal trainer; which may or may not be sub-contracted to a gym. Obviously money is needed to pay bills, but for bodybuilders, this seems to revolve largely around paying for food, gym memberships, and supplements, which may include drugs. Sometimes, however, jobs are necessary to support families. Wayne had a family and felt the financial responsibilities towards them. He was, therefore, quite aggressive about the prospect of making money from the long hours he spent personal training. He said:

there’s twelve sessions.....every day.... but it’s my choice. I mean there’s money to be made, and I’m making it.
Sometimes athletes had other interests, which may or may not have been related to their bodybuilding success. Zoe and Jason were particularly open to outside influences:

(Zoe): something I tend to do a lot of both you and me, is looking for new opportunities.....just in other areas of life. Like new business ventures or for me...where I'm going to take my studying, where I'm going to go from here. Ways to make money...

(Jason): yeah a lot of planning and that ay. A lot of going...flicking through things, planning...thinking about things. I mean we spent a couple of hours at a meeting last night. For a couple of hours we were looking at business ventures and things, so there's always. There's always something on....you know?

Such outside interests the athletes in this study have shows that they are far from the one dimensional, or flawed individuals that seem to be commonly represented in scientific studies, or media outside the bodybuilding magazines. They appear to be highly motivated people outside of their bodybuilding world. Several respondents had taken papers at universities and polytechnics in a wide variety of disciplines, including medicine\textsuperscript{9}, sport, business and "engineering\textsuperscript{10}". For some bodybuilders, having other interests may mean either augmenting or diversifying their experiences in the gym with formal qualifications. Wayne had taken courses through the gyms where he works:

...I mean physiology and all the rest is just the base, I mean it's no big deal um, but there are a lot of units that go way off the main stream as well.....and specialise in

\textsuperscript{9} The precise medical training has deliberately been omitted for fear of potentially identifying the respondent.

\textsuperscript{10} This has been disguised because the respondent's discipline is unusual and very specialised. It may, therefore, potentially identify the respondent. "Engineering" seems to broadly cover the respondent's qualification.
different areas and that. Um...could be rehabilitation or it could be elderly. Work with the elderly and stuff like that and um cripples and whatever um so you know we have the option of doing all these different units and that but um we've sort of got to do a total of like 60 units a year......so in that respect there's qualifications coming through.

In this sense, their qualifications and jobs mean that they have careers outside the gym. Most of the athletes in this study, therefore, view bodybuilding as simply an extension of the people they are in the ‘real world’. This seems to reinforce the idea, presented earlier, that bodybuilding is used by these athletes as a way to control the events that are occurring in their lives, rather than being controlled by bodybuilding and it's sub-cultural values.

Perhaps the best example of this is Steven, who describes how he does not consider himself to be a bodybuilder who lives only the bodybuilding lifestyle:

...bodybuilding isn't what I am. But it's just something I do. I do bodybuilding because I like competing, but I'm not, I'm not a full on bodybuilder if you know what I mean. I don't live and breathe bodybuilding twenty-four hours a day. I'm into other things.

Such outside influences are effectively a challenge to the sub-culture’s demands of commitment to the lifestyle. With a couple of exceptions, these athletes overwhelmingly view themselves as normal people and appear to be faced with similar issues as other people in regard to balancing their commitments to the various activities they are involved with. In this way it can be argued that the athletes' commitment to the sport should be measured by how well they balance all
of these demands. Perhaps not surprisingly, the athletes in this study had different success rates in balancing their lives.

While outside interests may interfere with bodybuilding, the same can be said of bodybuilding affecting outside interests. At certain times of the year, particularly on drug cycles, bodybuilding may occupy a competitor's mind outside the gym in their everyday lives. Athletes may have to think about training and drug cycles with their associated health effects, including, for example, the potential consequences of mixing certain foods and drugs with alcohol. Joseph describes this:

"...you have to take a lot of things into consideration, health, ummm....social ummmm aspects of it.....I have in the past been quite an aggressive person, so there is that concern too, that my aggression will become somewhat uncontrollable....it's become very central to my.....life and yeah I suppose it has, because there are certain times when I don't drink, I can't drink, I won't drink ummmm....you know I know I've got two more weeks before I start again, so my training changes, I make sure I get enough sleep....I eat more....."

Food intake may be especially problematic. Food is very important to bodybuilders both to build muscle in the off season and during pre-contest diet phase. Correct food usually has to be purchased and then prepared in advance. Joseph comments on how difficult it can be to take in enough of the right food:

".....My off-season diet has got to be improved. I've got to approach it a different way. I need to actually eat more, but I...I'd still like to keep hitting the junk, but just like eat some good quality and then...it's just so expensive. It is so expensive....."
In order to get enough food or the right types of food, bodybuilders may have to be quite obsessive in terms of routinising their days in order to train and pre-prepare the food they need, especially if they have other jobs. Ian describes this process:

I go to the gym in the morning. I get up at quarter past five, half past five to go to the gym. I'm there at six. I train for about forty-five minutes tops. I get out I have a shower. Then I come out and I've got my breakfast all made. I sit down, have breakfast, have a bit of a chat with whoever's the regular's there. Everything's pre done. The night beforehand I've already made my food for the day and for breakfast. So then I have my breakfast and then most of the time I'll go home, pick up "Gillian" and take her to work and drop myself off. I have lunch prepared. Whether I'm competing or not I still do that. That's just me. Ummm I cook all the dinner's at home for "Gillian" and while I'm cooking dinner, things are boiling and that I just make my lunch and breakfast.

Such an obsessive lifestyle with its associated demands can effect other people who are in relationships with the athlete. Sharon notes how she appreciated the support from her workmates when she was in pre-contest phase:

I'm looking back at a time when I was doing two and a half to three hours of aerobics a day, plus cooking all my meals, pre-planning everything, going to the gym three days on one day off. The couple of times that I've competed, I cooked a really fantastic afternoon tea for all the staff and always let them know how much I appreciated them putting up with my little vagaries. I'd go into work and I'd be eating my breakfast while I read reports, which some people were a little bit irritated by, but they put up with it.

12 Ian's wife. Her name has been disguised.
You know morning tea I’m scoffing chicken and what have you and they’re just looking at me sideways, but basically really understanding. It’s good.

For other athletes, such obsessiveness can cause problems with personal relationships they have with friends and partners. Ian’s wife hates what she considers to be his obsessiveness. Ian says:

*My wife hates bodybuilding. She hates it with a passion. She really hates it….she hates bodybuilding cos she thinks it’s just stupid….I can’t get it out of her don’t ask me why. I can’t tell you the exact reason cos she just won’t tell me…..I’m too organised for my wife. She hates it. I can’t explain it. You’d have to talk to “Gillian” about that……But it’s me. I’ve been exactly the same since before I met her. During and now it hasn’t changed at all and that’s what I keep saying to her. I haven’t changed. I’m exactly the same, I’m doing the same things, you know? And she’s a bit too scared to change me cos it just wouldn’t work."

Given the bodybuilding values of independence and commitment to the lifestyle, it seems likely that “Gillian” hates bodybuilding because it appears more of a priority to Ian than his marriage. Jane tells of how she would not put the same effort into anything else, including a relationship, as she puts into bodybuilding:

*Like it’s a matter of deciding what one thing or what other things are going to be a priority in your life. I probably don’t think I would put so much intensity into anything else I guess again….I’m not getting up at four o’clock cos of my boyfriend…..not that many days a week.*
Sharon was having marriage difficulties before she started bodybuilding. She perceived that she was putting more into the relationship than her husband and that this was a source of resentment and anger for her. It is interesting to note how she felt bodybuilding was something she could seriously commit to, purely for her own benefit and, in this sense, take control of her life. It is, therefore, not surprising how she describes her commitment and success in bodybuilding influencing the end of her marriage:

"ummmm.....no, it was instrumental in his decision to get out though, because I'd achieved some success which he was jealous of....so.... and he felt he was stuck in a rut, not achieving anything and what have you and left....yeah.... if I'd taken up something else, if I'd taken up hang gliding and got a national title hang gliding he would still have left....cos he would have seen that success...my happiness and not had it himself.....it's not necessarily bodybuilding."

In this case, Sharon makes clear that it was a question of priority and success which was the catalyst for the problems and subsequent break-up with her husband, not bodybuilding per se. As long as she was putting more effort into something else, the marriage was probably always going to fail.

As we have seen, bodybuilding can demand a great deal of commitment from the athletes and perhaps in some small ways this is what they ultimately seek from the sport; an activity they can control and commit to completely, while being assured of securing a large portion of the rewards of that commitment for themselves. Jason notes:

"It’s better on your own cos you don’t have to rely on other people for the victory or the losses you know. You’ve only got yourself to blame."
Somewhat contrary to this idea, however, is Joseph, who recounted how importantly he considered his wife when making the decision to use steroids, since steroid use could indirectly affect her:

....but when I was on the Stanozol (sic. Joseph probably meant Stanozolol), first started we sat down with the person I get most of my information off and he said look, your wife... If he starts getting aggressive, you tell me, cos I respect this person so much, he said. (If) "Andie’s13" concerned this is what’s happening, I would stop...

All of these demands from bodybuilding create tensions for the athletes because of being forced to balance different priorities. The respondents all had different ways of prioritising such tensions and, in this sense, they have varying opinions regarding how central a part of their lives bodybuilding is. In an ironic twist, the bodybuilders who seemed better at coping with such stresses seem to be the ones who apply some of the bodybuilding values regarding individualism and control to their lives outside the gym. These bodybuilders have developed what they term an intuitive sense for, not only their own bodies in the gym, but themselves as people. In an academic sense, this seems to mean applying a particular attribution about events learned in one context, to another context. Jason illustrated this point in regard to his own life:

it’s great to have a good support network and to have and to learn and accept knowledge and help from other people but if you if you can’t work through the problems of your own, oh how can I sort of explain it? You need to have your own foundation and your own abilities, and if that means you can plant your feet firmly on the ground but still yell out for some help, that’s cool. But if you’re still flailing around in

13 Pseudonym for Joseph’s wife.
the water and yelling out for help, that's not going to get you anywhere. You want to be able to solidify yourself a little bit and have your own self dignity I suppose, and worth that you can succeed in life and then use things, use the tools around you and use the people around you to get you through.

Bodybuilding is much more central to Jane’s life than it is to Jason’s, so it is not surprising that she echoed Jason’s comments specifically in relation to bodybuilding. Although she acknowledges how not being independent can result in bodybuilding failure, she seemed to be talking about any activities a person might be committed to:

*I’ll do the things that are in here (feeling her stomach) that feel right. And I’ll try them, but common sense is mainly a lot to do with it- I respect my body enough to not want to do it, do anything stupid to it.... and that’s why people bomb out, cos they’re not sensible about what they do. So you know, I mean I just do what feels right to me.... I basically think that a lot of people are just plain bozo’s....*

**Becoming ‘Normal’; Leaving Competitive Bodybuilding.**

Ultimately, the athlete is forced to leave the sport, whether through disillusionment, like Sharon; through injury, like Wayne and Jane; through the pressures of work interests, like Jason; or ultimately because of old age. All of the respondents felt they would want to do some form of weight training until the day they died. Although this may seem an idle fancy at first glance, the emotional commitment to the sport can be so great that the fear of not being able to lift weights seems genuine.
Giving similar reasons as they gave for entering the gym world, athletes in this study viewed the wish to lift weights in old age in terms of bodybuilding health dogma; as a necessity for health and a mixture of health and vanity. Vanity in this sense was not in terms of maintaining the godly body they had built, but in terms of still looking good and being active and energetic in old age. Jason and Zoe comment:

(Zoe): I won't stop weight training.

(Jason): no I'll be weight training 'till I drop dead.......

(Zoe): I'll stop competing...obviously. I mean it'd get a bit boring if I got up there every year...there's this sixty-five year old chick, she's been up for the last sixty years. Ummmm.... no I won't stop weight training in some form or another. Unless they come up with some brilliant new technology where you lay down and they zap you with lasers and everything.....

This quotation still shows evidence of the body project, but a project that is tailored for older age. Other respondents simply couldn’t imagine a life without weight training. Jane comments:

After bodybuilding? (laughs)..... that scares me. I'll have to always train cos I like what it does for you and I don't ever want to look soft I wanna look always athletic and fit, and I do like muscle..... Things like that I dunno. I dunno. There's not another sport that's this challenging. So I'll be kind of afraid to give it up. I dunno. I'm still thinking about that.
Some athletes, like Joseph, may feel that they will ultimately stop weight training, but will never completely leave the sport. He talked of using his competitive success to enhance his reputation further, and then, focus his efforts on business as a personal trainer and ultimately a business owner. He said:

\[(I f) I've \text{ competed as a professional. When and if that ever happens, I'll just have to see how it goes from there, but I mean that's going to be. I'm going to use that as a spring board, so you know I could get into you know... heavily into the personal training...\]

Wayne was one of the more mature athletes and had already retired due to injury. He initially said that he looked forward to not being so big, but then started thinking about competing in the Masters category:

\[I \text{ quite like the idea of just being quite athletic again... so um... yeah who knows. I mean a lot of guys who are taking the masters are in their fifties.... "Beefy Muscles Contest" and stuff like that, so I mean... yeah, there's still time, and I'll keep on training. I mean there's only one way of training and that's training quite hard.}\]

**Conclusion.**

This chapter has detailed bodybuilding from the perspective of a serious leisure career. Linked with Stebbins’ development phases, the career paths of a group of elite New Zealand bodybuilders has been examined and linked with the

\[14 \text{ The nature of the business has been deliberately omitted and is related to bodybuilding.}\]
\[15 \text{ Wayne had difficulty moving around confined spaces, giving the example of beds!}\]
\[16 \text{ This name has been disguised.}\]
values of bodybuilding and some of the challenges to these values that may eventuate while rising up the gym hierarchy and developing their career. These stresses largely revolve around non-gym influences challenging their sense of control over their bodies. To cope with these stresses, bodybuilders appear to apply internal attributions about events, either learned or reinforced in the gym, to other areas of their lives. Whether or not such learned attributions are learned in the gym and then applied to the real world or vice-versa is still unclear.

The next chapter summarises this work and discusses some of the implications and limitations of it.
Chapter 5.

Conclusion and Discussion.

Limitations.

The size of the elite level bodybuilding community is very small which limits the number of respondents that can take part in the study. It remains unclear, therefore, whether the athletes in this study are representative of bodybuilders in New Zealand. Furthermore, although I felt the interviews were good, I am unable to tell how open or honest the athletes were regarding certain aspects of their lives, especially drug use. Some of these athletes had a great deal to lose, both personally and professionally, by talking to me about drug use in particular.

In future research, an anonymous questionnaire regarding the incidence of drug use may be useful as part of an overall qualitative study on understanding the use of drugs. Being able to more effectively guarantee anonymity may provide future researchers with different results regarding the incidence of steroid use to the ones obtained in this study. Making it part of a qualitative study seems important since studying the incidence of drug use alone cannot account for the motivations behind their use or shed light on the bodybuilders' lives. Comparisons between other bodybuilders at different levels of the gym hierarchy and, perhaps, from overseas might also be beneficial. Furthermore, because part of the data obtained in this study related to other people in relationships with the athletes, interviews with these people also seems appropriate, and could potentially shed much light on certain aspects of the sport.
Conclusion.

The body is important because it has, historically, provided authority with a mechanism for control. Of particular importance in a discussion of bodybuilding are the increasing medical intervention strategies of governments and medical practitioners and the growing importance of the body project as part of consumer culture. Arguably, consumer culture may be the catalyst for the growing dissatisfaction people have with their bodies. Weight lifting is one technique people may use to overcome such dissatisfaction.

Bodybuilding developed in tandem with medical and social control and is now a sporting sub-culture with its own values regarding health and individualism. A status hierarchy has developed in the gym. Status in this hierarchy is dependent on both competitive success and payment of dues. Payment of dues may be in physical and psychological terms and seems to be a process whereby athletes learn gym norms and get access to carefully guarded knowledge regarding dieting, exercise and drug practises.

There is some evidence of differing attitudes towards health, diet and drugs and the control athletes feel they have over such practices, based on the athletes’ position in the status hierarchy. Part of these different attitudes towards drugs are explained by the bodybuilders’ use of a drug hierarchy to explain/negate drug use. The possibility of healthy steroid use does appear possible among the elite level competitors.

Such differences in attitudes can partially explain the differences in competitive standard, and, potentially the incidence of unhealthy side effects from diet and drug use. What remains unclear is whether the gym hierarchy and its associated values serve to put pressure on athletes to use drugs such as anabolic steroids; whether it provides the athletes with neutralisation techniques to combat any psychic dissonance associated with illegal and potentially harmful drug use; or whether it provides a responsible atmosphere
for the safe use of drugs which, like any other, are potentially dangerous. This represents a good area for future research among gym users.

The gym hierarchy can be approximated to phases in a bodybuilder’s leisure/bodybuilding career. There is some evidence among the elite competitors in this study that the initial and difficult process of getting in is motivated by a need to control events which are occurring in their lives, such as physical injury, psychological states, or health and body projects.

As the athlete moves up the status hierarchy there appear to be challenges to their sense of control which initially motivated their presence in the gym. Such challenges revolve around the requirement of a mentor and drug use. Drug use is a particularly important event for the athletes in this study and represents a watershed in their careers. The watershed involves making decisions regarding the use of illegal and potentially dangerous drugs with maintaining control over their own bodies, versus taking control of their bodybuilding careers by taking steps to more actively guarantee success in bigger competitions.

As the athletes rise up the hierarchy, they are also more exposed to other influences which can challenge their sense of control in their own careers. These include political influences in the bodybuilding hierarchy and balancing their bodybuilding commitments with other commitments in their lives such as jobs and family. This is made more difficult by their bodybuilding lives progressively making demands on the athletes’ time outside the gym as they become better at their sport.

To cope with such stresses, some of the bodybuilders in this study seemed to learn to make internal attributions about their abilities in different contexts. In this sense, assuming the athletes’ entry into the gym was in order to control life events, the internal attributions they learned to make in the gym appeared to be applied to other areas in life they become involved with. The psychology literature appears to be unsure of people’s
abilities to make internal attributions in one context when learned in another, and so, this too, appears to be a potential area for future study in the gym.
REFERENCES.


APPENDIX 1.

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS.

1. How old are you (roughly!)?
2. What was your last place of study?
3. What bodybuilding titles and other sporting titles/achievements do you have?
4. Do you have an occupation (What is this? Hours per week)?
5. How much time per week do you spend in the gym and doing other training?
6. Can you tell me about some of your social pass-times?
   - Do you drink/smoke?
   - How much time do you spend doing these activities?
7. Can you describe for me, your relationships with other non-gym people.
8. In the beginning, what interested you about bodybuilding to make you start?
   - Was it a progression from weight training or training for other sports?
   - Prompts if necessary (physical changes. Psych/Soc effects).
   - What differentiates a bodybuilder from other gym users?

BODYBUILDING.

1. Could you describe for me, your relationship with other bodybuilders in the gym(s) where you train?
   - Training?
   - Socialising?
   - Relationships?
   - Drug sourcing?
2. Could you describe for me your relationship with the gym owner(s) where you train?
3. How has bodybuilding effected your relations with other bodybuilders and non-gym people?
4. What are the keys to being successful in bodybuilding?
   - What/who are your sources of information and dietary/drug supplies?
   - How important are steroids in being successful?
   - What effects does this have on you?*
5. Are there any “pressures” on bodybuilders?
   - Physical?
   - Social?
   - Economic?
6. Do you have any “coping strategies” used to reduce any pressures placed upon you?
7. How do you view your time spent training at the gym?  
   - Work vs play?

8. How has your life changed after bodybuilding? OR How do you see your life changing after bodybuilding?

CLOSURE.

Offer transcript of the interview to check validity.
Offer executive summary (2 pages) of the final project if interested.

* If the athlete is willing to talk about steroid use, prompts may include.
  Where do you obtain drugs? How do you use these drugs (cycles etc)? How did you find out how to use drugs?
  Do you know of any others using drugs...How many? Info on where and how used? Do you think drug use in sport is cheating/should be illegal/banned? How does drug use make you feel?
18 March, 1997

Graeme Ballard from the Department of Human and Leisure Sciences at Lincoln University is undertaking interviews as part of the data gathering process for his thesis; which is part of the course requirements for a Master’s degree.

Where appropriate and possible, Graeme has informed respondents about the purpose and nature of the research and its possible implications for them. He has also informed respondents that at any time they may withdraw their consent to participate in the research or their consent to have any of the information obtained from them used in any written reports based on the research.

Graeme Ballard undertakes not to show transcripts or taped recordings of interviews made during this research to any person other than 1) the respondent giving the information or 2) the supervisor of this research, Bob Gidlow, unless prior written permission has been obtained from the respondent.

Graeme Ballard undertakes to respect the anonymity of the respondents and not to publish any information gained from interviews, whether as research paper/thesis or in any other academic media, except in the form of extracts pseudonymously identified, or in the form of numerical data.

Signing this form shows that you are aware of the purpose of this study and agree to participate in it. It does not effect your right to withdraw your consent to participate at any future stage prior to publication of the results.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either Graeme Ballard or his supervisor, Bob Gidlow, at the above address.

I ................................................................. am aware of the purpose of this interview and am willing to take part. I am aware that I may withdraw my consent to be part of this study at any time prior to publication.

Signature..........................................

Date.................
APPENDIX 3.

For some people, Bodybuilding is a central part of their lives.
Would you consider it to be a central part of your life?
In what ways?
Looking over time, is it more or less central than 5/4/3/2/1/ years ago?
Will Bodybuilding be more or less central in 5/10 years time?

Are you aware of having given anything up to pursue Bodybuilding?
What things have you had to give up?
How do you feel about having given these things up?
What kind of life do you expect to be living in 10/15 years time?

What “rewards” has bodybuilding given you?
Have you got what you deserved from bodybuilding?

Whether or not Bodybuilding is a central part of your life, is there anything else which is
central in your life at this point in time?

Philosophically speaking, it is said that life is a learning experience.
What would you say you had learned from Bodybuilding?
(About yourself, your body, other people, life, love and the universe(!), sport, bodybuilding).
Have you stopped learning or does Bodybuilding still have something to teach you?

Some people get into Bodybuilding and stay with it at the elite level because they have
been influenced by others and they want to be like other people, or they want to please
those people. Other people respond more to something inside themselves; they set their
own agendas and they are what we might call “self starters”. Most of us probably have a
mixture of these influences- some from inside us, some from outside. Could you talk a bit
about the influences that got you into Bodybuilding in the first place?
Are they the same influences that got you into elite Bodybuilding?
Are they the same influences that keep you there now?

Thinking back to specific competitions you have entered, why do you think you were
successful/ unsuccessful on any given day?
How did you respond to this success/ failure?
(Tempted to use drugs, give up, switch sports, change training partner/training
regime/diet).

Imagine you are performing heavy squats. What keeps you doing it?

Do you think Bodybuilding helps you in other areas of your life?
In what ways does it help/hinder?
You mentioned earlier some of the rewards and sacrifices as a result of bodybuilding...has this influenced you in any way regarding the use of ergogenic aids such as anabolic steroids?

What has been the influence of anabolic steroids?
  Central/peripheral?
  Effects on other areas of your life?

Reserve Question: Who or what has been the biggest influence on the way you are now?