Soccer Stakeholders' Perceptions and Experiences of Gender Equity Practices in Soccer at four Western Cape Universities in South Africa

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As the candidate's supervisor, I have approved this thesis for submission.

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WESTERN CAPE

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis represents original work by the author and has not been submitted in any form to another university. Where use has been made of the work of others, this has been duly acknowledged in the text.

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Thabisile Carol Nkambule

February 2015

ABSTRACT

This study presents an exploration of a group of soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices at four Western Cape universities in South Africa. It discusses female soccer players' experiences of gender equity practices at universities and the implications for the structures and practices of equitable soccer organisations. The concept of soccer stakeholders in this study represents both those at leadership level, soccer administrators, and those actively participating in soccer, male and female soccer players in the universities.

This study uses a feminist qualitative methodology and semi-structured individual interviews with four soccer stakeholders and 16 senior soccer players, that is, eight females and eight males, for individual interviews. In addition, focus group interviews with women only and mixed gender interviews were conducted per institution.

A major finding from the study suggests the dominance of a discourse of equal and same opportunity and treatment, which was disconnected from the understandings of power, and the lack of problematising the treatment of women as 'add-on' to the supposedly natural and hierarchical structure of soccer. In addition, gender equity as a superficial practice and 'favours for women' discourses suggest the prevailing male bias in which women's participation in soccer continues to be viewed as secondary and less valuable than men's. Rationalising discourses for continued male dominance in soccer suggests that gender equality is 'conditional' for women's teams, because the different levels of soccer they are playing at are not considered or valued the same as the men. Other key findings suggest that, firstly, the four universities did not have the gender equity policy in soccer and soccer administrators did not consider the importance of a specific and directed policy in soccer. Secondly, the results on the experiences of gender (in)equity practices in the universities corroborated the lack of support for women's soccer and women soccer players' experiences of marginalisation and neglect. The findings suggest that women's soccer continues to experience inequity practices in soccer, that women's soccer is devalued and secondary to male soccer, and that men's soccer and men in soccer continue to be prioritised. Thirdly, the findings suggest that while the government's sport policy is acknowledged, of concern is the lack of structures to develop soccer

at grassroots level to ensure the sustainability of growth for boys' and girls' soccer. Furthermore, schools are identified as important institutions, particularly primary schools, to encourage and develop an interest in soccer for boys and girls, because they have paid little attention to the development of soccer for girls in different age groups, or to nurture continuity and motivation in various age groups, as compared to boys.

Fourthly, there is a lack of passionate, serious, and committed people to implement and monitor the policy to make sure that the progress of gender equity practices are implemented and monitored in soccer. In addition, there is suspicion at the government's lack of interrogating the continuing bias of the media in relation to the dominance of men's soccer and lack of media coverage for women's soccer. Fifth, the findings suggest that women are not playing a role in supporting their games and they need to take ownership of their soccer, because they seem to have surrendered the role of developing their soccer, and are reliant on men to develop girls' and women's soccer. In addition, women who play soccer reportedly experience stigmatisation through name calling and questions about their physical appearance, sexuality, and dress code.
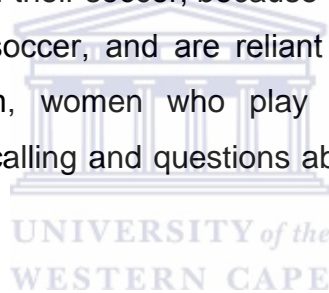
Finally, given that soccer fields are contested 'spaces' that have been traditionally and 'naturally' declared for men, research that prioritises interrogating and problematising men's perceptions of women's soccer and issues of gender equity practices in soccer is needed in a democratic South Africa.

Keywords: Gender, equity, equality, soccer, perceptions, experiences, Western Cape, university, stakeholders.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Proverbs 3: 5-6 is the verse that kept me going in difficult and challenging times while I was writing the thesis.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to Ms. Xolile Mazibuko and Ms. Lebohang Molefe.

I hope you follow your dreams and become researchers, academics, and Doctors that I think, you are meant to be. You are phenomenal women.

Thanks for being a pillar of my strength.

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CHAPTER 1

THE BEGINNING OF A PATH: SOCCER AND PRACTICES OF GENDER EQUITY AT UNIVERSITIES

1.1 Introduction

The tradition of the sports world has developed as a distinctly male institution internationally and on the African continent (Wiley, Shaw & Havitz, 2000). This development is also noted in social norms, practices in schools, and institutions of higher learning that continue to inculcate the belief that sport is a domain in which male participation is inevitable (Wiley et al., 2000; Messner, 1998). According to Messner (1997) a key element of the cultural power of sport has been its significance as a site for the reproduction of male identities, which starts at grassroots level where local communities and schools socially construct sport along the lines of gender. Thus, while male participation in sport is seen as 'natural' because of societal norms, it is a phase that is expected to end at a particular point. In the past women have been systematically excluded from participating in many sports, and have been channelled into others that concur with societal norms of femininity (Howe, 2001). This notion is emphasised by Metheny (1967) who reported that gender stereotyping of sports was as a result of gender-role expectations of society. Such stereotyping can influence individuals' choice of participation in sport with their choices conforming to society's expectations of their participation. Furthermore, inequitable gender relations also contribute to the exclusion of girls and women from male-dominated sports (Howe, 2001).

Consequently, soccer remains fiercely masculine and strongly intolerant of the entry of women (Bryson, 1987; Meân, 2001), if women's discriminatory experiences in soccer are considered. Soccer (known as football in most European countries, I use 'soccer' to reflect the site of study) has been accepted to be the dominant, most popular and influential sport throughout the world (Sugden & Tomlinson, 1994). Due to men's dominance, it was perceived as the last preserve for masculinity which was eventually threatened by women entering this sport. In South Africa as more girls

and women play soccer, attention has been given to questions relating to women's participation in what has been seen as the national men's sport. Women have a long history of participation in soccer, though they continue to face countless barriers to competitive soccer, particularly the salary based soccer. However, irrespective of the lack of a highly paid salary league in South Africa, soccer is one of the sports which enjoys growing popularity among girls and women. It could be argued that the lack of a competitive salary league for women's soccer serves to reinforce hegemonic notions of masculinity within soccer.

For Howe (2001), besides gender, sexuality has an influence on how women's soccer is portrayed to the public, which could be categorised in two ways. Firstly, the femininity and sexuality of female players is brought into question due to the assumption that physical, aggressive behaviour is masculine. Secondly, women are seen in a negative light because their physical skill is not as developed as it is for men. There is also evidence that women who play soccer are viewed as unfeminine or lesbian (Howe, 2001) or as masculine or homosexual (Davis-Delano, Pollock & Vose, 2009; Fallon & Jome, 2007; Cox & Thompson, 2001). This is evident in South Africa where the sexual orientation of women soccer players is questioned because the perception is that they are competing with men by straying into their territory (Sunday Times, 30 August, 2009). Of concern in South Africa is that the suspicion of being a lesbian may result in an epidemic of violence, sometimes being subjected to "corrective rape" by men trying to punish or cure them (Naidoo & Muholi, 2010, p. 10). Permanent suspicions about the gender conformity and sexual conformity of women playing soccer is accentuated by the 'homosocial' nature of the sport and the relationship it suggests. Thus considering that the gender definition of sport emphasises virile, heterosexual masculinity, which requires 'gender conformity' for women in general, and for female athletes in particular (Mennesson & Clément, 2003), women who play soccer transgress the dominant representations of athletic women widely publicised and systematically reinforced by the media (Mennesson & Clément). The most appreciated sports are those that favour, or do not prohibit, the expression of 'feminine gracefulness' during performance, in spite of intensive training.

Messner (1996) posits that if the "linkup 'athletes–masculinity–heterosexuality' does not cause any doubt for men, the linkup 'athletes–femininity–heterosexuality' is generally presented in a more or less explicitly interrogative fashion for women" (p. 314). Heteronormativity regulates not only sexual relationships, but also the roles, behaviours, appearances and sexualities of, and relationships between and among, women and men (Haugaa Engh, 2010). Moreover, heteronormative discourses normalise a particular relationship between sex, gender and sexuality that posits woman/feminine/heterosexual and man/masculine/heterosexual as a natural order from which variance is considered a punishable deviance (Caudwell, 2003). It could be perceived as a punishment for women with different physicality that does not conform to the prescribed feminine physical appearance to be expected to undergo a so-called 'sex test' to prove that they really are women (Wackwitz, 2003). For example, the appearances of Caster Semenya, South African 800 metre champion runner and Park Eun-Seon the South Korean soccer player disrupts notions of femininity and appropriate feminine appearances as embedded in heteronormative discourses. When it comes to women's engagements with sport and physical activity, the seemingly unavoidable contradiction between athleticism and femininity creates a situation in which being a woman and an athlete is almost an impossibility (Haugaa Engh, 2010). Discourses about the 'natural' physical difference between men and women function to sustain a belief that athleticism and muscularity is compatible only with masculinity.

Feminist sport sociologists, who look more critically at the women's game, have focused on the gendered experiences of women players and the social expectations and norms that govern the construction of heterosexual femininity (Caudwell, 1999, 2002, 2003; Cox & Thompson, 2000, 2001; Mennesson & Clement, 2003; Scraton et al., 1999). However, just as in the feminist sociology of sport more generally, these analyses have not yet considered 'race' and ethnicity. This reflects the fact that in the sociology of sport, just as in sociology more broadly, gender and 'race' have tended to be studied in isolation, each constituting a separate field of enquiry (Scraton, 2001). Similarly, Haugaa Engh (2010) argues that the Northern domination of feminist analyses of sports masks differences in women's experiences by neglecting to examine the intersections of gender, race and class as axes of domination in women's lives. In Africa, Hargreaves is one of the few academics who has dedicated
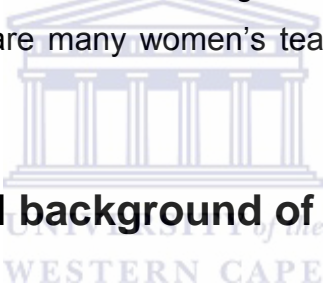
efforts to write about this, and has made important contributions through investigating Olympic sports in Zimbabwe and South Africa. She argues that the 'culture of sport' has been more predominant and resourceful among the white communities and has led to a situation where more white women participate in sport on a higher level (Hargreaves, 1994). Moreover, she argues that in the South African context pressure for making sport multiracial has largely been directed at Black African males, leaving "the sporting potential of the female Black South African population untapped and unknown" (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 232). Similarly, Carrington and McDonald (2001) state that the study of 'race', ethnicity and sport focuses on black sportsmen as the universal subject, just as studies of gender have positioned white women as the universal female subject.

1.2 Gender equity policies in sports

Research into gender-related diversity in sport and sport organisations demonstrates that they are far from being equitable. This is due to a disjuncture between the development of gender equity policies and programmes and the ways in which gender relations, or the socially constructed ideas of what it is to be a man or woman, are expressed and played out (Acker, 2000). The gender equity policies and programmes have struggled to meet their espoused purposes and may even work to the detriment of their stated equity aims (Hoeber, 2004; Hoeber & Frisby, 2001; Shaw & Penney, 2003). For example, while the aim of some policies is to increase the numbers of women participating in sport and management positions, this does little to change the dominance of masculinities that are deeply and historically entrenched in sport. It is noted that even when women's teams had a longer history of winning than men's teams, the inequities in budgets, promotions, and access to administrative positions persisted (Hoeber, 2004; Hoeber & Frisby, 2001). In addition, the implementation of equity policies may be faced with backlash, as some men and women may resent the seemingly special treatment that women might receive (Ely & Meyerson, 2000a).

Considering the contradictions between the creation and implementation of gender equity policies workable alternatives have been uncommon. For Ely and Meyerson (2000a) the underlying limitations of gender equity policies are because they have

been conventionally theorised as a women's-only issue. Similarly, Meier (2005) states that the argument for the use of "sport for gender equity" (Meier, 2005, p. 47) reinforces the notion that 'gender work' is essentially about women. Of concern with this perspective is that it risks putting blame on women for their historically produced circumstances that have resulted in fewer and less powerful positions for women in soccer organisations when compared to men (Staurowsky, 1996). It follows that if gender equity is a women's issue, then it is women's responsibility to address it, rather than the responsibility of all organisational members (Meyerson & Kolb, 2000). Actually, it is noted that some sport organisations may engage in the creation of equity policies and programmes for political reasons, such as to gain government funding based on required criteria (McKay, 1997; Shaw & Penney, 2003), without valuing equitable gender relations in deeper and more meaningful ways (Hoeber & Frisby, 2001). In South Africa it is unclear whether soccer organisations receive funding from the government to ensure that gender equity policy is successfully implemented, however there are many women's teams still in existence that were started after 1994.

1.3 The socio-political background of soccer in South Africa

Sport, in whatever form or shape, has always been an integral part of the social fabric of the South African society, irrespective of the political constraints. Before the European colonists arrived in South Africa sport already existed, although they did not consider them as sport due to unfamiliarity and not fitting with their conception of sport. According to Alegi (2004) during the pre-colonial South Africa sporting activities such as stick fighting, hunting, competitive dancing and foot racing constituted sporting practices in highly codified forms. In rural areas "For African male youths, stick fighting was sport … developed in patriarchal South African societies and was gender- and age- based contests and recreations" (Alegi, 2004, p. 8). This outdoor sport became a key part of the gendering process for young men and "forged assertive masculine identity, and enhanced their reputation of warriors" (Alegi, 2004, p. 9). While young men were doing these activities young girls took part in singing and dancing activities around the time of puberty (Alegi, 2004) as their way of participating in 'soft' sport, and all these activities formed a vital part of "a local

vernacular athletic worldview" (Alegi, 2004, p. 14). The British Colonials utilised the local sporting 'codes' and used them to build and develop their athletic framework, to inscribe 'uncivilised' colonial subjects with ideals of civilisation through the use of sport and recreation in the schooling system (Haugaa Engh, 2010).

Sport was one way in which the English speaking settlers in South Africa became part of the imperial community, and Nauright (1997) argues that "English-speaking white schools in South Africa took up British games and used them to instil values of British elite culture" (p. 25). For example, cricket became "the epitome of British culture, morality, manners and racism, which served to alienate Afrikaners as well as most blacks" (Nauright, 1997, p. 26). It was also used to establish links with other British settler communities outside the Union, consolidating the importance of keeping links with 'home', while at the same time supporting a racial, rather than nation based solidarity (Nauright, 1997). This establishment served to deepen divisions among whites in South Africa, and also caused rugby, rather than cricket, to achieve a highly symbolic value during the apartheid years (Nauright, 1997). In the history of these sports, white women were not participating in the 'gentlemen' sports but were only supporters and spectators. Nauright (1997) argues that the racialisation of sport that is evident in South Africa even today, has its roots in 20th century developments where "sporting practice and associated popular culture surrounding sport became distinct social signifiers within the country" (Nauright, 1997, p. 26). It is important to mention that soccer was one of the elite sports for white men, considering the establishment of the all-white South African Football Association (SAFA) in 1892 by British and Dutch settlers (Bolsmann, 2010). By 1900 Black[1] South Africans were not included in sporting competitions in which Whites participated; and sport was generally established and developed in highly segregationist forms (Nauright, 1997). Nauright (1997, p. 45) suggests that "… sport became one of the central cultural practices whereby white supremacy and difference were performed and learned over time". It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that organised sports became a major concern in South Africa, and from the 1920s onwards, organised sports became a key part of policy (Badenhorst, 2004).

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[1] The term 'black' was used to refer to South Africans previously classified as African, Coloured and Indian under apartheid law (Population Registration Act 1950).

This discussion demonstrates that racial segregation in sport was not introduced by the Afrikaner Nationalist government in 1948, however they played a role in tightening and fortifying the existing racial practices and laws (Booth, 1998). Racial segregation became more rigid as the government designed policies to ensure that no racial mixing was taking place in sport (Nauright, 1997). The development of sports policies in 1956 is a clear indication of state involvement, where official sporting codes had clauses in their constitutions restricting membership to persons of white descent (Hill, 2011; Jarvie, 1991). The Nationalist government referred to racial segregation as "an old national custom" and that sport could safely be left to the forces of tradition (Nauright, 1997, p. 26). Darby (2008, p. 261) quoted Dr Dönges' speech in 1956 "white and non-whites had to organise their sports separately, prohibited any form of mixed sport within South Africa, prevented mixed teams from competing abroad and required international teams competing in South Africa to send an all-white team". This statement marked the politicisation of sport through the promotion of racial division and the association of certain sports with cultural identity and racial groups. Thus, politics played a major role in sports where no area of life in South Africa was immune from the politics of race, and segregated sport was one of the most visible of racial policies and practices (Booth, 1998, p. 4).
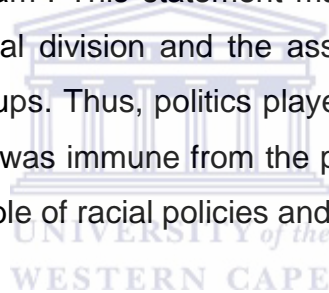
The notion of the sports field as a place and space of equals did not exist in South Africa because "only those of the same economic class, social status and race played together" (Booth, 1998, p. 4). The politics of racial legislation, what Jarvie (1991, p. 182) calls "a powerful administrative machine", influenced the association of certain sports with popular culture(s) and the unequal distribution of sports resources such as the stadiums and funding. Sport was therefore a perfect vehicle to promote and express not only the politics of racial privilege and priorities but also to perpetuate gender stereotypes. It was taken for granted that when issues of sports were discussed or published, it was normative that they referred to "sports*men*, which perpetuated the marginalisation of sportswomen" (Darby, 2010, p. 266). Thus the state had power and control over who played where, with whom, under what circumstances, and in terms of which sport belonged to whom, that is, sport as a cultural struggle and identity. It could be stated then that in the South African context, soccer was developed as an institutionalised form, to use Bourdieu's concept, of cultural capital, first by the rise of white élite soccer and later, black working class

soccer. The politics of soccer in South African sport could then be explained in relation to the way race and national identity has shaped and continues to shape sport (Booth, 1998).

1.4 The history of men's soccer in South Africa

The research and sociology of soccer is still in its infancy in South Africa, and that which is in existence focuses on the dominance of white and black male soccer (Hill, 2011). Similarly, soccer is relatively underdeveloped and what seem dominant are recently published academic and non-academic books, and magazines. Historically, access to the opportunities of playing non-organised and/or organised soccer has long been determined by racial, gender, and class hierarchies in South African society (Pelak, 2010). These structures unequally decided who participated in soccer, particularly for men, and was very biased towards female soccer, especially non-whites[2]. Regarding the association of soccer with a particular race and popular culture, it did not only exist in male soccer but also in women's soccer. The literature on the history of soccer indicates that white people were the first to play organised soccer in South Africa. While the first recorded soccer match was in Port Elizabeth in 1862 (*Eastern Province Herald* on 23 May 1862), Van Der Merwe (2007, p. 160) traced the first soccer match in Cape Town to a game between 15 officers of the 11th Regiment Royal Engineers and Royal Artillery and 15 gentlemen from the Cape Town civil service at Green Point, Cape Town, on Saturday, 23 August 1862. According to Bolsmann (2010) white male soccer was first played in 1862 and was followed by the establishment of the South African Football Association (SAFA) in 1892. The all-white SAFA was affiliated to the English Football Association (FA) and had a representative in London, and the white team put South Africa at the forefront of globalising soccer in the early twentieth century, and brought with it a great sense of white identity. Behind SAFA was a financial sponsorship from the government, which ensured access to finance and stadiums at all times (Alegi, 2004). Darby (2008, p. 261) argues that the affiliation of SAFA to FIFA meant that "the interests of the majority of football activity were not represented within the world body", because SAFA only represented 20% of the football playing South African population.

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[2] 'Non-white' is a concept that was used during apartheid referring to Coloureds, Indians, and African (Bantu) as one racial group.

Soccer is played by all races in South Africa. Although Indians have a short history of playing soccer, Coloured played soccer as far back as the 19th century. In Natal, the emergence of male football is traced in the English schools to the 1870s, particularly to Pietermaritzburg, which became the home of the game in South Africa (Hill, 2011). In 1921, the Indian footballers toured India and the All-India Football Association toured South Africa in 1933, which attracted approximately 100 000 spectators (Raath, 2002). After this tour, many Indian teams were formed in the 1930s and in 1942 the Durban Senior League was formed. However, by 1986, very few Indian clubs existed and the literature does not say anything of the whereabouts of Indian male soccer in the 1990s. It is noted that women played an important role in men's soccer in Durban, as Alegi (2004, p. 18) explains that "women were important actors in the daily activities of supporters clubs, filling both conservative and progressive roles". These roles were played outside the field and were never allowed on the soccer field, which means women continued to play roles they always played at home, in terms of supporting men.

Soccer played by Coloured soccer dates back to the 19th century with the arrival of British sailors and soldiers. According to Hill (2011), the first recorded club called Roslyn was established in 1882 in District Six by freed slaves, followed by Malay Quarter (now known as Bokaap). Raath (2002, p. 45) states that "from 1904 onwards soccer grew among the Coloureds and resulted on the formation of the Western Province Coloured Football Association (WPCFA)". Of interest is that Coloured teams even had problems with stadiums and changing rooms for games, let alone for practices. Raath (2002, p. 102) states that "players had to compromise their dignity and change into their soccer kit in the open". The lack of infrastructure never discouraged soccer players from playing the game they considered 'a beautiful game'. Although there was progress with Coloured soccer, things changed with the introduction of policies entrenching racism, whereby certain sections of the community, that is Muslims and Africans, were not accepted into the league (Alegi, 2004). In the Coloured community, soccer was a family sport as Pelak (2004) observes that Saturdays and Sundays were family time in the soccer field for Coloureds in Cape Town. Of concern however is Ghandi Adams statement, a Coloured former soccer player, that: "Mind you, today I still see undertones of racism. In years gone by it was from the whites, now it is from the Africans. Once we

were not white enough. Now we are not black enough" (in Raath, 2002, p. 109). Although this comment could possibly be true, the Cape Town infrastructure seems to tell a different story, given my observation on the infrastructure dominance in Coloured areas as compared to Black African areas. I argue that much research is still needed to gain more insight into the participation of Coloureds in soccer, because their participation seems to have increased in the 20th and 21st century, particularly in girls' and women's soccer. Notwithstanding the changes in South Africa, Black African soccer teams are still having problems with access to stadiums and fields to practice, particularly in Cape Town.

The early development and popularity of soccer amongst Blacks is traced in Natal to the 1890s (Alegi, 1999). The establishment of soccer promoted masculine athleticism and toughness, as illustrated by Magubane's (1963, p. 12) statement: "... there's a need for (soccer) clubs dominated by male workers to evoke images of 'viciousness, fury, and savagery'" (in Nauright, 1997, p. 106). The establishment of gold mines in the 1920s played a role in developing and popularising Black African soccer, which became popular in different townships in South Africa and was associated with the working class, as compared to the connection with the white male middle class (Darby, 2008). Darby (2008, p. 267) posits that "soccer clubs and competitions brought many people of different language groups and backgrounds together to help form new urban black popular culture of the cities". Similarly, Alegi (2004, p. 125) states that "soccer provided a meeting place for common social and cultural experiences that sliced through class, race, ethnic and gender distinctions". While this might be the case, this discussion shows that men have long dominated soccer, which at some point was used to instill masculinity through the promotion of toughness. This is interesting because the discourse possibly excluded men who never showed signs of toughness but feminine softness. The association of masculine fast pace and toughness with soccer could have shaped the undermining of female soccer, as it is described as soft, slow paced, and feminine. This discussion traced the complex developmental process and historical dominance of men's soccer, and possibly addresses the continuing dominance in soccer.

1.5 Outlining South African women's participation in soccer

The popularity and dominance of soccer in different racial groups in South Africa raises questions of whether women were really not playing soccer, because it is unbelievable that the popularity of soccer, especially among Coloured and Black African communities, never led females to play soccer. Pelak (2006, p. 375) observes that "women have a forty-year history of participating in organised soccer". This information was mostly acquired orally from women who played soccer and also from archival news stories (Pelak, 2010). Although this is now known, Jones (2001, p. 130) is of the opinion that still, "the contributions of sporting females are largely invisible ... and it is only since the late 1990s that scholars have begun to research the various histories around females and sport in South Africa". The various authors that made contributions are: Andre Odendaal (2008), Cora Burnett (2001, 2002, 2003), Jennifer Hargreaves (1994,1997), Cheryl Roberts (1992, 1993, 1994, 1995), Denise Jones (2001, 2003, 2004), Cynthia Pelak (2005, 2006, 2009, 2010) and Martha Saavedra (2004, 2005, 2009) (Haugaa Engh, 2010), and they have provided a sound base from which to proceed with further research and writing on women's soccer in South Africa. While these authors contributed to the development of literature on women's soccer, the nature of gender equity practices in soccer within university contexts has not been researched in South Africa.

According to Pelak (2010, p. 64), "South African women's access to opportunities in organised soccer has been largely determined by an individual's race and class". This was noted when South African English-speaking urban middle-class women became the first to participate in organised soccer during the late 1960s and early 1970s (Pelak, 2010; Saavedra, 2004). Nauright (1997, p. 45) suggests that "race and class privilege helped to facilitate [white females'] entry into the male-dominated sport". Apparently, they never had problems with material resources necessary to participate in organised sport, especially a masculine sport like soccer (Pelak, 2006). Of interest is that Afrikaans-speaking women seem not to have been interested in soccer, and possibly supported rugby, which was dominant in the Afrikaans community. Pelak (2010, p. 375) posits that with women's soccer, "racial integration was not a problem under apartheid rule because the sport was small and hardly

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noticed". This is noted when whites participated in mixed race competitions although, as Saavedra (2004, p. 219) argues "white women were still not willing to sacrifice their own privilege". This was clearly noticed when apartheid was dismantled in the early 1990s, the majority of white women disappeared from soccer. According to Pelak (2006, p. 376), the disappearance of white female soccer players was perceived as not problematic because "they did not represent a large part of the population". Although the reason for the disappearance is unclear, it is however noticed that it happened in the late 1990s and seems to be associated with the end of apartheid "given the constraints of racialised spatial arrangement" that white women enjoyed. The end of apartheid also marked the increasing number of Coloured and Black African women soccer players and the continuing racialisation of soccer. It has lately been re-constructed as a "black game" (Couzens, 1983, p. 217), while there is strong competition and participation of Coloured women in Cape Town.

The very little existing literature on women and sport in South Africa illustrates that "some coloured women managed to create spaces and opportunities for themselves ..." to play informal soccer, particularly in Cape Town (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 24). According to Pelak (2010, p. 64), "coloured and black women's played soccer irregularly soccer in the 1960s and started to play organised soccer in the late 1970s and early 1980s". It is unfortunate and disappointing that although this participation existed, the cursory information does not provide helpful incidents and experiences of coloured women soccer. This lack of information could be attributed to the hardly-noticed women's soccer, while a player like Desiree Ellis was already popular in soccer. This is evident when she was selected to be part of the 'unofficial' squad that played in Italy in 1989 (Pelak, 2010). There were a number of Coloured women's teams such as Cape Town Spurs (formerly known as Saban), Athlone Santos, and Cape Town Santos, which were affiliated to SAWFA[3] and participated in different tournaments from 1975 to 1990.

This participation proves that women were playing serious soccer and lacked someone to document these experiences. Pelak (2006, p. 377) posits that in the

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[3] SAWFA stands for South African Women's Football Association, which was exclusively for whites and coloureds (Pelak, 2006).

Western Province (Cape Town), approximately six teams competed in 1990 and increased in the beginning of year 2000 to approximately 22 teams. These percentages do not clarify the participating races, and the Coloured women's participation percentage is presently not known in soccer, considering the previous increment; however, the number has surely increased. This is a speculation which needs to be confirmed through research to trace the trajectory of women's development in soccer. I argue that no one will do the research for women, as they need to take the initiative and document their experiences and incidences in soccer themselves. There are various issues that need to be researched on women's soccer, such as rural women's participation in and experiences of soccer because of a general focus on urban women's soccer.

Talking about rural women's soccer, Alegi (2004) states that Black African women's informal participation in soccer started in the 1960s. They did not only support Black African men's teams but also played soccer very informally in the townships. For Black people, soccer became a second religion, in the sense that weekends were known as soccer days and some women were motivated by male soccer and played seriously. This is illustrated by the establishment of Orlando Pirates Women's Football Club and Mother City Girls, both Black African teams (Alegi, 2004). Alegi (2004) emphasises the point that these teams were short-lived, although the reason is not mentioned. The assumption is the lack of support both from the management and the community, considering that it was still a stereotype for a girl and woman to play soccer. I argue that the material and infrastructural inequalities that were enjoyed by Black African men played a huge role in limiting Black African female participation in soccer because they had to compete with men who were always reluctant to share. Nonetheless, the resources were also limited for Black African men who understandably were not going to compromise the little infrastructure they had for female soccer. Pelak (2010, p. 64) said that "the harsh material inequalities experienced by black women under apartheid rule meant that very few of them enjoyed opportunities to participate in sport".

Even if this was the case for Black African women's soccer, it did not stop them from playing soccer, instead their "popularity grew exponentially" (Pelak, 2010, p. 67), especially during the 1990s. For example, the Winnie Ladies Soccer Club is known

to be the first women's club in Cape Town and was established in 1993. This encouraged the establishment of other women's teams in the townships and the formation of SAWSA[4]. Notwithstanding the increase on women's soccer, that did not address the lack of adequate funding and competing for resources and soccer fields with men. Of concern and rather disappointing, is that this inequality between men and women's soccer continued until "a Women's Desk was established at the National Sports council" (Couzens, 1983, p. 204). This was to enforce women's recognition in sport and promote development.

These marked changes in women's soccer and new structures and organisations administering sport were set up in order to create a racially inclusive administration of sport (Saavedra, 2004). The 'unification of sporting structures was not a pain-free process, and due to internal power struggles both SAWFA and SAWSA were "dissolved, and existing local clubs and emerging new teams were reorganized under an appointed committee, which eventually became the South African Women's Football Association (SAWFA)" (Saavedra, 2004, p. 244). Following from the creation of SAWFA non-racial competitive league structures were set up as a symbol of being united, and in May 1993 in Johannesburg, the first Senior Women's National Team (nicknamed Banyana Banyana) was selected (Saavedra, 2004), and was dominated by Black African players. Unfortunately, internal power struggles persisted within the new SAWFA structure, and when Banyana Banyana failed to qualify for the 1997 Women's World Cup, SAFA dissolved the 'new' SAWFA organisation (Saavedra, 2004). It is unfortunate that the organisation was quickly dissolved due to not qualifying for the World Cup. SAFA overlooked that it was a new team that needed time to get used to competitions, especially seeing that it was a mixture of players from different teams and provinces, who needed time to familiarise themselves with various style of soccer.

However, Saavedra (2004) and Pelak (2010) suggest that the breakdown of SAWFA and the subsequent incorporation of women's football into SAFA structures was a direct result of the problems and concerns outlined by the Pickard Commission's

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[4] SAWSA was formed by a group of black women in 1991, after complaining against exclusion in the SAWFA organisation (Pelak, 2006).

report of 1997. The Pickard Commission was set up to investigate claims concerning financial mismanagement and sexual harassment on the part of male owners, managers and leaders within women's football in the mid-1990s (Pelak, 2010). The commission found that SAFA had been negligent in responding to the allegations and reports made by women's soccer clubs and teams, and advised SAFA to increase the allocation of funds for women's soccer and to work harder at creating adequate structures for the development of women's soccer (Pelak, 2010). SAFA as a result organised two separate women's soccer Indabas, and finally claimed full control over women's soccer and its structures in 2000 (Pelak, 2010). A women's steering committee was set up as a part of SAFA structures, and SAFA became the official organiser of women's soccer nationally (Saavedra, 2004). The claiming of full control over women's soccer seems to have raised hope for sponsorship of women's soccer, considering that the men's soccer leagues have sponsorships and they seem to know how to market their soccer.

A new phase of women's football in South Africa began when the SAFA Sanlam National Women's League was launched in 2001 (Saavedra, 2004). The league consisted of more than 300 teams, and the top teams in each province competed annually in the Sanlam Halala Cup tournament (Saavedra, 2004). The establishment of the national league and the Halala Cup developed women's soccer, and also provided a space for regular and national competition. This also served to keep current national team players fit, while at the same time providing a space for new talent to be discovered (Saavedra, 2004). The founding of the Sanlam league marked the entry of corporate sponsorship into women's soccer and Vodacom, Cadbury, and Nike soon followed Sanlam as sponsors of women's soccer in South Africa. The entrance of ABSA and SASOL with an expansive sponsorship contract in the beginning of 2009 was an achievement, as they became the official supporters of women's soccer in South Africa. ABSA supports the regional 'development' leagues (named the ABSA league) and corresponding tournaments, and their contribution amounts to about R20-million (Erasmus, Media Club South Africa 20/02/2009). SASOL has come on-board to support the high-level league as well as the national teams; they have entered a four-year contract to support the women's game (Erasmus, Media Club South Africa 20/02/2009). Following the involvement of

SASOL, and the launch of the SASOL league, women's teams across South Africa have received much needed support in the form of transport allowances and equipment, the national team has also increasingly started to take part in overseas friendlies and competitions (Clark, Mills & Haugaa Engh, 2009).

Despite the recent sponsorships by ABSA and Sasol, women's soccer in South Africa is still struggling to 'make ends meet', and women's football remains underfunded, both at local, provincial and national levels. The Banyana Banyana team does not, by far, receive equal remuneration to the Men's National Team (Bafana Bafana) and while the men get to keep their national team playing kits, the women have to return theirs after each match (Saavedra, 2004). In the past few years there have been numerous attempts to set up a national competitive and professional league for women efforts however, have yet to show results (Haugaa Engh, 2010).

1.6 Rationale and motivation of the study

As mentioned earlier, apartheid was used to widen the inequality of provision in sport as well as in other walks of South African life. Sport, as an integral component of South African social formation, was subject to the laws of apartheid and affected by the many contradictions of legislative and discriminatory policy (Sugden & Tomlinson, 2002). The racial and gender discriminatory policy in sport was extended not only in schools but also in institutions of higher learning (Hendricks, 1996). The discriminatory policy ensured that Black[5] African people did not participate in sports that were associated with White people, for example, cricket, rugby, tennis, and swimming, to mention a few. This was also noted in universities, where white universities had first class sports facilities as compared to Black universities which were dominated by soccer and netball fields and some with boxing facilities and very rarely tennis courts and swimming pools. Thus, for Black African men soccer became their sport and netball became a sport not only for Black African females but also for white females. The university applied the same social practices where males were associated with 'tough', physical sports while females were associated with

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[5] Black African, in this study, refers to people classified under the apartheid system as non-white but do not fall into the categories of White, Coloured or Indians

netball and sometimes with tennis. This sport culture was entrenched in the society and also in the university context whereby it seems that girls and women were not expected to participate in soccer as the boys and men were not expected to participate in netball

The association with successful masculinity and the popularity of soccer meant that men across class and racial divisions were attracted to soccer as participants or observers (Pelak, 2005). With this background in mind, it is clear that this legacy left the country with high levels of gender inequality and inequity in sport with a particular marginalisation and disempowerment of women in soccer. It is within this backdrop that the study aims to investigate the status of gender equity practices in soccer at universities in a post-apartheid, democratic, non-sexist South Africa. It is important to note that this was an aspiration but not necessarily a reality. Furthermore, I argue that it is crucial to explore soccer stakeholders' understandings of gender equity as well as women's experiences in particular in order to unpack current gender equity practices in the university context.

In addressing the racial and gender inequalities and inequities of the apartheid government in sport, the new government was driven by the ideology of the 'non-racial' and 'non-sexist' nation. This philosophy, especially the latter, intended to enforce gender equality and encourage women's empowerment in social, cultural and economic life, including sport (Chappell, 2003; Hargreaves, 2000). Although the government's intentions are clearly stated in policy, the development of comprehensive equality and equity[6] between men and women in sport has been very slow and the allocation of resources remains uneven (Richardson, 2001). By introducing the laws and legislation the government was attempting to empower women to take advantage of the opportunities provided in sport. Chappell (2003, p. 4), however, argues that "just because all sections of the communities are equal according to the law, it does not follow that there will be equality and equity of opportunity". This means that although the government's plan was to achieve greater

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[6] Equality, in this study means leveling the playing field for girls, women, boys and men by ensuring that all children have equal opportunity to develop their talents. Equity, in this study does not mean that all people must be treated the same but is the principle and practice of fair and equitable allocation of resources and opportunities for females and males. Equity eliminates discriminatory practices that are barriers to full participation of either gender.

gender equality in sports, where girls have been targeted as a group in need of special attention (Roberts, 1991), it is difficult to turn a blind eye to the lack of development in women's soccer while male soccer enjoys publicity and support. Pelak (2005, p. 55) argues that "just because the ideology and discourse of equality and equity according to the law has been announced, it seems not to mean that there will be equal opportunities for men and women because the structures, processes, and practices of sport were never transformed". This was restated by Women and Sport South Africa (WASSA): "Soccer is still seen to be the domain of men. This is still the case irrespective of what the constitution says in relation to equal rights, so we have not made enough sustainable progress since 1994…" (Chappell, 2003, p. 34).

In relation to this study, the continued status of gender inequality and inequity in soccer between the men's and women's national teams and soccer leagues is well studied and known, however little is known of the status of gender equity practices in soccer at universities. Universities are acknowledged as one of the platforms in which dialogue, interrogation and critical analysis of social issues, including gender biases in soccer, take place. Of concern, Tight (2003) argue, is that sports in universities is perceived as relatively under researched, although assuming greater importance in promoting participation at the highest levels in national and international sporting competitions. In the context of this study, the university plays an important role in producing players for the professional and national teams through the SASSU (South African Students' Sport Union) league, the SASSU national team, and the Vodacom amateur leagues for males and females at university level. It is therefore of concern that stakeholders' understandings and experiences of gender equity practices in soccer at universities are overlooked and not known. This might perpetuate gender inequity practices in soccer, which could possibly extend outside of the university context, as some men and women soccer players also participate in external leagues. The taken for granted issues of gender equity in soccer at university might explain the continued gender inequity in soccer in the community, because the university seems silent on the issues of gender equity in soccer, and generally in sports. The rationale for this study is supported by the need to investigate soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity

practices at universities to transform the taken for granted issues of gender equity in soccer to accomplish true gender equity in soccer.

It is therefore the intention of this study to enhance existing knowledge on gender equity in soccer at university institutions. It may further serve to play an important role for policymakers at university and government levels because of its potential to provide an in-depth understanding of gender equity meanings, practices and policy implementation in soccer, in the light of provisions in place.

1.7 Statement of the problem

Insufficient research into the history and sociology of women's sport and particularly soccer has been conducted in South Africa. The little information that exists about soccer focuses on irregular treatment of gender in the literature that discursively reinforces men's soccer as the standard and women's soccer as the other, because it has not been seen as important as men's soccer. It was not until the late 20th century, particularly in South Africa, when a few women academics started to write about women's soccer, that the literature approach shifted from male centeredness to women's recognition in soccer. This sparked various research studies on sporting women since the 1980s in South Africa, and from then they received a lot more attention than previously. However, it is only since the late 1990s that research on women in sports has been taken seriously by sociologists and other researchers (Jones, 2003). Researchers such as Andre Odendaal (2008), Cora Burnett (2001, 2002, 2003), Jennifer Hargreaves (1994, 1997), Cheryl Roberts (1992, 1993, 1994, 1995), Denise Jones (2001, 2003, 2004), Cynthia Pelak (2005, 2006, 2009, 2010) and Martha Saavedra (2004, 2005, 2009) have made enormous contributions to the development and marketing of women's sport, and soccer in particular in South Africa. Research gaps on women's soccer are still recognised, for example, sport bodies and sexuality are completely absent from South African sport studies, as most of what has been written concerning women and sports presents only historical analyses of racial and gender inequalities (Haugaa Engh, 2010). In a country where education and sport organisations were historically used to divide and undermine certain social and cultural aspects of life, institutions of higher learning should arguably be central in addressing social transformation and gender equity in sport.

Of concern is the lack of research to investigate the state of gender equity practices in soccer within the university context, in particular that they develop players who are then selected for the senior national team.

1.8 Research focus and objectives

This study focuses on exploring a group of soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices at four Western Cape universities in South Africa, in order to interrogate, and critique the implementation of gender equity in soccer. The study furthermore intends to bring to light female soccer players' experiences at universities representing diverse cultural, religious and racial backgrounds, and suggest how these experiences may have implications for the structures and practices of equitable soccer organisations. The concept of soccer stakeholders in this study represents both those at leadership level and those actively participating in sports, including male and female soccer players and soccer administrators at university.

1.8.1 Research questions

Given these objectives, the study seeks to address several research questions. The overriding research question which informs this study is: "What are female and male soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer at four Western Cape universities?" Within this broad question the following sub-questions were asked:

- What are soccer stakeholders' conception(s) and understanding(s) of gender equity?

- Do the universities have gender equity policies and interventions in soccer, if so what do these include?

- How is gender equity practiced in soccer at four Western Cape universities?

- What role do the universities reportedly play in promoting gender equity practices in soccer?

- What are women soccer players' experiences in soccer at their universities with respect to gender inequities in particular?

- Why does gender inequity in soccer persist despite government attempts to address it?

1.9 The structure of the thesis

The main aim of Chapter one has been to introduce and provide the contextual background through a discussion of the existing policy in sports, the socio-politics in sport, and men's and women's participation in soccer during apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. This is in relation to the role the former era played in shaping and dictating who could play what sport, where, when and to what extent. The purpose of this chapter is to show the way in which the post-apartheid era is attempting to redress the gender inequality and/or inequities practices of the past in sport, and soccer in particular. The status of research into sport, especially soccer and women's soccer in South Africa is also discussed to understand the impact of socio-political factors and development, or lack thereof, in soccer post-1994. The chapter also contains the rationale and motivation of the study, the statement of the problem, the focus and objectives, and lastly research questions.

Chapter two discusses the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that are used to interrogate and critique and critically analyse soccer stakeholders' meanings and experiences of gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer in the selected universities. The study utilises feminist and Foucauldian post-structuralism theory for the roles they play in interrogating the production of knowledge (meanings), where some voices and experiences are heard and counted as knowledge, while others are ignored and overlooked. The Feminist perspective on sport examines how men's soccer occupies positions of power and popularity, and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance. Feminist post-structuralism provides a lens for in-depth examination of personal experiences, perceptions, relationships and contextual meanings of relations of power between individuals. Personal experiences and perceptions are understood to be informed by

social, cultural and institutional beliefs, stereotypes and norms, and this theoretical framework is utilised to interrogate and problematise the institutional beliefs, stereotypes and norms in relation to gender equity practices in soccer.

Chapter three presents a discussion on gender and sport in general and specifically gender issues in soccer and equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer internationally, on the African continent, and in South Africa. The purpose is to understand how issues of gender equity in soccer have been viewed as a global concern. The discussion firstly deals with gender and sports in general, to gain insight into the role that the social construction of femininity and masculinity played in organising and genderising sports. Second, the focus is on girls' and women's access to and participation in university soccer internationally, considering the role of Title IX in the USA context at least in bringing substantial changes to the sport landscape for girls and women to enjoy greater access to sport. Third is a discussion on the development of girls' and women's soccer in African countries in general, including social challenges they have to overcome to ensure the continuation of women's soccer and social roles that could influence gender equity practices, or lack thereof. Fourth is an overview of the establishment and complexities of women's soccer in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa in communities and universities, as well as contemporary local research into women's soccer that addresses challenges and achievements thus far.

Chapter four provides an overview of the research methodology selected for this study and the rationale for the choices made. The study is informed by the feminist qualitative approach and critical discourse analysis. In addition, the justification of the chosen sampling strategy, and methods of data collection are also discussed. Furthermore, consideration is given to issues relating to the trustworthiness, credibility, and confirmability of the data, all crucial to the validation of research. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the challenges of conducting the research.

The focus of Chapter five is on discourses that emerge from the participants' responses with respect to their understandings of gender equality and equitable participation of women in soccer. The chapter also provides insights from the participants regarding their understanding of gender equity.

Chapter six discusses the results on the extent to which participants report universities as having gender equity policies in place and whether they are perceived as promoting interventions in soccer. Following this discussion are findings about the narrated experiences of gender equity practices in soccer at the four universities studied. How soccer administrators and soccer team managers in universities report on the policies and interventions is a particular focus in this chapter, since they are responsible for initiating and overseeing the implementation of such policies in soccer.

In Chapter seven participants were asked about their perspectives on the lack of progress in gender equity practices in soccer and to share their suggestions for the way forward. The participants' responses were categorised into four themes: the importance of developing soccer at grassroots level using schools and particularly primary schools; the role of the government in promoting girls' and boys' soccer together; parental involvement and motivation to participate in soccer; women's ownership and passion towards the promotion of their soccer.

Chapter eight begins by summarising the findings of the study in relation to the research questions. This section of the chapter is followed by a discussion of the significance/contributions of the study and is linked to wider debates and research on gender and soccer/football and gender equity and equality practices internationally and in South Africa. The implications of the study and the limitations associated with this study are discussed. Finally, the chapter concludes by outlining the possibilities for further research, and particularly proposes more research in other universities and soccer clubs in the community to understand the nature of gender equity practices in soccer.

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING GENDER EQUITY PRACTICES IN SOCCER: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Sport has the power to unite people in a way little else can. Sport can awaken hope where there was previously only despair. It breaks down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of discrimination. Sport speaks to people in a language they can understand (Mandela, 2000).

2.1 Introduction

Women's soccer is one of the fastest growing sports around the world, although the uneven treatment of gender in the literature on soccer discursively reinforces men's soccer as the standard and women's soccer as the other (Pelak, 2006). Without overlooking the growth of women's soccer, while former President Nelson Mandela stated that sport laughs in the face of discrimination, in South Africa women's sports continue to exist in the shadow of men's sports. In particular soccer, as a popular sport, has been discriminatory towards women as they seem to always have to justify their need for training equipment, financial sponsorships, media coverage, safe transportation, soccer academies for the development of girls' and women's soccer, and the officially recognised women's soccer league. I acknowledge, however, that in the late 1990s women's soccer started to receive small sponsorships from transnational corporations such as Reebok and Nike to assist with training equipment. In 2001 the sponsorship of the South African insurance company Sanlam also enabled some girls and women players to own soccer boots, training equipment, and have minimal transportation to some their games (Pelak, 2010).

Unfortunately, these early developments were short - lived as the national governing body, SAFA[7], served as a barrier to increased financial support for women's soccer (Eng, 2010). It is reported that SAFA management was slow to pursue leads on sponsorship opportunities for the women's game and that financial sponsorship for

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[7] SAFA - South African Football Association

women's soccer was often constrained by existing financial contracts with major sponsors of the men's game (Keim & Qhuma, 1996). This could be an indication that women's soccer continues to experience unequal treatment, irrespective of the government's attempt to address gender inequity in sports in the post-apartheid South Africa. The goal for the government was to create developmental policies and programmes to promote equal opportunities for girls' and women's sports alongside boys' and men's sports in South Africa. These developmental policies and programmes were influenced by the liberalist ideology[8] which encourages equal treatment between boys and girls.

Given this brief introduction, the chapter discusses the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that are used in this study. In order to interrogate and critically analyse soccer stakeholders' meanings and experiences of gender equity practices or lack thereof in soccer in the selected universities, feminist and Foucauldian post-structuralism theory is used. The chapter begins with an overview of selected feminist perspectives in sport to gain insight into the different roles they play in problematising gender biases in sports. This is followed by a critical discussion on the social construction of gender and sport in order to facilitate an understanding of the nature and state of gender equity in soccer, or lack thereof, in selected universities in the South African context. Gender and soccer, in this study, are viewed as socially constructed, a process which is inescapably invested with power, but also a process that we do or perform (Butler, 1990). Studies which view gender from a social perspective generally believe that gender is concerned with social power relations which are metaphorically or literally androcentric (Morejele, 2009). Ely and Meyerson (2000a) see gender as being central to social, political, and historical practices that produce gender-based inequities. Thus, gender relations play an important role in sport and are conceptualised as axis of power that shape organisational structures, identities, processes, and the dominant forms of knowledge that become truths or taken for granted ways of operating (Acker, 1990; Meyerson & Kolb, 2000).

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[8] The government's liberal approach to South African political change is in line with the African National Congress's (ANC) liberal vision of a 'global city' without unequal practices (Benit-Gbaffou, in Pillay, Tomlinson & Bass, 2009).

Lastly, the chapter discusses the feminist and Foucauldian poststructuralist lens which will be adopted to gain insight on soccer stakeholders' understanding and awareness of gender equity or inequity practices in soccer in the selected universities.

2.2 Feminist perspectives on sport

Feminism is considered both social and political, because it is not only directed at changing but also addressing and challenging existing power relations between women and men in the society (Weedon, 1987). The feminist political nature thus questions what it means to be a woman and how femininity and sexuality are defined for women. This notion addresses the process of knowledge production, the type of knowledge produced (Nicholson & Hoye, 2008), and who produces the knowledge that has the power to empower or marginalise and promote stereotypes about others. Taking into consideration the process of knowledge production, it seems to represent power relations which, according to Weedon (1987), structure all areas of life by determining who does what and for whom, what we are and what we might become. Hierarchically, arguments that are shaped by power relations usually favour men more than women because of the dominant patriarchal structure. Cocks cautions that "it is far too simplistic to represent males as holders of power who wield power self-consciously and with malignant intent and the oppressed sex as powerless, innocent, and blind". Cocks draw on Foucault's notion of power as omnipresent, to argue that we all play a role in the regime of truth, she labels masculine or feminine, as we help structure gender relations.

If everyone plays a particular role in the construction of truth, this could possibly mean that women have the power to choose which sports to play and what kind of knowledge they want to produce about their sports. However, this is only possible if women are able to recognise that men are not the only holders of power in sport organisations and coaching, women could also exercise their power. If women are not encouraged to question and challenge the existing imbalance in power relations in soccer organisations, it could imply that they also play a role (consciously or unconsciously) in the reproduction of male hegemony in soccer. Despite this, the current study argues that it is crucial to examine how men's soccer occupies

positions of power and popularity, and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate men's dominance (Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1987). It is not coincidental that male soccer is well supported and represented in the society at large and female soccer continues to be marginalised in South Africa. This means a conceptual shift is needed which could lead to broader structural and cultural changes to "taken for granted assumptions, values, and practices that systematically accord power and privilege to certain groups of men at the expense of women..." (Meyerson & Kolb, 2000, p. 554). Considering the above discussion, it is assumed that women's soccer is systematically devalued because of the socio-cultural gender and power relations that privilege men over women.

The discussion does not overlook that gender ideology is produced, reproduced, resisted, and changed in and through the everyday experiences of men and women. However, this study recognises that feminist research has shown that sports are gendered activities in that their meaning, purpose, and organisation are grounded in the values and experiences of men and celebrate attributes associated with dominant forms of masculinity in society (Birrell, 2000; Burstyn, 1999). Thus, various feminist perspectives critique the inequality and inequity, sexist culture and organisation of sports, and soccer in particular, by interrogating and problematising these notions for the purpose of encouraging new discourses and meanings about women's soccer specifically. The following section presents a critical discussion of three feminist perspectives that have dominantly criticised gender bias in sport.

2.2.1 Liberalist feminist perspectives

Different scholars have recognised that women's access to soccer can be seen as a political outcome of a liberal feminist discourse that centres on equal opportunities for women and men (Scraton, Fasting, Pfister & Bunuel, 1999; Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Sibson 2010). Similarly, Messner and Sabo (1990) posit that feminist activists for female involvement in sport often use a liberalist rights perspective, arguing that "women and girls should have access to the sports world just as boys and men do" (p. 23). Of concern for liberal feminism are the public issues such as the inequality of funding for female sports bodies, or the lack of access to certain sports for females. The assumption is that gaining equal access to the resources and opportunities will

produce social change both within and outside of sport. Without undermining the progress, Meyerson and Kolb (2000) assert that even though liberalist feminist ideology increased women's participation in sports, and soccer in particular, it did not change the prevailing discourses, structures, and operating norms in sports. For example, when women gained access to soccer, men maintained power over the sport experiences, rules, distribution of resources, and decision making. In addition, the liberalist concept of equality has been critiqued for failing both to accept the gender-linked values of mainstreaming sports, and to acknowledge or understand broader structures of power (Caudwell, 2003). Structural differences are evident in the numerous ways that women experience discrimination, which include financial support, facilities and equipment, coaching, medical and training facilities, transportation, scholarships, and media coverage (Theberge, 1981). With these structural inequalities in mind, it might be difficult for women to believe that soccer indeed 'laughs in the face of discrimination', as mentioned earlier.

It is further argued that liberal feminism fails to acknowledge the influence of gendered discourses and does not encourage a full examination of the assumptions, values, and beliefs about men and women that are deeply entrenched in sport organisations (Alvesson & Billing, 1997). It is therefore important to be critical of the liberal feminist ideology, as Shaw and Frisby (2006) argue that if the liberalist neutrality of institutional structures and ideas are left unchallenged they could become institutionalised organisational truths that might be difficult to challenge. Writing in the South African context, Burnett (2007, p. 17) expresses the same concern that "the liberalist approach fails to acknowledge the broader structures of power and the reproduction of power relations". This is entrenched in the selection of the SAFA National Executive Committee and chief executive officers in the South African soccer premier division[9]. The bias of structural power relations shapes the imbalances of resource distributions, promotion and recognition of women's amateur and professional soccer in South Africa. It seems that of importance for liberal feminist critiques is problematising and interrogating the prevailing gendered discourses, structures, and operating norms in sport organisations. This is because

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[9] The South African Football Association (SAFA) National Executive Committee has only two women and 38 men. The South African Premier Division, since its inception has had 7 chief executive officers, and none were women.

even though women have been given access to play soccer, this does not mean that the structure of soccer is reformed, particularly when "leadership and administration of the game is still mainly left in the hands of male officials" (Grundlingh, 2010, p. 51). This needs to be challenged and addressed by problematising the firm structures of soccer.

Due to the failure of liberal feminists to acknowledge the impact of broader operating structures of power in sports, some radical feminists argue that "sport is a 'mirror reflection' of society which indoctrinates the young with the dominant values and fosters the authoritarian interests of the dominant culture" (Theberge, 1981, p. 28). This could probably mean that masculine hegemony in soccer is instilled in the early years of boys' soccer and becomes institutionalised as they grow up. This discussion introduces the notion of radical feminism in sport.

2.2.2 Radicalist feminists perspectives

The earliest radical feminist Kate Millett (1969), claimed that the oppressed position of women in patriarchal society was due to the social construction of gender-appropriate behaviour, which restricted and dictated women's positions of authority and access to participation in various sports. Of importance for radical feminists is to deconstruct the existing structures and ideas that maintain the priority of the rationalist patriarchal perspective, and create new structures and ideas that produce new freedoms and opportunities for women from their own experiences (Burke, 2001). To address this, Willis (1984) asserts that radical feminism promoted immense transformation in women's consciousness, "a process of sharing and analysing their experiences in a group as the primary method of understanding women's condition in general and particularly in sports" (Thompson, 2001, p. 48). The process was often misunderstood as a form of therapy; however, it assisted in uncovering an enormous amount of information about women's socio-cultural experiential lives and insights into constraints and challenges in participating in male associated sports (Bell & Klein, 1996).

This process was an attempt for radical feminists to address the concerns of underlying structural power relations that are the result of the systematic

maintenance of male power through patriarchy, whereby men as a group dominate women as a group. According to Thornton (1986) male sexuality is the central organising principle of patriarchy, as it emphasises discourses of toughness, aggression, and selfishness. If soccer, as a male dominant group sport, is taken into consideration, it appears easy for men to constrain women's popularity in soccer and maintain power through socially constructed patterns, discourses, and organisational structural power relations they have historically established and that have remained the same.

Language has played a role in the promotion of men's experiences and maintenance of male dominance in soccer and marginalisation of women's experiences in soccer. To attend to this, problematising language becomes important for radical feminism as they examine its limits for articulating women's experiences. They argue that to represent women's experiences new words or a whole new language is necessary, where women can narrate and name their experiences that were not represented in mainstream culture (Forte, 1989). Radical feminists believe that language not only describes reality but it also creates reality including knowledge construction, as it created male soccer as 'real', fast, and entertaining and women's soccer as 'unreal', slow and 'boring'. In South Africa, these perceptions shape the recognition, support and popularity of women's soccer, as noted when soccer supporters are allowed free entrance to all women's soccer tournaments and cup games. It is therefore important to always question the way women's experiences are represented in sport organisations and the media. Taking into consideration the way language is used to represent women's soccer socially and in the media, it could perpetuate gender inequity practices in soccer.

Notwithstanding the contribution and the insight of radical feminism into the nature of power relations, it has been criticised for lack of attention to social class and cross-cultural analysis among women. Different social class backgrounds play a major role in women's access, or lack thereof, in soccer, as mentioned in chapter three. Prior to 1994 in South Africa, women's social class determined the distribution of soccer equipment, access to financial support, and power to establish and organise tournaments. White and Coloured women's soccer had resources, and White women's soccer had more financial support as compared to Black African women's

soccer. Along the same line of discussion, while I was searching for literature on women's soccer I recognised little existing literature regarding the role that different social classes played in the development of women's soccer internationally, in the African continent and particularly in South Africa.

Radical feminism has also been criticised for universalising female victimisation at the hands of patriarchy. This is possibly because patriarchy represents systems of male dominance and has formed a male culture that wherever it has predominated has oppressed women of all socio-economic classes and races (Dolan, 1992). The critics seem to suggest that some women have not suffered under the socio-cultural practices of patriarchy, presumably because of minimal choices and voice to address their social and sport issues. Radical feminists assert that choices occur in the context of a society where there are serious differences of power between men and women as "a presumed incapacity of women to make decisions" (Andrews, 1988, p. 14). They seriously question the actual content or meaning of a choice which grows out of a context of powerlessness. Do choices such as playing rugby, boxing, and soccer foster the empowerment of women as a class and create a better world for women? Radical feminists do not deny that women are capable of choosing within contexts of powerlessness, but question how much real power these 'choices' have. In soccer, although women currently have choices to play the sport, they appear not to have choices in the allocations of resources and a voice in management decisions. Could this mean women's soccer has limited power that is constrained by patriarchal socio-cultural power? Considering the present state of women's soccer in South Africa, it is difficult to ignore these questions.

The discussion thus far has focused on the notion of promoting gender equality in sports and critiquing bias towards men's power and domination over women in sport and soccer particularly. In promoting a conceptual shift, poststructural feminism challenges binary divides and dualistic thinking that has dominated liberal feminism and radical feminism, which, for them, might serve to exclude and limit the understanding of gender equity or lack thereof in sport and soccer in particular.

2.2.3 Poststructural feminists positions

The undeniable historical continuity with the present is one of male dominance of the sporting discourse and practice. Sport has played a role in the maintenance of hierarchical gender relations, and women's participation and performance in sport has always been negotiated within this set of hierarchical gender relations. Poststructural feminists interrogate and disrupt the discourses and assumptions that make gendered hierarchies and practices appear normal, with the aim of creating space for the development of new meanings and understandings to guide the implementation of alternative policies and practices in sports (Fletcher, 1999). The concept of 'sport' has been re-evaluated by poststructural feminists to see it not only as a descriptive term for institutionalised and formally organised activities involving the body, but as "a construction of discourses whose central focus is the body" (Cole, 1993, p. 78). Considering the naturalisation and normalisation of men's bodies with sport, the female body is often presented as a body in trouble for sport participation because of the biological, moral and religious discourses. These discourses assert that there is no redeeming value to the individual or the society in women playing sport because of the damage that such participation would do to the reproductive and nurturing female body (Lensky, 1986). Considering the discourses, poststructural feminists encourage resistance towards the normal gendering of bodies in sports by interrogating language, discourse, and power in relation to their roles in the construction of knowledge and social realities of gender relations in soccer.

Furthermore, poststructural feminism asks sceptical and deconstructive questions to normalising and naturalising practices and work to destabilise taken for granted truths of gender subjectivity, gender relations and relations of power (McNay 1992; Lather 1991; Sawicki 1988). Similar to radical feminists, language takes a centre stage for poststructural feminists, because it shapes the way that we see and make sense of the world and consequently the way we understand and interact with each other. For example, it could be argued that because there is a normalised notion of soccer naturally associated with men, and women's soccer which is differentiated from the former, this already creates expectations of different kinds of soccer and attitudes. This language consistently puts females as the secondary sex and gives

males dominance, a situation that is not driven by nature but is socially constructed. Thus, poststructural feminism, according to Andrews (2000), seeks to challenge perceptions of gender through the use of appropriate language and also questions historical values and interpretations of the truth, by encouraging the society to try and see things from a different perspective. This discussion will be revisited in detail later in this chapter. The next section presents the notion of social construction in relation to gender and sport.

2.3 The social construction of gender and sport

This section explores the relationship between gender and sport and consequently in soccer, and the significance of sport in contributing to the dominant gender order in patriarchal societies. Grewal and Caplan (2006, p. xix) explain gender as:

> the assignment of masculine and feminine characteristics to bodies in cultural contexts. It is a socially constructed that involves roles, expectations, and responsibilities that are not biologically determined. Gender is constructed through power relations between the sexes as well as in relation to class, race, sexuality, nationality, religion, and a host of social divisions specific to particular cultures and regions.

This study acknowledges that the notions and meaning of gender differ between racial and socio-cultural groups and are translated through cultural ideologies of femininity and masculinity. Thus, a social constructionist perspective of gender helps this study to understand how gender is shaped and given meaning by the social structures of, and the social relations/interactions in a society (Alsop, Fitzsimons & Lennon, 2002). The construction of gender is therefore seen as a process rather than a 'role', where culture and language are central to the processes (Barrett 1992). Likewise, sport is also a social and cultural process in which social constructions of masculinity and femininity are reaffirmed, and importantly serve to valorise masculine characteristics (Sever, 2005). This means the socio-cultural constructions of sport have been traditionally associated with masculinity, and in some societies it has been considered inappropriate for women to engage in sports, although some changes in this respect are clearly in evidence globally. Burke (2001) explains that sport is a fertile area to display the way that ideas and practices, as well as bodies, are gendered through discourse.

According to Coakley (2007) ideas and beliefs about gender are a crucial part of the foundation on which sports are organised, promoted, and played. Considering that gender has been the central organising principle of social life, gender ideology "influences how we think of ourselves and others, how we relate to others, and how social life is organised at all levels" (Coakley 2007, p. 262). In soccer, the ideas and beliefs about gender have played a role in determining who should be included and excluded in the field of play and management positions. Given this, it is important to problematise and interrogate gender ideologies when gender equity practices or lack thereof are explored in soccer. This is because the achievement of gender equity for Houlihan (2003) requires changes in the gender ideology that has been used to organise, play, and make sense of sports. For example, a simple binary classification model where people are classified into one of two sex categories; male or female, are seldom equal. On this issue, Coakley (2007) argues that gender ideology that is grounded in a binary classification model can be preserved only if people work hard to police gender boundaries and maintain them through myths, rituals, and everyday cultural practices.

This means people must 'do' gender to keep the model viable, and it is within the act of doing gender that the masculinity of soccer becomes the product of cultural practices that promote manhood as tough and aggressive, "resulting to claiming social and physical space and sports as their own" (Messner 2002, p. 22). In addition, men's measurable superior performance in sports trials of strength, speed and skills seem to prove female inferiority and lack of skills, particularly when compared with the standard of men. The perception of female inferiority could be linked with the notion of 'natural' women's physical inferiority, a socio-cultural discourse that might be further associated with patriarchal hegemony. It is an ideological view that is deeply rooted in culture and in the social world, which is rarely questioned but perceived as common sense. Thus, when girls and women play sports that are perceived as tough and aggressive, they are seen to be invaders and threaten the masculinity of the sports, for example, soccer, rugby, boxing and American football. I argue that the threat results in women's sports being perceived as not 'real' or not as important as men's sports (Hartmann, 2003), a discourse that has been dominant in soccer. This study acknowledges that soccer is not only a reflection of society but also a site where "culture and social organisation are

produced, reproduced, and changed" (Coakley 2007, p. 41). Soccer is therefore a social construction by human beings as active agents, and has impact on relationships and social organisation in society as a whole.

Collins and Kay (2003, p. 98) explain that sport and soccer have been sites where unequal social relations that underpin women's experiences of social exclusion are very persuasively reproduced. For this study, this means soccer structures, values, rules, ideologies, and practices are "social and cultural matters" out of which society and culture come to be what they are (Collins & Kay, 2003, p. 98). If these factors are not challenged, problematised and questioned within contexts where they are practiced, for this study at universities, gender equity could be perceived as something out of reach. It also means that to promote and achieve gender equity practices, strategies should focus on gender ideology issues, distribution of power, and bias discourses in soccer (Houlihan, 2003, p. 97) as experienced and understood by various soccer stakeholders in selected universities. Given the discussion on the notion and role of social construction on gender and sport, the lens of feminist poststructuralism is presented below.

2.4 A feminist poststructuralist framework for the study

The aim of this study is to explore soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity in soccer, and feminist post-structuralism provides a lens for in-depth examination of personal experiences, perceptions, relationships and contextual meanings of relations of power between individuals (Aston, Price, Kirk & Penney, 2011). Personal experiences and perceptions are understood to be informed by social, cultural and institutional beliefs, stereotypes and norms. Kenway, Willis, Blackmore and Rennie (1994) posit that feminist poststructuralism is concerned with the way in which meaning is structured and produced, whether skewed gender power relations are inherent to the point of rendering female meaning invisible, the way meaning circulates amongst us, the impact it has on human subjects, and the connections between meaning and power (Bailey, 1993). While Weedon (1987, p. 18) explains that "all forms of poststructuralism assume that meaning is constituted within language", Kenway et al. (1994) argue that meaning is not fixed in language or in consistent power relationships but shifts as different

linguistic, institutional, cultural and social factors come together in various ways. Similarly, Foucault's work challenges the notion of a fixed meaning, and argues that meanings are always plural and produced through the discursive and interactive processes of everyday life (Weedon, 2004). This suggests that meaning is shaped by and shapes shifting patterns of power.

Considering the above discussion, the current study suggests that male dominance and its association with soccer has been normalised by taken for granted, socially constructed experiences and meanings, which have impacted negatively on the promotion and recognition of female soccer in South Africa. It is an examination of the way meanings of gender equity practices are constructed by soccer stakeholders, and the importance of language that is intimately bound up with social practice (Maybin, 1998). Feminist poststructuralism questions the normalised social practices, in this study practices in soccer that are gendered in any way, and works to destabilise the taken for granted dominant discourses that promote male hegemony in soccer within the South African context. Thus, to gain in-depth understanding of gender equity practices in soccer within the university contexts, this study supports the plurality of meaning-making by including various stakeholders in soccer.

In addition to the discussion on meaning-making, feminist poststructuralism, it is claimed, has the potential of promoting social transformation because it analyses the historical conditions of the actual existence of statements, listens to all voices, and deconstructs normative and common sense discourses (Ritzer & Goodman, 2003). This study recognises that statements and meanings "respect the set of rules and reside in the system of preceding statements" (Diaz-Bone et al., 2007, p. 9), which means they are the result of a socio-historic process. Foucault examines the set of rules on which statements are predicated, considers additional rules that could produce similar statements, and questions why any one particular statement appears rather than another (Arslanian-Engoren 2001). Statements, for Foucault, are not described as a linguistic unit like the sentence but as a "special mode of existence … as a function", which enables "groups of signs to exist, and enables rules or forms to become manifest" (Foucault, 1972, pp. 98-99). In this study, statements are

interpreted as articulated words that privilege particular ways of seeing and codifying certain practices and norms.

Another issue of concern for feminist poststructuralism is dualism, as mentioned earlier. Baxter (2002, p. 9) asserts that feminist poststructuralism equips researchers with the thinking to "see through" the dualism, ambiguities and confusions of particular discursive contexts where women/girls are located as simultaneously powerful and powerless. In some discursive contexts some female soccer players could be perceived as powerful, for example, those who play in junior and senior national teams, and powerless in other discursive contexts particularly in relation to challenges regarding finance and resources into establishing a premier soccer league. Weedon (1987) posits that the tendency of binaries is to constitute females as the negative *other* of males, and to disperse power, authority and 'truth' accordingly. Considering Cocks caution mentioned earlier and Foucault's notion of power as omnipresent, it could possibly be argued that women also constitute themselves as the negative *other*, given the continuing labelling or name calling of female players by other women in particular. For example, the familiar and taken for granted discourses that female soccer is slow and boring, and that the players look like men or are tomboyish appears not to be problematised by girls and women in general. Instead, they seem to play a major role in perpetuating gender inequity in soccer because these kinds of discourses are not interrogated but propagated. Consequently, they would disperse power and authority for male soccer, at the same time creating 'truth' about male soccer as 'fast' and 'entertaining'. Binary, in this study, is therefore understood not only as about male/female soccer but also about powerful/powerless discourses, and powerful/powerless meanings. Thus, to understand these discursive practices, the aim of this study is to explore how female soccer players perceive gender equity practices in soccer generally and particularly within the university context. This information could provide insight into whether women soccer players problematise and question practices they are part of or whether they have normalised them.

As mentioned earlier, to gain access to soccer stakeholders' meanings and understandings of gender equity practices language plays an important role, and it is one of the important principles for poststructuralism. In addition to this principle,

Dickson (1990) identifies three other significant principles within a feminist poststructuralist theoretical perspective: discourse, power and knowledge, and subjectivity. These principles also form key conceptual foci in this study for a nuanced analysis of the data. Thus, the following section discusses the four principles of feminist poststructuralist theory to gain in-depth understanding of what they entail.

2.4.1 Language

According to Weedons (1987) perceptions, experiences and meanings are understood as produced within language rather than simply reflected by language, which is the reason it is a central focus in the poststructuralist paradigm. Coalter (2007) explains that individuals do not have intrinsic meaning but acquire meaning through language, which makes meaning truly social and a site of political struggle. For example, language is the mechanism by which the constructs of femininity and masculinity are defined, characterised and internalised in socially specific ways (Scott, 1994). Similarly, language can be used to construct gender equity or inequity beliefs through soccer stakeholders' definitions, descriptions, and explanations which can result in relevant practices. Thus, language is how one makes sense and meaning of one's world, and furthermore, socially specific meanings are constituted within language and not necessarily by the individual who utters the words (Weedon, 1997). Given this, the purpose of this study is not to criticise soccer stakeholders' language but to problematise, interrogate and analyse their language practices critically which might be taken for granted, at the same time to promote critical reflection on their perceptions and experiences of gender equity or inequity practices in soccer. The intention is to create awareness of the role they may play in shaping attitude and behaviour in soccer.

Along the same lines of discussion, Alcoff (1988) explains that given that a sense of one's self is constructed through language, words can be a medium through which insight is gained into the life-world of women soccer players, and for this study, includes the life-world of men's soccer players. Of importance for this study is to gain insight into the unknown life-world of soccer stakeholders, meaning male and female soccer administrators, coaches and players. This is because their perceptions and

experiences of how gender equity policies are responded to, practised and impact soccer within the current context of South African sport, and particularly in Higher Education institutions, are unknown. The interrogation and critical analysis of soccer stakeholders' language practices and discourses could provide information and knowledge on their conception(s) of gender equity and the status of gender equity or inequity practices in soccer at university level and possibly more widely in South Africa. Arslanian-Engoren (2002) asserts that language not only gives voice to women's experiences and perspectives that do not necessarily represent the dominant discourse, but can also be used to convey differences in semantics including that of men's soccer administrators, coaches and players. Without undermining the information that will be contributed by men, this study prioritises women's experiences and perceptions of gender equity practices because of the assumption that they continue to experience inequities in soccer on the basis of gender in South Africa. This study hopes that comparative meanings can be identified during the description of perceptions and experiences of gender equity or inequity practices in soccer by male and female soccer players.

Feminist poststructuralists maintain that languages operate to produce very real material and damaging structures in the world (St. Pierre 2000), and thus need to be deconstructed. In addition, language is a practice to create privileged identities over differences and construct and maintain hierarchal structures (Maybin, 1998). This is noted in South African soccer where language practices create and maintain privileged male soccer identities through the choice of words and language used to describe and talk about their soccer. The choice of words and language practices used to describe and create female soccer players' identities are demeaning, for example, lesbianism and tomboyism. Thus, language is sometimes used without being aware of the serious meanings words have and the negative attitudes it could have on individuals because it is an everyday interactive tool that is naturalised and taken for granted. In South Africa, for example, a female soccer player for a senior national team was gang raped and murdered in 2008 (Eudy Simelane) because of being a lesbian (Naidoo and Muholi, 2010), which could be associated with social hatred discourse against lesbians and playing a male associated sport, soccer. For feminist poststructuralism it is therefore important for people to shift their normalised usage and understanding of language and consider that language is not as

transparent as it seems, but it has a possibility of perpetuating hatred, discrimination, and gender inequity practices in the society.

Another important role that language plays is to conceptualise and debate sport policies, which includes defining gender and the meaning of gender equity by policy designers. This process, consciously or unconsciously, favours a particular socio-cultural group, depending on who is involved and whose voice is dominant during the designing process. Thus, included in this study is the interrogation and critical analysis of the University Sport South Africa (USSA) Constitution and regulations[10] alongside South African sport policy, to understand how they address gender equity in sport, particularly how they promote female participation in soccer. Depending on the participating individuals during the discussions and the design of the constitutions and regulation, the analysis of discourses within these documents could highlight the nature and state of gender equity in the university. Ritzer and Goodman (2003, p. 520) state that "people are endowed with a series of internalised schemes through which they perceive, understand, appreciate, evaluate, and practise in certain ways in the social world". This study proposes that language embedded in culture plays a major role in shaping these schemes because of its social powers and externality to the individual. Bourdieu (1989, p. 18) associates the internalised schemes with *habitus,* which refers to the "internalised product of history, embodied in social structures" that produce individual and collective practices, akin to common sense. For Jarvie and Maguire (1994), it is a person's 'habitus' that engenders all the thoughts and perceptions which operate at conscious and/or unconscious levels.

At this point this study suggests that soccer stakeholders have acquired various habitus, depending on the nature of the individual's position in soccer, embedded in social structures, which could shape their perceptions and experiences of gender equity or inequity practices in soccer at the university. Nicholson and Hoye (2008) state that the habitus produces and at the same is produced by the social world. This means that "on the one hand habitus is a structure that structures the social world, and on the other, it is a structure that is structured by the social world" (Nicholson &

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[10] USSA was constituted in 2008 from South African Student Sports Union (SASSU) that was established in 1994. It is considered the official unified national umbrella sports structure for the regulation, organizations and coordination of student sports activities at regional, provincial and national levels in the tertiary education sector of South Africa.

Hoye 2008, p. 287). This seems to address the existing relationship between historical practices that are socially constructed, and the conscious or unconscious socio-cultural practices that perpetuate the existing [gender] inequities in the society and particularly in soccer. Coalter (2007, p. 87) posits that if habitus operates at an unconscious level, "people's manners, deportment and performance signify a great deal about their personal history and present occupancy of a specific social position". Considering this, it could then be concluded from this discussion the importance of acknowledging the possible influence of personal history in soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity or inequity practices in soccer. This study is significant because it aims to provide a platform to articulate perceptions and experiences, to conscientise and access the unknown and taken for granted soccer stakeholders' perceptions, experiences, meanings, and discourses of gender equity or inequity in soccer at selected universities.

2.4.2 Discourse

Fairclough (1992) posits that discourse refers to patterns of language use which encode particular kinds of knowledge as authoritative and particular kinds of values, hierarchical relationships and subjectivities as unquestionable. As has been discussed earlier, in soccer, men's knowledge is authoritative and is highly valued as illustrated by the rules and regulations that were formulated by men and with men in mind, which means that the language and dominant discourse represents men. For Foucault (1972), discourse illustrates how language gathers itself together according to socially constructed rules and regulations that allow certain statements to be made and not others (in Adams St. Pierre, 2000). Similarly, Scott (1988, pp. 35-36) argues that "A discourse is not only a language or a text, but a historically, socially and institutionally specific structure of statements, terms, categories and beliefs". In South Africa it is uncommon to watch, hear or read about women's statements in the media, unless the senior national women team has won something. The Banyana Banyana (senior national women's team) was featured minimally on the news when they became the first African women soccer team to qualify for the 2012 London Olympics. However, Bafana Bafana (senior national men's team) easily gets attention from the media and a platform to explain their losses and still have support from the society. The structure of statements by the media promotes particular

beliefs about men's and women's soccer because silences and marginalisation of women's statements could be interpreted as meaning their soccer is not as important as men's which regularly feature in various media.

Thus, discourses for Wetherell (1998, p. 16), are constructive and are forms of social action, they build objects, worlds, minds and social relations, and do not just reflect them". Considering the discussion thus far, I argue that it is not accidental that men's statements about soccer are dominant and given attention, are prioritised for financial sponsorships, and receive attention in the media, as compared to women's statements that are marginalised. The language, socio-cultural structures, power relations, and discourses have all played a role in this. Discourses, therefore do not simply describe the social world, but categorise it, and bring phenomena into sight. In agreeing with Foucault, Fairclough (1992, pp. 3-4) asserts that "discourses do not just reflect or represent social entities and realities, they construct or 'constitute' them", meaning that different discourses constitute key entities in different ways, and position people in different ways as social subjects.

At this stage it is important to acknowledge that the concept of discourse is used differently both analytically and theoretically. According to Litosseliti and Sunderland (2002, p. 9), while the linguistic understanding of discourse is that "it is language beyond the sentence stretching to text, spoken or written", for the ideological and social theory perspective discourse has been theorised as "a form of social practice" (Fairclough 1992, p. 18) and the "sort of language used to construct some aspect of reality from the particular perspectives" (Chouliarraki & Fairclough 1999, p. 63). As a social practice, discourse therefore plays an important role in shaping how gender equity or inequity practices in soccer are perceived by soccer stakeholders. For Wallace (1992, p. 68), discourses are "ideologically determined ways of talking or writing about persons, places, events or phenomena". As mentioned earlier, this study uses discourse as a spoken and written text and also social practice that constructs some aspect of reality about gender equity practices in soccer from specific perspectives, because of the socio-historical background of soccer. This background continues to be dominated by stories of men's soccer and is perceived from the male perspective, which seems to be 'true', normal, and appropriate to be interrogated and critiqued. Gee (1996, p. viii) reiterates that discourses "are always

and everywhere social and products of social histories", and thus if not interrogated they have the potential to perpetuate gender inequity in soccer because social history has normalised men's soccer and abnormalised women's participation in soccer.

The analysis of the discourses and language used by stakeholders to describe and explain their perceptions and experiences of gender equity would possibly enable us to understand "how *what* is said fits into a network that has its own history and conditions of existence" (Barrett, 1991, p. 126). This is because we are all members of a particular community that includes a discursive framework that has naturalised the ways of talking about the world, and for this study about soccer. Bakhtin (1973, p. 167) says "the word does not forget where it has been and can never wholly separate itself from the dominion of the contexts of which it has been part", because the patterns of speaking about the world shape our choices of words and language. It is through the interrogation and critical analysis of word choices and language usage by soccer stakeholders that communicates meaning in a context in which dominant discourses could emerge and the factors that shape the discourse(s) could be identified. The analysis of discourses could further highlight how gender equity is perceived, whether gender equity is practised or not, and the reasons for the latter in relation to the former. This is because, as Foucault (1989, p. 25) stated in an interview, "Discourses are not only a form of knowledge about cultural ways of thinking and doing, but are also form of practices". If this is the case, it means if one is in a discourse it is difficult to escape from it (Janks, 2010, p. 71), and hence one practices it.

Of importance for the analysis of discourse for this study, is to improve awareness of the role that perceptions and experiences could play in normalising attitudes and behaviour that are unusual. In particular when Foucault (1972, p. 49) argues that discourses "give meaning to an experience or articulate our ways of seeing the world". This is also in line with Kress's (1985, pp. 6-7) definition of discourse as that which "organise(s) and give(s) structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object, and process is to be talked about". This notion seems to suggest the power of discourse in shaping how to think about men's and women's soccer, particularly about gender equity or inequity in soccer within the university. Thus, feminist critical

discourse analysis is used in this study to analyse the discursive practices in the university, in order to foreground the taken for granted assumptions that structure them. Foucault (1989) reminds us that discourses are often institution-related, for this study SAFA and USSA institutions[11], and it is the institutions which help endow discourses with their potential for power. Weedon (1987) posits that knowledge is located in and is structured by a particular *discursive field*, a set of discourses which are systematically related, like the male discourses that are systematically related and protected in the field of soccer. The university is considered a field in this study, which has the potential of shaping soccer players' perceptions and experiences of gender equity or inequity practices. Of concern for this study is that the role this field plays in promoting gender equity or perpetuating gender inequity practices in soccer has not been researched. The university as a field is powerful in shaping attitudes and behaviour, and also creating particular knowledge, power relations, and identities about male and female soccer players, through players and soccer coaches.

2.4.3 Power relations and Knowledge

Power, for feminist poststructuralism is not identical to knowledge but both are dependent on one another, with power generating knowledge and knowledge initiating power (Arslanian-Engoren 2002). In an elaborate approach, Foucault (1979, p. 27) writes, ''…power and knowledge directly imply one another; there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations''. In soccer, power has been used to establish "organisational logic" or "the truth rules" (Acker, 2000, p. 9) and further used to define and shape "what can and cannot be said, what constitutes the mandatory, the permissible, the forbidden, and the boundaries of common sense" (knowledge) (Jacobson & Jacques, 1997, p. 48). For Hoeber (2007, p. 261), the strength of these "truth rules" is that they appear to be natural, obvious and free from scrutiny, and hence difficult to challenge or change. These rules are identified in soccer organisations such as FIFA (Football International Federation Association), CAF (Confederation of African Football), and

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[11] The South African Football Association (SAFA) was incorporated on 23 March 1991 following a long unity process that was to rid the sport in South Africa of all its past racial division. It is currently dominated by men in management, National Executive, SAFA bodies, and committees (www.safa.net.co.za).

SAFA (South African Football Association), where men's discourse determines what should be considered the truth about soccer and what is permissible in the field of soccer, and as mentioned earlier, women's soccer is played within these rules.

Power and knowledge, for Dickson (1990), are used to conceptualise the relationship between language, social institutions and individual consciousness. In the university context, knowledge about male and female soccer is inherently gendered and produced in various communication channels such as media, journal articles, and everyday conversations. The media arrangement is reflective of socially constructed sex differences where soccer is dominantly written, presented and understood from the male perspective (Sibson, 2010). As Hoeber (2007) indicated earlier, the produced knowledge about men's and women's soccer is taken for granted because what is written or talked about is usually normalised as the way it is about soccer. This knowledge has the potential of becoming common sense for the people while contributing to maintaining the dominant forms of viewing soccer, which have been male centred. The feminist poststructuralism contends that because knowledge is socially constructed, inherently transient and closely associated with power, individuals with power control and regulate what constitutes the essence of the experience and the subsequent understanding of the event (Arslanian-Engoren 2002).

Given the men's dominance, this study assumes that at universities male soccer events are prioritised in the media when compared with women's soccer events, because of general popularity and constant appearance in newspapers and/or sports and soccer magazines. The inequity in the representation of women's soccer in the media could happen and is possibly shaped by the power and dominance of men in the sport section of the media. It is therefore important to gain insight into possible factors that generate gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer within the university context, to allow different meanings that could disrupt and displace oppressive knowledge and meanings (Gavey, 1997) on soccer, particularly about women's soccer. As discussed earlier, this study promotes the collection of plural meanings for the purpose of producing knowledge that represents diverse experiences.

In general understanding, power is understood as a limited commodity or as something which people have in their possession (Dyrberg, 1997; Rao et al.,1999). In talking about power relations, Foucault (1980) asserts that potential power is to be found everywhere because men and women have different power positions, even between and within different soccer organisations. To reiterate on Foucault's (1980) point, McNiff (2000, p. 101) states that "power exists in who people are and what they do in relation with one another . . . how we are with one another constitutes the nature of our power". As mentioned earlier, girls and women who play in junior and senior national teams could be considered as having power as compared to those who play in Sasol league games. Taking into consideration the incentives in national teams, it might be unfavourable to question the nature of power and particularly gender equity practices in the organisation. Based on the informal observation, it seems not to be a norm for girls and women soccer players to question the asymmetrical distribution of resources for national teams, let alone for the leagues. Thus, an individual is "both *produced* by power and a producer of power, rather than something completely distinct from it" (Halford & Leonard, 2001, p. 34, emphasis in original). Rao, Stuart and Kelleher (1999, p. 6) argue that "neither of these views about power is true or untrue," but the way in which power is viewed has implications for the way in which it is practiced. In talking about "exclusionary power", Rao et al. (1999, p. 67) suggest that not all organisational members have access to power or can exercise it, because power relations are gendered. They identify four key ways in which power relations could be utilised: through positional power, agenda-setting power, hidden power, and the power of dialogue, each of which have an impact on meaning-making and the production of knowledge regarding gender equity practices in soccer.

2.4.3.1 Positional power

This power relates to one's formal status and title in the organisation, which in most soccer organisations is dominantly occupied by men. For example, in the University Sport South Africa (USSA) National Executive Committee (NEC) there are three women and seven men who hold high positions (president, chairperson, vice-chairperson). In the South African Football Association (SAFA) NEC there are 38 men and only two women, and this is evidence of men's dominance in soccer both at the university and premier soccer league level. The positional power promotes

greater access to any sport-related discussions and mechanisms, and in soccer it possibly allows mostly men to create dominant understandings of gender equity practices through those platforms (Rao et al., 1999). In addition, Rao et al. (1999) posit that positional power can be coercive or abusive when used to control or limit the power of others, but it can also build capacity and bring about change. Thus, it could be argued that the continuing domination of men in senior management and leadership positions in South African soccer organisations and international federations undermine and limit women's access to power, and could potentially perpetuate gender inequity.

This study argues that minimal participation of women in positional power in South African soccer organisations continues to exist, and might constrain women's participation in decision-making, and their voices in addressing issues of concern (Eng, 2010; Grundlingh, 2010; Wadesango, Machingambi, Ashu & Chireshe, 2010). Sibson (2010, p. 382) suggests that positional power "could be used in the allocation of money, time, people, information, and other resources". Some of these aspects are noted in South Africa, and according to Mills and Eng (2010) this is attributed to different factors such as limited broadcasting of women's games, tournaments including World Cup and Olympic qualifying games, and generally the lack of female soccer information, as was discussed earlier. Even if these issues could be raised, those in high positions in soccer organisations could defend their positions and decisions when asked about the existence, or lack thereof, of gender equity in soccer. On this Hoeber posits that

> executive directors and other top administrators in national sport organizations, most of whom were men, claimed their organizations were already gender equitable, denied the existence of gender inequities, or suggested that it was irrelevant to them (2007, p. 262).

In South Africa, soccer executive directors and administrators' responses on whether gender equity practices in soccer exist and how, are not yet known. Internationally, Lapchick's (2006, p. 87) assessment of sports and gender representation in America points out that "women are under-represented in leadership areas in professional sport". Corroborating this trend, Gogol (2002, p. 22) posits that "...the role of women as top-level administrators has not always effectively increased..." If the under-representation of women in leadership positions continues, it is difficult to see how

issues of women's soccer would be addressed in leadership debates. Considering the discussion, this study could contribute contemporary information and knowledge that could be further used to problematise and interrogate silences on the nature and state of gender equity and practices in South African soccer.

I acknowledge the existence of limited numbers of women in positional power in South African soccer organisations, with the popularity of Ria Ledwaba (chairperson of the Women's committee of SAFA), Fran Hilton-Smith (women's football technical head) and Tsichlas Anastasia (standing committee). However, I argue that the inclusion of women in leadership positions does not address the practice of gender equity, because given the number of men they might not have a voice to [re]present women's issues. In particular when it is considered that 20 years into democracy, women's soccer is still in the process of being recognised and the women's national team still need to be acknowledged as important in flying the South African flag. McKay (1997, p. 51), in his study of the management of national sport organisations in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, found that male managers often attribute the under-representation of women in decision-making positions to "'tradition', 'society' or 'natural' sex differences". If this is recognized, it is important to create a conducive environment to ensure the increased participation of women in management positions. I have to mention that it is difficult not to be sceptical of the existing women in leadership positions in soccer organisations and, whether they are used 'as window dressing' to argue for the promotion of gender equity practices. Of concern for this study is that if this is believed it could lead to a lack of interrogating, problematising, and monitoring of gender equity practices in soccer organisations by men and women in positional power, given that positional power "resides in every position" (Rao et al., 1999, pp. 6-7).

2.4.3.2 Agenda-setting power

Closely related to positional power is the *agenda-setting power* which establishes informal boundaries around acceptable and unacceptable topics of discussion, what takes take priority, what resources they are going to allocate and/or who is going to get a vacant job position. Considering the relationship between positional and agenda-setting powers and lack of women's representation in positional powers within soccer organisations in South Africa, it appears that their complaints and

challenges might not feature in the agendas of the meetings, because it is determined by people in managerial positions. In addition, given the power to determine topic(s) of discussion, if issues of gender equity practices, or lack thereof, are not considered problematic by the leadership, it is unlikely that they would be openly and frequently discussed. Rao et al. (1999, p. 7) argue that "what is not on the agenda is often what is not important to men, although it may be important to women". Massengale (2009, p. 48) asserts that soccer, as a hegemonic social institution, naturalises men's power and issues over women's" and could shape the selection of issues to be discussed in meetings as suitable for men. It is a concern in the South African context where a high number of men continue to be involved in key positions as they were in the South African Women's Football Association (SWFA) structures and affiliated clubs prior 1994, and currently in coaching Banyana Banyana, Basetsana, and administrating ABSA and SASOL women's soccer leagues (Pelak, 2010).
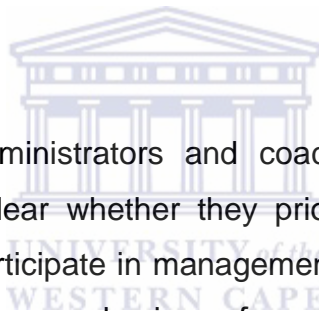
Taking into account that administrators and coaches for women's soccer are dominated by men, it is unclear whether they prioritise issues of gender equity practices in soccer as they participate in management meetings. Administrators and coaches serve as representatives and voices of women's issues because they have some power to question and address challenges they experience in their positions. On the other hand, Hoeber (2007, p. 262) posits that, "if issues are not of concern for upper managers they are unlikely to be openly and frequently discussed", then it becomes a duty for administrators and soccer coaches to be critical and exercise their power. This is important because, according to Foucault (1980, p. 97) power "infiltrates the minutiae of daily life ... governs and dictates our behaviour". If this view is taken seriously, then power "reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, and everyday lives" (Foucault 1980, p. 39). It thus becomes necessary and important to interrogate and understand how soccer administrators and coaches prioritise discussion on gender equity practices in soccer in their respective universities. The assumption for this study is that perceptions and experiences of men in soccer have become a 'regime of truth' (Foucault, 1980) and are presumably accepted unquestioned. Truth, for Foucault (1980, p. 133), is to be understood as "a

system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements". Thus, if statements are not problematised and interrogated, they could maintain the status quo, and perpetuate inequity and gender stereotypes in soccer.

2.4.3.3 Hidden power

The *hidden power* exists when those who are marginalised do not recognise their situation, and fail to question dominant knowledge and practices, even when there are apparent inequities (Rao et al., 1999). In relation to soccer, the lack of recognition [by women] could be the result of socio-cultural and historical practices that has naturalised and normalised soccer with men, such that certain practices like men's access to training fields and financial support are not seriously problematised by women. Lukes (2005) calls this unobtrusive exercise of power where "not only is your issue not on the agenda, you are not even aware that it is an issue". In South Africa it is difficult to believe that women soccer players are unaware that their issues are not adequately prioritised in management discussions, as exemplified by continuing lack of financial support and recognition. It could possibly be the lack of sufficient women's voices in the management to challenge the taken for granted prioritisation and entitlement of men's soccer over issues of women's soccer. Along the same line of discussion, Alvesson and Deetz (2000, p. 23) posit that "power is maintained not through the use of force but because those who are subordinated consent to dominant understandings that appear to be reasonable, ordinary or inevitable". In South Africa it does appear reasonable and unavoidable to prioritise men's soccer, particularly the senior national team, irrespective of its performance, in such a way that the society becomes sympathetic when they lose important games such as World Cup qualifying games. Of concern is that the society, and specifically women, have normalised the lack of publicity and financial support for the women's senior national team and even women's league games, such that this practice appears not to be questioned. It does seem like women are consenting to the inequity practices in soccer in South Africa, considering their silence on the lack of support for women's soccer.

It should however be added that the consent could happen unconsciously because when people *acquire* a discourse, for example gender roles, "we take on the ways of

being in the world constituted by it" (Janks, 2010, p. 55). The word 'acquire' is borrowed from Krashen (1981) and is seen as a process of gaining knowledge without being explicitly taught formally, resulting in normality and common sense. Considering this, as mentioned earlier, it is assumed that the marginalisation of women's soccer could also be propagated by them because they have normalised the hegemony of men's soccer, consciously or unconsciously. Hoeber (2007) argues that this power works because it is challenging to advocate change if those who are marginalised or oppressed accept their situation in spite of contrary evidence. In explaining the notion of power with resistance and freedom, Foucault (1984) states that power does not exist individually but in relation. This, according to St. Pierre (2007), means that in order for power relations to come into play, there must be at least a certain degree of freedom on both sides. If it happens that power relations are completely out of balance, as in male and female soccer in South Africa, power can be exercised over the other only insofar as the other still has the option of leaping out of it. If this is the case, it means women's soccer has the freedom and ability to resist the power exercised by men's soccer if they can 'really' put their mind and action into it. This discussion introduces the power of dialogue, which could be used by women to reclaim ownership of women's soccer.
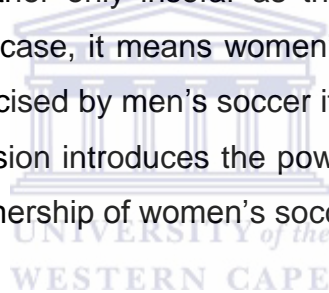
2.4.3.4 Power of dialogue

This power focuses on whose voices are consulted, included and heard in discussions and meetings, and whose voices are silenced and ignored when decisions are taken (Rao et al., 1999). This is about representational access and Houlihan (2003) argues that players should be present in the structure and decision-making process in order, to promote democratisation in sport. In soccer it is known that administrators and coaches, because of their positional power, are often consulted and involved in institutional decision-making but is unclear whether soccer managers and captains are now invited to attend decision-making meetings. Hoeber (2007) contests that for meaningful change to occur and new knowledge to be developed, many voices must be included in the dialogue. This study therefore encourages "alternative vocabularies" through dialogues in and off the soccer fields and meetings to generate new meanings and practices that "go farther in reflecting and enacting" the desired implementation of gender equity in soccer (Hoeber 2007, p. 261). I argue that it is not enough to limit our discussions and complaints about

inequity practices in soccer outside formal structures, it is important to ensure that there are representative women in the formal dialogues that would challenge and unsettle men's dominant voices. It is through continuous dialogues that issues of women's soccer would be taken seriously, but only if women take them seriously. In South Africa, it appears not enough to rely on the existing women in management to represent challenges of women's soccer because they seem to be overpowered. Considering the continuing informal dialogues in the communities, there is a serious need to encourage and unite in favour of increased number of women in management positions in soccer. I acknowledge that increasing the number of women in management positions does not necessarily mean addressing and prioritising women's issues, which means careful selection is needed.

2.4.4 Subjectivity

From poststructural perspectives, there is no fundamental or essential self, but instead, "we speak ourselves into existence within the terms of available discourses" (Davies, 2000a, p. 55). Weedon (1987) posits that subjectivity is constituted through language and discourse, which means that subjects position themselves in relation to competing and contradictory discourses, denying the existence of a "unified, rational self" (Gavey, 1989, p. 465). Subjects therefore constitute and position themselves along multiple discourses, making subjectivity unstable, contradictory and changing (Weedon, 1987, 1999). While this might be the case, some people are interpellated by dominant discourses which, according to Gavey (1989), "support and perpetuate existing power relations" (p. 464). Thus, rather than coming from an independent consciousness or core, essential self, notions of who one is and what a person is supposed to be and do are socially constructed (Barrett, 2005). If subjects are socially constructed, this means that people are subjects of cultural narratives, or storylines and as such they are always being produced and cannot claim a core nature that is theirs alone. Foucault gives us the metaphor of creating self as art (McNay, 1992), the idea that one can construct subjectivity with a certain degree of awareness and creativity. This is a possibility since "power is inherently fractured, operating in a capillary way" (Gore, 1993, p. 76). This however does not mean that we can be free of such power, but it does open a space where we can reorder the sequence of our narratives and tell our personal stories with alternative discourses.

This means that women's soccer players have opportunities to construct their subjectivity with some degree of awareness and narrate their personal experiences about gender (in)equity practices in soccer at university.

Foucault (1986) in revealing that the subject is a problematic entity asked several questions: "Where does the subject come from, what produces it, what effects does this mode of production have on it, what sort of a subject is it?" (p. 49). Tamboukou (2000) states that subjectivity is "patterns by which experiential and emotional contents, feelings, images and memories are organized to form one's self-image, one's sense of self and others, and of our possibilities of existence" (p. 465). This seems to suggest that subjects cannot claim to be authors of their ideologies, instead, it is ideologies that construct one's subjectivity, understandings of oneself and of what is both possible and permissible (Weedon, 2004). It is therefore important to explore how women's soccer players position and understand their current experiences of gender (in)equity practices in soccer, and whether they talk of the possibilities for change in women's soccer within university contexts.

2.5 Conclusion

To gain insight into the existing power relations between women and men in the society, and consequently in sport, and soccer in particular, three feminist perspectives were discussed. The liberalist feminist argued for equal opportunities and access to the sports world among women and men, because of the unequal distribution of funding for female sports. The assumption seemed to be that the equal distribution of opportunities could produce social change in sports, and overlooked interrogating the role of institutional structural power relations, gendered discourses and operating norms in sport. Radical and poststructuralist feminists prioritised deconstructing the existing institutional structural power relations and ideas that maintain the prioritisation of male dominance. The radicalist encouraged immense transformation in women's consciousness by sharing their experiences in a group, as a way of addressing and challenging the underlying imbalance in structural power relations. The focus on women's group experiences resulted in disregarding women's different social class and cross-cultural differences, which play major roles in women's access to sports. The poststructuralist feminist was concerned with the

hierarchical gender relations which dictated women's participation and performance in sport. Their aim was to interrogate and disrupt the discourses and assumptions that made gendered hierarchies and practices appear normal. The radical and poststructuralist feminists were concerned with the nature of language that creates reality and constructs knowledge, meaning that it shapes what we see and the way we make sense of the world and consequently the way we understand and interact with each other. Language has dictated women's positions in soccer through media, because there have been silences on the state of women's soccer in South Africa.

Gender and sport are socially constructed and are concerned with social power relations which are literally androcentric. A social constructionist perspective assists this study to understand the role that social structures play in shaping and giving meaning to gender. The argument is that the socio-cultural construction of sport is usually associated with masculinity and in other communities it is considered inappropriate for women to participate in sport, particularly those considered tough and aggressive. In soccer, the ideologies about gender play a role in determining the included and the excluded people in the field of play. It is therefore important to change the gender ideologies and beliefs that have been used to organise, exclude, and make sense of soccer. Changing gender ideologies for feminist poststructuralism means promoting the conceptual shift which challenges the way gender is understood or talked about. They challenge the binary divides and dualistic thinking which might exclude and limit the understanding of gender equity in soccer. The lens of feminist poststructuralism is used in this study to gain insight into the way meaning is made, structured and produced through the discursive and interactive processes of everyday life. For this study, feminist poststructuralism questions the normalised social practices and soccer practices that are gendered in most ways, and attempts to destabilise the taken for granted dominant discourses that promote male hegemony in soccer within the South African context. Of importance for feminist poststructuralism is to promote social transformation in soccer, the way women's soccer is perceived and conceptualised socially, as it perpetuates gender inequity. It is therefore crucial to critically examine and problematise perceptions and experiences of soccer stakeholders on gender equity practices at selected universities. Considering that soccer takes part in the construction of normative ideas of masculinity both at the individual level of play and at the structural level where

hegemonic masculinity is reproduced through messages embedded in sport media, it is important to disturb the normalisation of masculinity in sport media to encourage gender equity practices in soccer.

This study argues that the social constructive structures such as habitus, cultural capital, masculine hegemony, and discursive practices and the role they play in intensifying men's status quo in soccer have been and still seem to be taken for granted in South Africa. The construction of meanings which involve the selection of particular vocabularies and the exclusion of alternative meanings (Fletcher, 1999) could have been shaped by power relations that are socially constructed and unquestioned. The notion of exclusionary powers, that not all organisational members have access to power or can exercise it, are used as the analytical tools for soccer structures to expose the gender (in)equity practices in soccer within the university contexts. In addition, the role of subjectivity is important in this study to explore how women's soccer players narrate their personal experiences about gender (in)equity practices in soccer at university, how they position and understand their current experiences of gender (in)equity practices in soccer, and whether they talk of the possibilities for change in women's soccer within university contexts. Thus, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks selected for this study are used to understand the multifaceted socially constructed structures that established themselves as normative and escaped interrogation and critical analysis.

Given the discussion on the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for this study, the following chapter presents the research methodology and the justification for the chosen methods used for this study.

CHAPTER 3

GENDER AND GENDER EQUITY PRACTICES IN SOCCER: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed critical review of literature on gender and sport in general and specifically gender issues in soccer and equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer internationally, on the African continent, and in South Africa. The purpose is to understand how issues of gender equity in soccer have been viewed as a global concern. This is due to the historical exclusion, discrimination against, and marginalisation of women and girls in soccer participation. The critical examination of scholarly research is crucial to gain insight into the background, nature and extent of the challenges, problems, and achievements of women's and girls' participation in soccer within communities, schools and universities. Saavedra (2003, p. 226) expresses concern regarding the "serious absence of research and documentary materials on women's football, and that much of what is written is not widely circulated". The possible reason for this absence, according to Hums, Bower and Grappendorf (2007, p. 56), is that "historically women's and girls' access to soccer was limited by society's belief that participation in sport, particularly male associated sports, was unladylike and even dangerous to their reproductive lives". Similarly, Theberge (2000, p. 22) argues that "women's participation in physical activity was constrained by 'the myth of frailty' that in many patriarchal societies has informed ideas about women, gender relations and participation in sport". These statements highlight the various discourses that have been drawn on to restrict women's participation in historically male dominated sports such as rugby, bodybuilding, boxing, wrestling, and American football, especially since such sports are associated with strength, toughness, bravery, tolerance for pain, and muscularity. The discourses are unpacked and discussed in detail in chapter two, which presents the theoretical framework.

Thus, women who participate in 'tough' and 'masculine' sports challenge the constrained 'natural' feminisation of women's bodies, resulting in what are

constructed as derogatory labels such as 'tomboy' and lesbian. Messner (1996, p. 198) asserts that "women's participation in sports, particularly those that have traditionally been all-male, is a contested ideological terrain". It could then be argued that dominant gender discourses, and in particular social expectations of femininity, have shaped and undermined girls' and women's interest in sport generally and specifically in soccer as a strongly male associated sport. Sport could then be seen as "a site for relations of domination and subordination and the reproduction of gendered power relations" (Hall, 1996). This is historical because, according to Burnett (2001, p. 71) "the gendering of many popular contemporary forms of sport has its roots in the late 19th century in Britain and was transported to different colonial settings, resulting to the association with masculinity". If this is the case, it makes sense that male associated sports or 'true' sports, like soccer, have become a 'domain' where masculinity is celebrated and promoted by media, sport organisations, and governments at national and international levels as a unifying force (Dunning, 1994). Of concern, however, is that if these perceptions are not problematised and interrogated, they could perpetuate gender inequity and inequality in sport organisation structures and particularly in soccer as a focus of this study.

The review first elaborates on the literature that deals with gender and sports in general, to gain insight into the role that the social construction of femininity and masculinity played in organising and genderising sports. The social construction of femininity and masculinity forms part of the theoretical framework and was discussed in-depth in chapter two. Second, the focus is on girls' and women's access to and participation in university soccer internationally, considering the role of Title IX in the USA context at least in bringing substantial changes to the sport landscape for girls and women to enjoy greater access to sport. Third, is a discussion on the development of girls' and women's soccer in African countries in general, including social challenges they have to overcome to ensure the continuation of women's soccer and social roles that could influence gender equity practices, or lack thereof. Fourth, is an overview of the establishment and complexities of women's soccer in the apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa in communities and universities, as well as contemporary local research into women's soccer that addresses challenges and achievements thus far.

3.2 Gender and sport

The construction of gender defines "normative boundaries and influences how we think of ourselves and others, how we relate to others, and how social life is organized at all levels..." (Roth & Basow 2004, p. 263). This is clearly noted in sport organisations and the field of play, where normative gender roles dictate who is suitable to play what sport, what behaviour is socially appropriate and acceptable for which gender, and who is entitled to hold management positions in soccer organisations such as FIFA. Whilst women's participation in sport continues to increase, it could be argued that their presence remains challenged, given the significant relationship between gender and sport or the significance of sport for the construction of gendered identities (Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2011). Ross and Shinew (2008, p. 40) state that in sport "certain behaviours continue to be considered more or less appropriate for females depending upon how compatible they are with biologically or socially constructed female characteristics". For example, the demeaning phrase 'throwing like a girl' speaks volumes about appropriate qualities for males and females in the society, as they relate to sport (Ross & Shinew, 2008, p. 39). This is widely interpreted as not having the ability to throw proficiently, and also means that female sporting ability is assumed to be at a much lower level than male ability (Ross & Shinew, 2008). Consequently, on one hand, the femininity of girls and women who demonstrate sporting ability or can throw would be questioned and they may be considered to be 'masculine' or a lesbian, as the case of Caster Semenya[12] in South Africa illustrates so well, or be considered possessing male-like qualities. On the other hand, males who are not proficient in sport are usually compared to girls and the comparison is viewed as an insult for males.

Such biased gendered discourse is offensive for both male and female players, and especially disadvantageous for girls and women because it might discourage and limit their participation in male dominated sports and sports in general. In elaborating on 'gendered discourse' in sports Acker (2000, p. 146) suggests that "the knowledge that informs assumptions and interpretations of sport participation is influenced by discourses concerning socially produced distinctions between male and female,

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[12] Mokgadi Caster Semenya is a South African middle-distance runner and world champion who was forced to undergo gender tests after exhibiting high levels of testosterone.
http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/olympics/article-2175219/London-2012-Olympics-Caster-Semenya--gender-test-nightmare-me.html#ixzz2ZSQCDZBi

masculine and feminine." Similarly, Alvesson and Billing (1997, p. 67) assert that "gendered discourses or masculinities and femininities are those that are informed by taken for granted meanings of what it is to be a man or a woman in society", resulting in the association of particular sports with men or women. Clasen (2001, p. 57) argues that "all significant dualisms tend to be hierarchical, and masculine traits are typically defined as better, strong and more powerful than feminine characteristics". Thus, women athletes who are skilled, forceful, and strong and embody power, challenge the equation of physical power with masculinity (Whitson, 1994). It is evident that normative practices of masculinity are generally more socially valued than those associated with femininity in sports and sport organisations (McKay, 1999).

Thus, gendered social control is exercised in institutions and practices of sport by associating sport and physical activity with masculinity. This means that women who want to succeed in such sports must embrace masculine practices and their femininity may be questioned. Of interest, however, is that these women are usually not welcomed by men and those in power in sporting organisations because they represent a threat to the gendered role of social structure (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). Even if some women enter into male oriented sports, it is noted that sport organisations are often places that still reproduce traditional gender roles and male privilege and dominance (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Messner & Sabo 1990; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). For example, there is a general concern about the continued small number of women in comparison with men in coaching and senior positions in sport organisations (Rehman & Frisby, 2000; Mills, 1993; Frisby, 1992). This may also be linked to further gender inequities in society given the double load of work and care that women frequently carry. Thus, there is a common belief that leadership roles entail a commitment of time and energy beyond minimum job requirements, which may exclude those women with children. This is because leadership roles overlook the double roles that women play in taking care of children and domestic responsibilities that must be negotiated above and beyond their public responsibilities (Hovden, 2000). Another attributed reason is linked to the taken for granted perceived "naturalness" of men occupying leadership positions (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003, p. 348), which reproduces the normative understanding that women do not have this "natural" ability to occupy a leadership position and must work hard

to engage in it. Sport, then, has been found to reinforce a power differential based on gender that is not only favourable to males, but may also be constraining toward females (Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw & Freysinger, 1996; Shaw, 1994). As mentioned earlier, this multilayered bias is founded on gender inequity practices, and that sport participation is considered "natural" and common sense and is often strongly encouraged by significant others such as parents and peers (Messner, 1998).

It then means that through sports participation males potentially have the opportunity to experience social acceptance and learn what is expected of them to fulfil their social roles. To illustrate this, Coleman's (1961) survey on how high school students would like to be remembered reveals that participating in athletics was the most important predictor of popularity for males. In replicating Coleman's study, Goldberg and Chandler (1989, 1991) discovered that half of the males rated the role of 'outstanding athlete' as important or very important, supporting the notion that preferred maleness is widely associated with sport. Considering the studies sport, as "a product of culture and a reflection of the ideologies of dominant social values and ideals" (Schell & Rodriguez, 2000, p. 38) becomes a context that maintains, reproduces and rewards male participation and female subordination. Burnett (2001, p. 71) posits that the "dominance of this particular form of masculinity in sport can be described as hegemonic", which means a particular form of power and dominance in which male athletes legitimise their positions and secure the acceptance from women athletes. Anderson (2005, p. 21) explains that the key element to hegemony is that "complicity is achieved because subordinates believe their place in the system is *right* and *natural*". This means there is no force practiced, at least not explicitly, but some form of consent and acceptance of socially constructed position for the subordinates, that is, sportwomen. Considerable research has focused on consensual perceptions of gender behaviour and appearance to determine the appropriateness of particular styles of athletic participation (Cszima et al., 1988; Hall et al., 1991; Kane, 1987; Koivula, 1995, 2001; Matteo, 1986; Metheny, 1965; Messner & Sabo, 1990).

Metheny's (1965) early research was among the first to identify gender stereotypes that influence the social acceptability of various sports. The research recognises that

sports requiring aesthetically pleasing movement patterns, use of a light object, and a spatial barrier separating one from an opponent is acceptable for women. Alternatively, the use of force, overcoming resistance of a heavy object, and bodily contact in sport is perceived as acceptable for men and unacceptable for women (Metheny 1965). In another study, Kane and Snyder (1989, p. 43) found that the degree of physicality necessary in a given sport determines if that sport is thought of as "typically male" or "typically female". Snyder and Spreitzer (1983) surveyed adults to identify their perceptions of appropriateness concerning women's sport participation, and indicated that respondents found basketball, track and softball to detract from feminine qualities, while swimming, tennis and gymnastics enhanced feminine qualities. This social assessment of the appropriate sports for females to take part in could be shaped by the traditional beliefs regarding expected normalised feminine, ladylike behaviour.

In an examination of the relationship between female athletic participation and status attainment, Kane (1988) found that high school students attribute significantly greater social status to females in sex-appropriate sports (such as tennis, volleyball and golf) than those in sex-inappropriate sports (such as basketball, American football, and soccer). In a recent study seeking to identify perceptions of female and male athletes, McCallister, Blinde, and Phillips (2003) interviewed girls in elementary school and asked about perceived capabilities of boys and girls. Unsurprisingly, boys were commonly perceived as being tough, while girls were more often seen as fragile. Specific sport activities were also frequently identified with boys, such as American football, soccer, rugby, baseball, basketball, and wrestling, and girls were considered best at jumping rope, softball, cheerleading, dance, ballet, and gymnastics.

These studies indicate that sport is a context that reflects and reproduces the attitudes, beliefs, rituals, and values of society in relation to gender (Koivula, 2001; Birrell & Cole 1994; Messner, 1988, 2002). Sport is conceptualised as a structure ordered according to a dualistic understanding of gender that may continue to constrain sport participation for girls and women to varying degrees (Hargreaves, 1993; Krane, 2001; Krane et al., 2004; McCallister et al., 2003; Shaw, 1994). Along the same line, Cahn (1994) has been critical of research and literature that

distinguishes feminine sports based on aesthetic beauty versus strength (e.g. Matteo, 1988; Metheny, 1965), asserting these experts have "fortified a set of problematic cultural links between femininity, beauty, and female athleticism" (p. 32). She accepts that all sports contain an aesthetic dimension, and argues that the prevailing emphasis on sports for women that do not demand violence, aggression, and exhaustion has limited women's sport participation. This seems to embrace the traditional gender stereotype of men and women and reinforces that men are physically superior and women are weaker, leading to normalisation and recognition of males as more natural or respected athletes (Castelnuovo & Guthrie 1998; Kane, 1995).

3.3 Women's access and participation in soccer: international perspectives

> Everyone plays soccer here [in the United States] and girls are encouraged. When you travel abroad the game is considered a man's world in so many cultures. A girl is considered a freak if she plays. We've been to Spain, and jumped into a men's game and been looked at like we were crazy (Foudy, 2001, p. 18).

Soccer has been acknowledged to be the dominant, most popular and influential sport throughout the world (Sugden & Tomlinson, 1994). Notwithstanding its popularity, of concern is that soccer "has excluded almost completely the female half of the population to date" (Marschik, 2003, p. 26). While this could be the case, as soccer players, women persist in an environment associated with male competence and prestige. There is a substantial increase in the opportunities for women to participate and compete in soccer, as FIFA estimates that by the mid-2000s 26 million females will be registered players (Cox & Pringle, 2011). In conjunction with the growth in participants, a number of international tournaments such as the FIFA Women's under-20 and under-17 World Cups and the Olympics have developed to offer opportunities for females to play, coach, administer and referee on the world stage (Cox & Pringle, 2011). With this increase in mind, Acosta and Carpenter (2006, p. 56) caution that "with female soccer participation numbers currently at an all-time high it might be assumed that soccer environments are now more inclusive". Actually, a paradoxical situation has been noted in soccer where girls and women are admitted to the realm of soccer, but continue to be discriminated against (Sabo &

Messner, 1993). For example, the lack of grounds, lack of financial support, lack of proper training equipment, lack of referees and a general lack of acceptance that girls and women could or should play football (Cox & Thompson, 2001) are some of the continuing challenges. Although this could be the case, it should also be acknowledged that differences exist in meanings, development and support provided for girls and women participating in soccer in different countries internationally.

The following section critically discusses such differences with respect to how different countries have responded to girl's and women's soccer. For example, it could be possible that in the United States, where men's soccer is not the national sport, the meaning given to women's soccer will differ from that given to countries such as China, Netherlands, Austria and New Zealand, where men's soccer is dominant as the national sport. It is therefore important to take into consideration countries' socio-cultural situations and specific context with respect to girls' and women's participation in soccer, which were possibly influenced by the introduction of the Title IX law in 1972 in the United States.

In general, the Title IX law of 1972 presents a positive change and success stories for the development and involvement of girls and women in soccer in that country and arguably internationally. The 1972 Title IX was introduced to address and eliminate gender bias and gender-based barriers to educational programmes and experiences (Coakly, 2004). To contextualise the introduction of this law, Thomas (2007), writing in the US context, explains that "In 1972 virtually no college offered women athletic scholarships, and athletics programming for women consisted of little other than cheerleading squads" (p. 34). In addition, women's programmes and teams did not have the same access to coaches as men, because "their athletic facilities were not of comparable quality, and their competitive events and games were not given the same attention and resources" (Clayton & Humberstone, 2007, p. 18). This law was therefore introduced to promote gender sensitivity and consciousness in different sports, at the same time encouraging gender equity awareness and changes in schools, colleges and universities. However, the National Women's Law Center (2002) argues that despite substantial progress, most sport institutions still suffer from a marked imbalance in this regard.

Without overlooking the argument, Title IX law's success is reflected in the increased participation of young girls and women in sports, particularly codes that were previously associated with men such as soccer, rugby, cricket, weightlifting, and basketball. However I acknowledge that sports such as boxing, American football, and wrestling are still lacking behind in promoting women's participation. Thus, in the US, Title IX of 1972 assisted with the identification, implementation and monitoring of gender equity practices in different sport codes in educational institutions and consequently within the communities. Following the introduction and the passing of Title IX in 1972, governments in different countries have passed laws and formulated policies promoting equal rights for girls and women in sports (Chappell, 2003; Coakley, 2004; Pelak, 2005). It is therefore due to the introduction and monitored implementation of Title IX law that success stories of sports development for girls and women in general and particularly in soccer have been identified. Before I discuss girls' and women's successes in soccer, it is important to address the different challenges and constraints they experience and have to overcome to accomplish success.

3.3.1 Challenges and constraints for women in soccer

As mentioned earlier, women's participation in soccer has always been a "contested ideological terrain" (Messner, 1988, p. 198), because it threatens the historical dominance of men in soccer. This was noted during the introduction of Title IX Law of 1972 in the United States which was surrounded by controversy and debates, due to the perceptions that it could possibly cause "death to men's athletics" (Hums, Bower & Grappendorf, 2007, p. 50). Lovett and Lowry (1989, p. 25) argue that since the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) was unable to slow the growth of women's athletics by defeating the Title IX law, it chose to put women's sports under their governing structure in order to control their growth and possibly benefit from them. In responding to this 'strategic' practice, Lough (2004, p. 4) suggests that, "In essence, the power and control of women's sport has effectively been seized by men, many who have then limited the career progression of women". Similarly, this was seen as the end of women's control over women's college sports, as Zimbalist (1999, p. 60) notes with concern that "Title IX … had brought some status back to women's sports and now, it seems, the women's programs were too worthy for

women's work". Considering this discussion, the gender inequity in soccer that was mentioned earlier could be attributed to women's 'surrender' to take control of coaching and senior positions in soccer. Furthermore the seizure, it could be argued, might have possible effects on the slow development, promotion, participation, and financial support for girls' and women's soccer. This defeats the purpose of the Title IX law for sport organisations to comply with gender equity practices in sports.

Various studies have been conducted to determine the compliance of different sport organisations with Title IX law, as they are assessed on various programme components. These include equipment and supplies, scheduling of games and practices, athletic scholarships, travel and daily allowances, medical and training facilities and services, publicity, locker rooms, coaching and practice, and competitive facilities (Hoeber, 2008). Fink and Pastore (1997) surveyed the athletes' perceptions of equity in relation to these components. They found that athletes on revenue generating teams perceive a higher level of equity than those on non-revenue generating teams. They also suggested that since historically female athletes have been exposed to university sport programmes of lower quality, their expectations of equity are lower than male athletes. This confirms the point that was made earlier in this chapter regarding sportswomen conforming to masculine hegemonic discourse, which perceives them as secondary to sportsmen.

In a similar study, Sanger and Mathes (1997) demonstrated that various stakeholder groups (athletic directors, faculty representatives, and women's basketball coaches) of American university athletic departments have multiple, but different understandings of their department's compliance with Title IX regulations. They found that coaches were most cognizant of specific regulations of the policy that were not being met. In contrast, athletic directors, who exercised the most power and influence in the department, assumed that their departments were generally compliant. While these studies revealed multiple perceptions of gender equity policies, they presumed there were shared understandings of gender equity within key stakeholder groups. Later, Hoeber and Frisby's (2001) examination of athletic department administrators' understandings of gender equity found that most of them initially indicated that the athletic department was gender equitable, yet a majority of them later pointed to examples of gender inequities, such as some men's teams

receiving more funding than women's teams. For Hoeber and Frisby (2001), this example illustrates a contradiction in their meanings.

In addressing the point of contradictions in meanings, Meyerson and Martin (1987, p. 637) point out that in most sport organisations "individuals share some viewpoints, disagree about some, and are ignorant of or indifferent to others". The ambiguities, according to Martin (1992, 2002), are inevitable within sport organisations and subcultures because there usually are tensions, contradictions, and silences around the meanings of organisational values. Thus, the ambiguities address the "rich variations in the way organisations carry meanings of gender equity" (Alvesson & Billing, 1997, p. 4), which makes it important to explore, interrogate, and make the meanings of soccer stakeholders visible. In general, the above mentioned studies illustrate the continuing challenges of implementing and practicing gender equity in sport after Title IX, and call to attention the significance of regular problematisation and research on gender equity practices in soccer organisations within schools and universities.

Constant monitoring of gender equity practice is crucial as Clark and Paechter (2007, p. 261) posit that "at the level of rhetoric, girls and women's participation in soccer is tolerated and even encouraged, but in practice there are constraints that hinder their involvement in various ways". This is noted in places like playgrounds, which are key sites of gender negotiations and interactions, or lack thereof (Renold, 2004). The playground, as a contested soccer space, is known to be historically dominated by males, and only recently has female participation begun to gain reluctant acceptance in this space. Scraton et al's. (1999) study with women in England, Germany, Norway and Spain on experiences and meanings of soccer in their lives found that women players in the first three countries gained access to playing soccer through male contacts and support, and they needed male approval to use 'their' facilities. In Spain, access to open space (field) was more restricted for women to play soccer and they experienced little support from men as compared to women, reinforcing the earlier point regarding the salience of different cultural contexts for shaping women's experiences in soccer. According to Scraton et al. (1999) this suggests the "cultural specificity of gender and also that transgressing the boundaries of gendered space may be more difficult in some cultural contexts" (p.

103). Considering this study, Palzkill (1990, p. 39) argues that "the territory of soccer is still determined by male structures and a masculine functional logic", thus changes cannot occur in soccer because men have retained the "power of defining how real soccer functions, both symbolically and in reality". This notion could mean that soccer continues to be perceived as inappropriate for women, illustrating possible resistance to the regulations of Title IX.

In the Netherlands soccer was constructed as a sport for men and grew to become a national sport, thus inappropriate and unworthy of women's participation (Skelton, 2000). It was further perceived that the participation of women in soccer would devalue the men's game (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2003) as an activity that could develop a desired form of masculinity. Consequently, the Dutch Football Association (KNVB) subsequently curtailed the growth of women's soccer by limiting the usage of soccer fields by women, allowing women for one hour after a men's amateur team (KNVB, 1997). The General Women's Soccer Association persevered and kept challenging the hegemonic idea that women could not play soccer and men controlled soccer fields. According to Skelton (2000, p. 76) "Initially the KNVB did little to promote women's soccer and were not part of an organised competitive structure, because many (male) clubs and regions did not want women members". Although soccer has become a popular sport in Netherlands, the development and participation of girls and women is slow (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2003) due to a seemingly unwilling support.

New Zealand women's soccer also experienced numerous challenges before being recognised and accepted. Male hegemonic discourses such as, "Oh soccer is not a women's sport, that's a man's sport. Women can't play in this club; we are not going to recognize them", from a male secretary (Cox & Pringle, 2011, p. 225), illustrate the 'fight' women's soccer has to overcome. Given gender bias in soccer, Cox and Pringle (2011, p. 226) state that "many football administrators did not take women's football seriously and believed that it would be a short-lived phenomenon". Thus, there was no threat or challenge to men's soccer, while no one wanted to invest financially in the growth of women's soccer. Furthermore, clubs refused to buy soccer uniforms for women and they had to use "ill-fitting hand-me-downs from the men's teams and were not allowed to train on the club grounds if the men's team

were going to play on it on Saturday" (Ruane, 1999, p. 43). This was also experienced by the Netherlands women's soccer. Before women were allowed to use the changing rooms, women used to "change behind bushes outside, in public toilets or in their cars" (Cox & Pringle, 2011, p. 228). Of interest with the New Zealand women soccer players is that they seem not to feel overtly marginalised by the lack of club support and appear to believe that they are not as proficient at soccer as the men (Cox & Thompson, 2001). Thus, women's soccer is not entitled to equal provision of soccer resources, that is, soccer fields, soccer uniforms, and coaches, which could result in a lack of public protest to the inequitable treatment. Actually, New Zealand women soccer players showed gratitude rather than demanding equity, and demonstrated that they were neither a threat nor a challenge to the current understanding that men were entitled by 'right' to have control of all soccer resources. For Thompson (1999), women's prioritisation of men's needs is "an extension and reflection of their domestic domination". Of concern is that although women's soccer was experiencing challenges, it was women soccer players who were perpetuating gender inequity practices in soccer by approving men's dominance and rights to soccer.
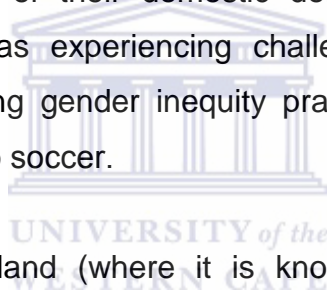
In describing soccer in England (where it is known as football), Sugden and Tomlinson (1994) assert that, "Of the national football organizations, the English Football Association (FA) regulates one of the most staunchly masculine sites in which football remains a strong bastion of traditional hegemonic masculinity" (p. 57). This is shaped by the long history of actively excluding female participation at all levels. In Scraton et al's (1999) study, mentioned earlier, on experiences of top-level European women soccer players (in England, Germany, Norway and Spain), for the England women soccer players "first real barriers to participation occurred when they entered the schooling system" (p. 103). Although there were no legal restrictions on girls competing in soccer, Flintoff (1993) argues that girls were not allowed to play with boys or had to battle for opportunities. It became worse when girls entered secondary school as "they were not allowed to play at school" (Scraton et al., 1999, p. 104). This confirmed Scraton's (1992) and Flintoff's (1993) findings that gender ideologies remain firmly embedded within the content, teaching and practice of physical education, validating the importance of investigating and interrogating gender equity practices in soccer in education institutions. Nonetheless, the

subsequent influx of women players to date has changed little, suggesting active resistance and gate-keeping practices in soccer (Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008).

The Canadians also attempted to address issues of gender equity in sport. The Canadian Interuniversity Athletic Union established an Equity and Equality Committee and goal statements that demonstrate a commitment to the value of gender equity in the organisation (Hoeber, 2007). However, research into Canadian university soccer and athletics has shown that women continue to receive fewer scholarships than men, their teams are promoted less often, and men's teams receive a greater share of operating budgets (Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS), 2001; Danylchuk & MacLean, 2001). Without sounding pessimistic, this could be an example of the fact that, irrespective of the official laws, men continue to possess larger and more flexible financial and sport resources, as clubs, sport organisations, athletic institutions and stadiums are led formally and informally by men (Horne, Tomlinson & Whannel, 1999). This also applies in the United State where women's soccer had to "contend with their male counterparts for use of facilities, as men were given priorities in the use of soccer fields" (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2003, p. 356). There was lack of competitive teams for girls and women, which meant that those who wanted to play had to play in men's teams and challenge the gender bias. Of course women experienced resistance from men's team: "A 9 year old goalkeeper Amy Love successfully sued California's youth soccer association because they prevented her from playing on an (boys') all-star team" (Longman, 2001, p. 57). This indicates the perseverance and the determination to play soccer whatever it takes for girls in the US, as has often happened in women's soccer in Europe.

Thus, despite FIFA President Blatter's promise at the USA 1999 Women's World Cup that "the future of football is feminine" (Manzenreiter, 2008, p. 244), the discussion has indicated that soccer continues to be an overwhelmingly masculine pursuit across the majority of European countries. Blatter's discourse seems to suggest that soccer is a 'neutral' and independent event that acknowledges and supports women's increasing participation in soccer. The statement disregards the fact that women's soccer is subjected to an extreme male hegemony, functioning on a terrain with specifically masculinist traditions and myths. This study therefore argues that it cannot be ignored that the social field of soccer is predominantly

defined by gender differences, as sports are ruled by a gendered basis of sports practices and institutions (Theberge, 1997).

Despite the challenges that women's soccer and women soccer players have experienced, they have persisted in a male dominated environment, and have gained sport competence through their continued participation. Their presence in high-level competitive sport seems to indicate success in challenging the dominance of male hegemony in sport, particularly those normatively associated with men.

3.3.2 Women's success in soccer

It is noted that irrespective of the challenges and constraints, girls' and women's participation in soccer has been increasing internationally. The breakthrough could be attributed to the Title IX law of 1972, which has been positively influential in countries that were religiously and culturally unsupportive of female participation in sports, and would not allow women to wear revealing clothes. An example is Leeda Yaqoobi's soccer project in Pakistan and Afghanistan which is aimed at empowering women, including parents, to have equal participation in social sports (van Kempen, 2007). The Afghanistan Women's National Team Captain's statement is illustrative: *"Today we are free to play soccer and hope to inspire more girls in Afghanistan to play"* (Shamila Kohestani, in Kocken, 2007, p. 11). The Seham Ibrahim organisation focused on marginalised street girls in Egypt, and encouraged them to take control of their lives through playing soccer and karate (van Kempen, 2007). This project maintained that sport encourages a sense of responsibility in these disadvantaged homeless girls, to take charge of their own lives. One of the street girl's statements illustrates this point: *"I am getting older now and I am beautiful so I will be harassed by many men … I want to learn playing soccer for discipline and karate for protection!"* (in Kocken, 2007, p. 12). It could therefore be suggested that women's soccer is improving globally, considering the participation of countries that were reluctant to allow women to play soccer due to cultural and religious beliefs. Thus, women's involvement in sport has also served to challenge socially constructed and narrowly defined gender role expectations supported by masculine hegemony (Ross & Shinew, 2008).

An enormous improvement has been noticed in the United States where "women's soccer is culturally equivalent of, or even superior to, the men's game" (Markovits & Hellerman, 2003, p. 14). Although women's soccer in the US has challenged culturally bound ideas and stereotypes that identify soccer as a male domain by dominating soccer, it was because it is actually constructed as a 'tame' sport compared to other more aggressive and more popular sports, for example, American football. Thus, in a sense women's soccer is not competing with the dominant male sports in the US and further is in some way already feminised as a soft sport. This is not so much the case in other countries where soccer is more popular as the dominant male sport and therefore is more masculinised. Consequently, women's soccer grew with relatively little resistance from men's soccer resulting in the American women's team dominating soccer and winning Women's World Cups. For example, they won the 1991 and 1999 Women's World Cups, and won gold in the 1996 Summer Olympics and silver in 2000 (Markovits & Hellerman, 2001). The 1999 Women's World Cup attests to the growing popularity and support of women soccer in the US as the attendance and interest broke the record for a women's sport (Longman, 2001). The final match between the USA and China that was held in the Rose Bowl attracted over 92,000 spectators and national TV audiences exceeded 40 million (Cox & Thompson, 2000, p. 5). The United States and Germany are the only countries that have won the Women's World Cup twice in – 199/1999 and 2003/2007 respectively (www.topendsports.com), which means there is much to celebrate in the history of women's soccer in the United States.

Notwithstanding the success of women's soccer in the US, as mentioned above, the argument could be made that women are dominating soccer in the US, because of the gendered meanings and physicality given to soccer as compared to the Netherlands where it is defined as a sport for men. It is also argued that soccer has not yet drawn interest from men in the US possibly because of the association with gentleness, that it's easy to learn, and physically safe for girls, which could be considered an insult for men, as discussed earlier. Within the success, women's soccer in the US is perceived and criticised for being a "primarily white, middle-class suburban sport that failed to attract black youth" (Dart, 2009, p. 175), and could therefore be discriminatory. Similarly, Scraton et al. (1999, pp. 101-102) noted "the under-representation of Black and minority ethnic women in football in England,

Spain, England and Germany". According to Zaman (1997) their absence in "top-level women's soccer, particularly in Britain where Black male players have made significant impact, is an example of the continued discrimination some Black women and women of colour face in many countries in competitive sport" (p. 56).

Without overlooking this criticism, US women soccer players could be recognised as challengers to the male field of sports by successfully attracting vast crowds and media audiences, and as a challenge "on male body dictates as they are paradigmatically construed in soccer" (Giuliani 2001, p. 22). The determination of US women soccer players has not only encouraged the development of girls' soccer from an early age, but has also popularised it in colleges and universities. It is noted that women who play for a national team and participate in Women's World Cup Championships "comprise exclusively of women who played soccer at American colleges and universities" (Anderson & Cheslock, 2004, p. 309). I acknowledge that this exclusivity might marginalise women who play soccer in the community, because of the possible exclusion in the selection of the national team. However, this is significant for the current study because it illustrates the importance of universities in developing and promoting women's soccer, and is also a relevant context to explore and interrogate practices of gender equity.

Women's soccer has also been popular and successful in the Scandinavian countries (Norway, Denmark and Sweden) and Germany as they form a centre for women's soccer globally (Agergaard & Botelho, 2009). In these countries school did not play a significant role in encouraging girls and women to play soccer, instead opportunities were provided by male soccer clubs. Of interest with respect to these countries is that "women players were active in setting up girls' teams and putting in place the club system that exists presently" (Scraton et a.l, 1999, p. 103). This indicates that for girls' and women's soccer to be successful, it was important for women to play a central role in establishing, promoting, and monitoring the continuation of women's soccer within communities. In Norway, women's soccer has been less marginalised and contested and the government provided more material support, which improved their competitiveness as they won the Women's World Cup in 1995 and have been considered successful (Laur, 1997). It could be argued that where women's soccer seems successful, it is because of the serious attempts by

these governments to address gender equity practices socially, educationally and in sports together with the support from local sports clubs and women players. In addition, the US and other European countries' success in women's soccer is not only attributed to Title IX of the 1972 Federal Education Amendments, but also to monitored implementations of the Law at the elementary, middle and high school levels, and in colleges for young women (Martinez, 2008). Considering the support of the government, the development of a well-organised and constant monitoring of sport policy for girls and women would seem to be crucial in increasing the participation rate of females in soccer (Scraton et al., 1999, p. 107).

In the Asian context, Manzenreiter (2008) argues that essentialised categories of 'male' and 'female' and gender behaviour initially hampered women's progress in countries like Japan. Edwards (2000, p. 18) adds, "Women's involvement in Japanese soccer has been constrained by an inherently comparative logic and a firm belief that the world of competitive sport is naturally and irreversibly first and foremost the domain of male and natural masculinity". Japan has an interesting story because at junior and senior high schools, soccer became the most popular sport, but no girls' soccer team was initially registered with the High School Sport Federation. It was only in 2001 when soccer was officially acknowledged for young girls in Japan that this occurred. Their progression is reflected in the 2006 FIFA rankings where they occupied position eight (Manzenreiter, 2008, p. 246) five years after promoting girls' participation in soccer. Their recent 2011 Women's World Cup victory over the US improved their rankings to position 3 in international soccer. Manzenreiter (2008) notes that Japan is the continental leader in the field of women's soccer, followed by South Korea, China, Singapore, Chinese Taipei and Hong Kong. The table below illustrates the world ranking between women's and men's soccer in Asia:

Table 1.1: World ranking of women's and men's national teams in 2012

Team	Women	Men
Japan	3	89
Korea DPR	8	30
China	18	28
Korea Republic	23	33
Chinese Taipei	25	156
Hong Kong	67	116
Singapore	92	96

Source: Rankings derived from FIFA statistics (www.fifa.org)

In addition, China's communist ideology that incorporates a traditional, patriarchal, and semi-feudal way of life (Riordan & Jinxia, 1996) played a role in hindering women's participation in soccer. Nevertheless, considering the constraints, Asian output in terms of number of female soccer players appears to be increasing, despite the evidence of a dominant masculinist ideology in soccer.

It is important to note that what this overview of the international context of soccer reveals thus far is that if girls and women are given 'fair' opportunities and support to participate in soccer, they are able to perform extremely well. These success stories of girls and women in soccer internationally are achievements that should be celebrated, considering that family socialisation and culture are identified as playing a role in restricting or promoting gender stereotypes in soccer. Yumiko (2005, p. 22) adds that "the inroad of women into soccer and their success at international tournaments threatens to disrupt culturally bound ideas of gender and nation ... where the collective imagination stereotypically identifies soccer as a male domain". The discussion, thus far, has indicated that although men do have considerable influence on women's soccer, women soccer players have also demonstrated that they can play competitive soccer and attract big crowds if they are given the opportunity.

The information provided up to now indicates that international women soccer players have demonstrated that although opportunities might not always be given, they have to create them by taking charge of developing and promoting girls' and women's soccer. The experiences, challenges, and successes of international

women's soccer have been influential in encouraging girls' and women's soccer players on the African continent. Thus, the next section focuses on the challenges and achievements with respect to girls' and women's soccer in an African context.

3.4 'Let the girls play soccer': African experiences and complications

> When I started playing for MYSA (Mathare Youth Sports Association in Nairobi) my father would say that there is no football for girls, and he would beat me up. (Brady & Khan, 2002, p. 17)

This quotation indicates that social obstacles such as cultural inhibitions and also religious restrictions have an impact on female participation in sports, demonstrating the ways by which humanity controls and regulates people (Ortner, 1974). In this quotation, the possible reason for restricting girls and women from playing soccer is the close association of women's bodies and physiological functions with the natural processes that include menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and lactation (Onwumechili, 2011). As mentioned earlier, it is therefore possible to find girls and women excluded from sports that are considered male-dominant in the community, and also to find similar practices in schools and universities: for example, sports like rugby, cricket, baseball, and boxing. Thus, without homogenising African countries, it could be argued that to some extent the social and/or religious pressures complicate and limit the participation of African girls and women in soccer both in rural and urban areas. For example, in Nigeria the adoption of Sharia laws in the early 2000s exacerbated the impact of religion on women's participation in football. One of the governors said, "If you use government money to sponsor female soccer, you [officials] will account for it. I don't see anything rewarding about it [women's football] as it is not in conformity with our culture" (in Onwumechili, 2011, p. 2214). This illustrates the role that some government officials can play in promoting or restricting girls' and women's participation in sport through financial support, given its importance in the everyday running of sport. In 2012 the Islamic Fiqh Council in Sudan issued a fatwa (religious order) saying that it was forbidden for the country to create a women's soccer team, deeming it an immoral act (Sudan Tribune, 2012, accessed in 12 October, 2014). In addition, the examples present the role that

gender power structures can play to legitimise and restrict the development of girls' and women's soccer in some African countries.

Again, with caution and without homogenising women in Africa, not naturally but in general, women have household responsibilities that men do not have, which results in a lack of time to participate in soccer training and matches and also organisation of soccer for women (CODICE, 2010). Considering that participation in soccer generally and specifically professionally needs time to practice and develop skills, it is argued that men have all the time and women are always challenged to balance household gender roles and play soccer. This influences the development, or lack thereof, of women's soccer because of the socially constructed gender roles that promote gender inequity.

In addition to these limitations, of concern is the little research and documentary material about women's soccer in Africa, considering the early establishment in different countries. Scholarly studies and reports addressing women's soccer are beginning to appear, although they are still not widely circulated to inform of current gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer. The studies that have been conducted to illustrate the status and importance of sport in African nations do not clearly address issues of gender equity in soccer. Relevant to this study, while researching literature on gender equity practices at universities, I could not find information and what existed focused on schools. In South Africa research is recently emerging on women's soccer at universities, but it does not address issues of gender equity. This means the area remains under-researched on the African continent. Notwithstanding the constraint, the following section focuses on existing research that provides information on the status of sport in Africa.

3.4.1 Studies on the status of sport in Africa: assessing gender equity practices?

Several studies have been conducted to demonstrate the development of sport in Africa, as it is recognised for its potential advance of national integration and international recognition, as well as to provide other health and socio-economic benefits to the nations (Willis, 2000). For example, Clignet and Stark's (1974, p. 34)

study about sensitising people to development through sport concluded that "sport participation seemed to parallel development and modernisation in Cameroon". Sport is used as a vehicle for an exit route from poverty and underprivilege and encouraging international respect and national unity and identity. In Kenya, Black (1987, p. 56) recommended an "environment-to-implementation model" which stressed the need for comprehensive implementation of local and national sports objectives. Kenya is an interesting country because girls have experienced both support and marginalisation in soccer. Initially, girls' soccer experienced bias where boys' soccer was the main focus of development and only after seeing Norwegian girls playing soccer was the girls' team established in 1996 (Willis, 2000). From then the approach in soccer has been different because the government explicitly developed programmes to promote soccer for girls and women to address and promote HIV/AIDS awareness. A league for girls and boys aged 9-18 years old was established in 1999 to instil and ensure development for both genders, irrespective of boys being always advantaged (Brady & Khan, 2002). It is argued that in Mathare (one of Nairobi's slums, in Kenya), girls' participation in soccer is always hindered by parents who are, understandably, concerned with household chores and importantly their safety (van Beek, 2007). Thus, irrespective of the sport policy, parents play a role in promoting or limiting girls' participation in soccer through culturally expected gender roles. Parpart (2008) posits that the dominant patriarchal ideology locates women's roles in the domestic sphere, thus limiting their participation in any sport.

Zambia is also cautious about girls participating in soccer due to the chores they are expected to perform at home and so limits their choice to participate in sport. Consequently, progression for women's soccer has been slow, as they currently occupy 18th of 21 positions in African nations in the FIFA rankings. This, according to Meier and Saavedra (2009), reflects the history of women's soccer in Zambia, which has been one of starts and stops because of lack of government and community support. According to Dorothy Yamba, general secretary of Zambia Women's Football Association (ZWFA), women's soccer in Zambia started in 1974, with a national team forming in 1976, but people thought women playing soccer was 'unusual and obscene'. 1990 sees Zambian women's soccer picking up again in the capital Lusaka, with help from external donors, such as the Norwegian aid agency, NORAD. Of interest is that seeing this assistance, the sport minister promised that

"the government will do everything possible to ensure that an enabling environment is created". Unfortunately, a month later the ZWFA leadership disbanded the organisation in protest, feeling neglected, ignored and irrelevant by the Football Association of Zambia (FAZ) (Meier & Saavedra, 2009, p. 1162). It is not encouraging for the growth of Zambian women's soccer that they have to protest for recognition and support, instead of focusing on encouraging and increasing girls' participation in soccer as a sport that has potential to address gender inequity.

Corlett and Mokgwathi (1989) assessed the status of sport in Botswana and suggested the need for a more committed and systematic approach towards sports development. According to Kgathi (1997), Botswana has a youth development policy that not only places very little emphasis on youth sports development, but also does not provide broad guidelines and frameworks for youth sports development. As a way of showing commitment, the Botswana government established a commission to investigate factors accounting for the poor performances of its national [male] teams in international sports competitions (Mokgwathi, 1999). Thus, although a commission was established and suggestions for a systematic approach towards sports development were encouraged, it seems that the issue and possibly the policy of gender equity practice in general were overlooked. This is noted in the exclusive focus on the men's national team by the commission, while the women's national team was also not performing well nationally and internationally and nothing was done about this. This could be interpreted as meaning that the women's team is not as important as the men's national team, if financial incentives and publicity associated with men's teams are taken into consideration. In Nigeria, the effectiveness of sports development programmes has been positively rated based on the international performances of their junior soccer teams. Notwithstanding this, Toriola, Adetoro, Toriola and Igbokwe (2000) maintain that activities of the departments of youth and sports in the ministry are poorly co-ordinated, and marginalise sports that take place out of school as they focus on competitive sports.

Of concern with addressing youth sports development is the use of neutral language, because it has the potential to conceal gender bias towards girls' and women's participation in sports generally and particularly in soccer. There is an urgent need to explicitly interrogate and deconstruct information on how girls' and women's soccer

development takes place on the African continent. If this is ignored it could perpetuate the limitation of literature on women's soccer and constrain the generation of information on the obstacles they continue to experience in Africa.

3.4.2 Documenting women's soccer and its obstacles

Researchers argue that the gender-typing of sports has historically been reified to the point that most African countries have normalised a belief that reserving soccer for boys was part of a traditional African culture (Saavedra, 2007). This notion resulted in girls and women being restricted to playing particular types of sports such as netball, which was popularised by British colonialism and exacerbated gender differences in sport (Onwumechili, 2011). The formal schooling system played a role in promoting sport in African countries, but in many countries also perpetuated gender inequity in soccer particularly. For example, in Malawi and Angola schools promoted the idea that boys should play soccer while girls were expected to play netball or garrafinha[13] which clearly separated the genders with respect to sport. In Nigeria, soccer was also introduced in mission schools that privileged men's admission, and very few women attended school at the time, meaning that the adoption of the game by women was delayed (Willis, 2000). However, since 1990 women's football competition has been organised at the secondary school level in Nigeria and has shaped the success of the women's national team (Falcons). Just like in other international countries, in Africa women's soccer also experienced several obstacles due to the hierarchal structures that favoured men and made women always seek recognition.

A 2007 report by the UN on women and sport in Africa has listed several hindrances that affect women's participation in soccer such as lack of separate sporting facilities including changing rooms, bathrooms, dressing issues, and negative media portrayal of women in sports (Onwumechili, 2011). In Uganda, it is claimed that there is a plan for the promotion of women's soccer, however a lack of funds to implement it, while men's soccer is well supported without complications (Saavedra, 2003). Furthermore, Zimbabwe's senior soccer team coach threatened to resign because of being associated with coaching the women's senior national team to prepare for the

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[13] Garrafinha is a common female-type activity in Angola.

African Women's Championship. He was reported to have said he would rather quit than work with the women's side (Daimon, 2010). This response and attitude towards the women's national soccer team has implications for the development, financial and community support of women's soccer, because it possibly emphasises men's perceptions that women's soccer is invading and challenging the 'culture' of soccer.

In Senegal, sport academies were established to encourage and promote children's participation in sport, and also to look for new talent. Saavedra (2003) notes that these academies by and large train only boys and there is a serious absence of girls because, it is argued, there is not yet a lucrative market for female soccer in Europe or the United States. Thus, the development of girls' and women's soccer is identified as not a pressing issue as compared to ensuring that men have all the necessary resources to play soccer, because of the lucrative market in Europe. It is these kind of perceptions that influence the development of girls' and women's soccer in general, as discussed earlier, and particularly in Africa where it is at an early stage. If this perception is taken seriously, it makes sense that youth sports development mostly focuses on boys rather than girls. As mentioned earlier, the interest is influenced by who has the potential to bring more money and international exposure to the country, consequently perpetuating gender stereotypes and gender inequity in soccer. Saavedra (2003, p. 242) posits that, "despite increasing rhetoric about the value of women's participation in soccer, choices made by organisations at national levels still often result in the neglect of the women's game". The neglect is noted in the association of women's soccer with charity because the entrance fee to their games is usually free, irrespective of whether they are playing cup games. For example, entrance to the 2004 African Women's Championship in South Africa was free, including the finals between Nigeria and Cameroon. This practice and meanings about women's soccer delivers wrong messages about women's soccer that watching women's soccer is not worth paying for, and propagates gender inequity practices in soccer while at the same time undermining the current achievements for African women's soccer.

Likewise, in Zimbabwe the provision of sport infrastructure is heavily biased towards soccer, with soccer stadia sprouting virtually everywhere across Zimbabwe (Daimon,

2010). Unfortunately, women's soccer does not enjoy this privilege as they encounter 'apartheid' in soccer participation (Daimon, 2010). This 'apartheid', according to Bogopa (2007) starts at "grassroots level where local communities and schools socially construct sport along the lines of gender, thus soccer is constructed as a boy/male sport at an early age (p. 78)". It makes sense then that women who participate in soccer are perceived as challenging "the male control of the public domain, a challenge that often elicits violence against those women perceived as transgressors" (Parpart, 2008, p. 123). The violence could threaten the participation of girls' and women's soccer because no parent would want their daughters to be hurt because of soccer. It is also noted that various soccer academies are in existence in Zimbabwe, just like the famous Abidjan Soccer Academy in the Ivory Coast, where boys are taught the skills of the 'beautiful game' at the expense of girls (Bogopa, 2007, p. 89).

This gender discrimination is also evident at the national level where professional women soccer leagues are non-existent and the Zimbabwean Women's National Soccer Team, nicknamed the 'Mighty Warriors', always struggles to raise funds during tournaments such as the COSAFA female championships and World Cup qualifiers (Daimon, 2010). A possible reason for challenges in developing Zimbabwe's women's soccer is the stigma of being "pseudo-masculine creatures that wish to behave like real men" (Daimon, 2010, p. 7). The community always tends to associate any success in soccer and other sports with masculinity and any sportswoman who is exceptionally successful has her sexuality questioned (Bogopa, 2007). For example, Nomsa Moyo, the best Zimbabwean 'Mighty Warriors' soccer player since independence, has been nicknamed Nomsa 'Boys' Moyo, which is reflective of a society that does not appreciate her talents as a woman and thus associates her football prowess with that of boys or men.

In 2007, one of the goals for FIFA's international development manager, Nada Grkinic, was to work on improving women's soccer in Africa with a special focus on Lesotho. Inside Lesotho, soccer is used to develop women's self-esteem and saw an increase of female registered players of 5,200 in 2006. Of concern, however, is that a total of 61 soccer clubs in the country only 7 teams are registered women's teams (Daimon, 2010). It could be argued that this is promising for women's soccer, but it

also shows that the development of women's soccer in other African countries is painfully slow. The Ugandans together with Melissa Cochran from Louisianan State University New Orleans, USA, established a Xtreme soccer Academy for girls, women, and homeless mothers, and it is also used to provide accommodation and promote a healthy lifestyle (http://xtremegirlssocceracademy.yolasite.com/, accessed in September 14, 2014). However, it is unclear what role the Academy plays in promoting girl's and women's soccer professionally and whether there is some kind of relationship with the community and institutions of education.

Considering the discussion thus far, most identified literature focuses on the establishment of women's soccer teams with unclear roles played by the institutions of higher learning, which could be interpreted as the lack of collaborative work. Furthermore, there seems to be a lack of partnership between community soccer, national teams and university sports. Given this, it is likely that women national soccer players come from the community teams in the abovementioned countries, and could be an area for further research in these countries. Given the discussion on the obstacles women's soccer experience, the following section focuses on women's achievements in soccer.
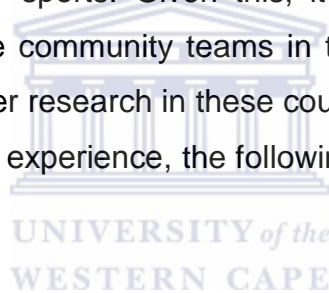
3.4.3 Overcoming challenges and celebrating women's achievements in soccer

It is clear from the discussion that, similar to the international experience, the entrance of women soccer players in Africa threatens the 'naturalisation' of men's soccer that is publicly celebrated. Consequently, women's soccer experiences resistance in these societies that subscribe to binary notions of gender and male dominance. It is however recognised that girls' and women's soccer continues to break the barriers as they take control of their game and increasingly participate competitively. According to Meier and Saavedra (2009), "as of March 2009 the official FIFA ranking lists a total of 156 internationally registered women's teams including 33 squads from Africa, with the numbers and rankings of national African teams continually rising" (p. 1161). Nigeria was the first African women's team to participate in a tournament outside the continent, when it went to the 1991 World Cup in China. Up until 2008, the African flagship Nigeria won all the previous seven

African Championships for Women's Football and ranked as high as 24th worldwide in 2007, followed by Ghana at 44, South Africa at 54, Morocco at 62, with Zambia occupying the 103rd position (Meier & Saavedra, 2009). Considering the challenges, lack of community support and male hegemonic discourses, women's soccer continues to grow in Africa as women patiently take ownership and try to encourage girls' participation at schools and universities.

South African women's soccer was not protected from the abovementioned experiences as they also experienced challenges and success in promoting and increasing girls' and women's participation in soccer from the apartheid to the post-apartheid era. The following discussion presents the trajectory of women's soccer in South Africa.

3.5 Development of women's soccer in South Africa

> When I was young, around six or seven years old, I basically played soccer in the streets, very unorganized, with two stones, with guys until I was 11 or 12. When they realized I was a girl, after that they didn't come call me (Lerato, in Pelak, 2005, p. 72)

> You know, sport is a religion in South Africa (interviewee, in Anderson, Bielert & Jones, 2004, p. 47)

Due to apartheid segregation, the development of girls' and women's soccer in South Africa is different if compared to other African countries, because it was dictated not only by gender bias but further complicated by racial segregation. FIFA firstly suspended and then expelled South African soccer in 1964 for the discriminatory policies and were only readmitted in 1992 under a newly integrated organisation, the South African Football Association (SAFA). With its nationalist and patriarchal tendencies, apartheid also carried both ideological and structural implications for gender, which influenced the politics and practices of soccer that are intricately imprinted with this legacy (Anderson, Bielert & Jones, 2004). As in some of the other African countries, due to the influence of the British public school system and the Christian mission school experience, sport was considered an important part of education and central to the development of national identity. However, participation in sport was dictated by gender because activities that were encouraged for girls were limited to those considered feminine or ladylike, for example, netball, tennis, hockey, athletics, softball, volleyball (Anderson, Clarke &

Perzigian, 1999) and soccer was excluded for females. This notion possibly influenced the limited interest girls and women have in playing soccer because of negative sentiments that associate these girls and women with lesbianism, as soccer is socially perceived to be for men.

Otherwise, in South Africa, as in other African countries, soccer has been associated with men and also used for the development of masculine identity and male power within classed power structures (Chappell, 2003; Pelak, 2005; Richardson, 2001). The structures seem to have been woven into sports in South African educational institutions as well. Morrell (1993, p. 36) highlights the historical male dominance in school sports through his historical research of schools in KwaZulu-Natal: "… in the policies and practices of the white boys' boarding schools in Natal during the period of 1880-1930, attempts were made to disseminate and entrench gender norms and values through organised sports". Hargreaves (2000, p. 18) argues that such practices were not only peculiar to historically white schools, but notes that of "… the sparse resources available in schools for Indians and Coloureds, most were for male sports, and in African schools there were usually none at all or a piece of rough ground would euphemistically be called 'a pitch'" for male soccer. It could be argued that little has changed since Hargreaves' comments on African schools. This point was reiterated by former Ajax Cape Town[14] coach Mushin Ertugal when talking about the state of soccer pitches in South Africa: "Even cows would not graze for fear of breaking a leg" (in Desai, 2010, p. 9). This means that the majority of community soccer fields have not changed in the 20 years of democratic South Africa. However, the identified change is that girls and women soccer players share these soccer pitches with boys and men, and the latter group take priority when they want to use the soccer fields.

The above discussion highlights a dominant theme that has characterised some international, African and South African sports historically, namely hegemonic masculinisation, in which men were clearly privileged in sport and their power was socialised and entrenched through sport practices. In South Africa, women were also

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[14] Ajax Cape Town was formed in October 1998 through the merger of two well established Cape Town clubs namely Seven Stars Football Club and Cape Town Spurs Football Club. It takes part in the South African National Premier Soccer League (www.ajaxcapetown.com).

marginalised differently as far as sport and soccer is concerned, depending on their racial, social and class background. For example, in 1974 the South African Women's Football Association (SAWFA) was established exclusively for White and Coloureds, but was controlled by Whites (Saavedra, 2004). It is argued that the Cape Town area "seems to have been the heart of the women's game, where soccer was particularly popular among Coloured girls and women" (Saavedra, 2004, p. 243). This is possibly exclusive to playing soccer, but it is also noted that as early as 1961 the Berea Soccer executive had a female-dominated executive board and, together with about 30 Indian women supporters, they travelled with the team to Johannesburg (Groenmeyer, 2010). Black African women were also directly involved in soccer in the 1960s, where young fans of Orlando Pirates FC Betty Nkosi and Edith Moipone Moorosi, dressed in black and white uniforms, were popular figures at the matches and shaped the internal affairs of Pirates FC. However, it was not until 1991 when Black African township women organised and established the South African Women's Soccer Association (Naidoo 2007). Both women's organisations fell into a power struggle with each other resulting in both being dissolved and the South African Women's Football Association being established in 1993, an associate member of SAFA (Saavedra, 2004).
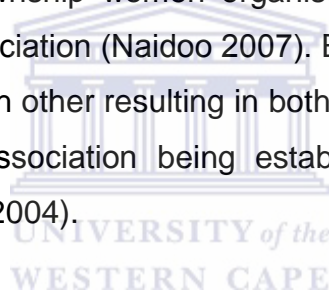
Thus, 1993 marks the first organisation of non-racial competitive league matches for women, and in 1994 Banyana Banyana entered the qualifying stages of the Women's World Cup. Although it could be argued that the post-apartheid era has brought some improvements in sports infrastructures in previously disadvantaged communities, schools and universities in South Africa, female soccer players still compete for soccer facilities and resources with males (Burnett, 2007; Jones, 2001; Pelak, 2005). For example, Pelak's (2005) study in Cape Town with female soccer players suggests that male dominance in soccer continues to mark female players as outsiders in soccer and weakens their collective challenge to men's dominance. This could be to reconstitute the game's historical masculine construction, which the post-apartheid government tried to redress with the discourse and ideology of a 'non-racial' and 'non-sexist' nation. The democratically elected government's discourse and ideology, especially 'non-sexism' for this study, was intended to enforce gender equity and encourage women's empowerment in social, cultural and economic life, including sport (Chappell, 2003; Hagreaves, 2000). By introducing laws and

legislation, the government has attempted to empower women to take advantage of the seemingly limited and conditional opportunities provided in sport. Although the government's intentions are clearly stated in policy, the development of comprehensive equality and equity[15] between males and females in soccer has been very slow, and the allocation of resources remains uneven in South Africa (Richardson, 2001).

Regarding the slow change, despite the policy in South Africa, Chappell (2003, p. 4) asserts that "just because all sections of the communities are equal according to the law, it does not follow that there will be equality and equity of opportunity". Similarly, Pelak (2005, p. 55) posits that "just because the ideology and discourse of equality and equity according to the law has been announced, it seems not to mean that there will be equal opportunities for men and women because the structures, processes, and practices of sport were never transformed". This means that although the government's plan was to achieve greater gender equity and equality in sports, where girls have been targeted as a group in need of special attention, it is difficult to turn a blind eye to the snail's pace of development and lack of public recognition for female soccer, while male soccer continues to enjoy publicity. Women and Sport South Africa (WASSA) reiterates this point stating that: "Soccer is still seen to be the domain of men ... irrespective of what the Constitution says in relation to equal rights, so we have not made enough sustainable progress since 1994" (in Chappell, 2003, p. 34). This is informally observed in the continuing support and development of boys' and male soccer through the commercialisation that dominates all types of media. Little attention continues to be paid to girls' and female soccer developments and commercialisation, hence the existing policy on gender equity in sport. What could have influenced the lack of attention given to the development of girls' and female soccer, according to Burnett (2007, p. 3), is that "promoting the women's game of football as a version of the sport is neutralised by the hegemonic position of the male version, which is constructed as the 'real' game". The privileging

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[15] *Equality* in this study means levelling the playing field for girls, women, boys and men by ensuring that all children have equal opportunity to develop their talents. *Equity* in this study does not mean that all people must be treated the same, but is the principle and practice of fair and equitable allocation of resources and opportunities for females and males. Equity eliminates discriminatory practices that are barriers to full participation of either gender (Thornton, 1986). Thus, equity involves judgements about the extent to which two or more groups are treated justly, and with respect, in a certain situation (Schwager, 1997).

of one version of meaning that promotes the male game as the "real game" demonstrates that hegemony operates to reinforce a dominant gender ideology that demands marked differences between female and male soccer (Hargreaves, 1997, p. 47). As mentioned earlier, consequently, commercialisation focuses on boys' and male soccer and overlooks girls' and women's soccer, because of the notion of the 'real' versus the 'unreal' game.

On a similar note, Coakley (2004) comments that power and performance sports are grounded in the values and experiences of men that continue to interfere with the achievement of gender equity in sports. For example, coaching and refereeing are some of the positions where men's experiences and values are explicit and seem unproblematised, not interrogated, and unchallenged. For a long time women's national teams did not have committed and dedicated coaches but were given coaches who were already committed to men's teams (Pelak, 2005, 2010; Burnett, 2007; Naidoo & Muholi, 2010). Hilton-Smith (in an interview in 2006), a former coach and manager of the senior women's national team and currently head of women's football at the South African Football Association, is concerned that the absence of women coaches and the appointment of ill-suited male coaches to the women's national teams were the primary factors leading to the team's poor performances (in Naidoo & Muholi, 2010). Hilton-Smith gave an example of the appointment of Styles Phumo to coach Banyana Banyana, while already coaching the under 20 men's team and assisting with Bafana Bafana. Due to the multi-coaching tasks and the high status of male teams, he chose to leave the Banyana Banyana team on the eve of an important game that clashed with the under 20 men's team (Naidoo & Muholi, 2010). Thus, the junior male national team was prioritised over the senior female national team, which possibly signifies that women's soccer is regarded as second to men's teams. In this regard, Hilton-Smith (in an interview in 2006, in Naidoo & Muholi, 2010, p. 106) posits that "often a problem in women's football is that there's not enough women coaches", which highlights the lack of holistic development in women's soccer. Of relevance for this study is that there is continuing gender inequity in coaching staff that is still dominated by men, possibly reflecting gender divisions and inequities of the broader society.

Of importance to this study is that this form of gender inequity practice is also experienced in the universities, where women's soccer teams are dominantly coached by men, possible provides further evidence for Hilton-Smith's point on the shortage of female coaches. Concurrently, the preferences of the dominated groups, in this case female soccer, go unnoticed, especially when women seem to consent to the existing order characterised by asymmetrical power relations (Anderson & Cheslock, 2004; Hoeber, 2007; Pelak, 2005). In particular, it is unclear whether women soccer players at universities problematise the dominance of men coaches and lack of women coaches, or are satisfied with having someone willing to coach them. If this practice is not interrogated it has the potential to perpetuate gender inequity practices in soccer, because men will continue to have power and a "collective sense of entitlement to control soccer" including women's soccer (Eng, 2010, p. 16). Hilton-Smith made some attempts to address the issues when she urged the South African Football Association (SAFA) to support the training and appointment of more female coaches. Considering the continuing lack of female coaches, this seems to indicate that "SAFA disregard and marginalise women's football in South Africa" (Hilton-Smith interview in 2006, in Naidoo & Muholi, 2010, p. 119). Thus, opportunities and motivation should be provided for women, given that they enter into a male dominated terrain.

Considering the complex relationship between the sport policy and soccer in general and particularly women's soccer, it could be argued that the possible complication with this relationship is the lack of regular monitoring of whether and how sport policies are implemented in community and education institutions. Thus, research could be one way of monitoring how sport policies are understood, implemented and practised, if at all. I acknowledge an emerging small body of research in South Africa that addresses women's soccer and the state of gender equity and equality practices in soccer in general, but nothing in education institutions, that is, school, college, and university. The next section introduces the discussion of research on women's soccer in South Africa.

3.5.1 Research on women's soccer in South Africa

To locate the field, I introduce this section with a brief historical discussion of girls'
and women's participation in soccer in South Africa, to contextualise and understand
the existing research in women's soccer. According to Alegi (2004) Black African
female participation in soccer started in the early 1960s informally in the townships.
Similarly, Pelak (2006, p. 375) noted that "women have a forty-year history of
participating in organised soccer" but information was mostly acquired orally from
women who played soccer and also from archival news stories. The establishment of
Orlando Pirates Women's Football Club and Mother City Girls in the 1960s, both
Black African teams, (Alegi, 2004) illustrate the point. However, Alegi (2004, p. 24)
posits that "... these teams were short-lived", without stating the reason, and this
could be attributed to the lack of community and club support. In addition, the Winnie
Ladies Soccer Team from Gugulethu in Cape Town was formally established after a
long existence and has produced good quality players, some of whom were selected
to play in the junior national women's team (Basetsane) (Keim & Qhuma, 1996, p.
82). Considering a brief history of girls' and women's participation in soccer, it is
disappointing that little research has been done to gain insight into the state of girls'
and women's soccer in the Black African township contexts. This is not to exclude
girls' and women's teams in other racial social contexts, but given that they represent
the majority of players, it is of concern that little research and information exists in
contemporary South Africa if the history of soccer is considered.

To gain insight into the history of women's soccer, Hargreaves (2000) conducted a
study on race, politics and gender, and women's struggle for sport in South Africa
prior to the 1994 democratic South Africa. The focus was on lack of equity in sport
due to lack of gender focused development initiatives, training and motivational
programmes aimed at facilitating women's participation in sport. She found that
historically Black, White, Indian and Coloured sportswomen decided to work together
to challenge gendered and sexist practices in South African sport, and to improve
opportunities in all communities (p. 45). She argues that this group of women
emphasised that "... women-centred policies are needed and that sport developers
must pay greater attention to the particular problems, needs and desires of different
groups of women" (Hargreaves 2000, p. 45). Similarly, Jones' (2003) study focused

on women and sport in South Africa and how they were shaped by history, and documented contributions made by groups of women in promoting and inspiring girls and women to play sport during the years of the international sports boycott. For example, women like Sensei Nellie Kleinsmidt, Cheryl Roberts, Gloria Hlalele, Phumla Masuku and recently Desiree Ellis were instrumental in encouraging girls and women to play sport, and soccer in particular. The women acknowledged the impact of apartheid policy in ensuring that sport development for women was racially segregated and class biased and thus influenced opportunities in games participation, imbalance of resource distribution and social relations. For example, the 'unofficial' women's squad that played in Italy in 1989 was dominated by White and Coloured players and did not have any Black African players, although players were selected from different provinces, due to the segregation laws of the time (Saavedra, 2004). Cape Town teams seem to have had more opportunities than those in other regions of South Africa as there were a relatively high number of Coloured women's teams such as Cape Town Spurs (formerly known as Saban), Athlone Santos, and Cape Town Santos, which were affiliated to the South African Women's Football Association (SAWFA) and participated in different tournaments from 1975 to 1990.

Along the same line of studies, although not focusing on inspiration but girls' and women's progress in sport participation, Burnett and Hollander's (2004) study examined progress on girls' and women's development in different sectors of recreation and sport. She found that although some minor improvements in girls' and women's participation in various sports were evident, it was of concern that they still experienced minimal social and media support, particularly in soccer despite the increased interest and participation. Following from the Burnett study was the Sport and Recreation Department survey in 2005, which aimed "at understanding the sport participation patterns and to probe the views of South Africans about general sporting issues" (Hendricks 2005, p. 11). This survey helped to determine the general state of sport participation patterns in nine provincial communities, and also highlighted existing gaps in female participation in sport in general. From this survey, it is interesting to note that females continue to show more interest in participating in soccer; although the continuing limited resources and public support seem to have hindered voluntary participation. Of concern however is that several years after this

survey was done, similar issues of minimal resources and little public recognition and support dedicated to women's soccer are still noted in different studies (Burnett, 2007; Haugaa Engh, 2009, 2010; Naidoo & Muholi, 2010; Pelak, 2010).

For example, Pelak's (2010) paper focuses on tracing the history of South African women's participation in competitive soccer from 1970 to the present and analyses power relations, namely race, gender and class, within the sport. She concludes that "the history of South African women's participation in the 'people's game' [soccer] suggests both successes and challenges" (Pelak, 2010, p. 73). It is alarming that the "development of women's clubs at the local level seems to be waning", and she argues that "a women's professional league and soccer for girls in schools would help grow the sport at the local level" (Pelak, 2010, p. 75). Thus, the role of educational sectors in helping with the development and encouragement of girls' participation in soccer, while continuing with their studies, is noted. Without sounding pessimistic, the sustainability of female participation in soccer needs a commitment from all stakeholders, that is, the schools, universities, and women soccer players, to ensure the development and promotion of girls' and young women's soccer.

The role of the educational sector in promoting sport participation for girls has been minimal in the post-apartheid era, as many schools in townships and rural areas continue to experience a lack of resources and sport facilities. To reiterate this point, Burnett (2007a) argues that girls and women were disadvantaged in various areas such as physical, financial and information resources, as well as having limited access to power structures, decision-making positions and leadership roles. Furthermore, hegemonic masculinity manifested in various sport structures and ideology informs cultural beliefs, policies and practices that negatively impact on women's advancement and access to resources at all levels. Burnett and Africa (2007b) in their work on Banyana Banyana further suggests that a lack of resources and access to structures at all levels of participation, as well as adequate and quality physical resources, coaching and training seem to be major stumbling blocks in the progress of women's football in the country. Earlier, Selebogo (1999a, p. 16) suggested that "in reality, there is no Banyana team, no money, no games, no sponsors, no media exposure, no equipment and no commitment on the part of SAFA". Thus, the struggle for recognition and resources for the Banyana Banyana

team has its roots in deeply seated male hegemonic discourses and the taken for granted gender inequity practices in soccer.

According to Naidoo and Muholi (2010), "it was only when Banyana Banyana met with former President Nelson Mandela during the year 2006 that they gained more media attention than they normally do. Prior to this meeting, Naidoo and Muholi (2010, p. 104) posit that "internet searches for women soccer including Banyana Banyana yielded very few articles and had presented a very different image of the women involved in football in South Africa". The gender inequity with respect to media representation between male and female national senior teams is unsurprising yet discomforting since it serves to further perpetuate stereotypes and devalue women's soccer. However, Pelak's (2002) study on women soccer players' negotiation of material and ideological barriers found that irrespective of continuing "negative attitudinal, ideological, and opportunity's barriers", women soccer players in Johannesburg and Cape Town have no intention of giving up playing soccer (p. 62). Although this attitude could be celebrated, the studies address the continuing gender inequity practices in community soccer, and it is unclear how it is being addressed, if at all. Of concern for this study is that the discussed studies are recent, and were done within a ten year period after the government's gender equality and equity sport policy was established.

3.5.2 Positive outlook on women's soccer in South Africa

Notwithstanding the dominant negative picture that the research shows with respect to women's challenges in sport, it is notable that the number of women's soccer teams continued to increase in 2009, despite limited resources and recognition (Eng, 2010). The increase could have been influenced by the support and interest of Sanlam in 2001, Vodacom from 2003 to 2007, and from 2009 to the present ABSA and SASOL companies in girls' and women's soccer. Women's soccer teams of the participating universities in this study also benefitted from these sponsorships, as they also take part in the provincial league in addition to the university competitions. According to Hilton-Smith, "the sponsorship changed the face of the women's league as they are more competitive and organised, and few players earn a salary from their clubs" (in Eng 2010, p. 18). Although it is unclear which players earn salaries, what

criteria is used to determine who should and should not earn a salary, and how much they earn, it is encouraging that women's soccer is starting to be considered a professional career. The ABSA league has 140 women's teams across South Africa, and teams have received much needed support in the form of transport allowances and training equipment (Grundlingh, 2009). The financial support has improved the standard of women's soccer in South Africa and this is noticed in the improvement of the Banyana Banyana national team, as they occupy the 3rd position in the African rankings after Nigeria and Cameroon. Unfortunately, these sponsorships do not seem to have convinced the media (newspapers, soccer magazines, and sport television) to prioritise and popularise girls' and women's soccer, including the women's senior and junior national teams. The reason for this is unclear but could be linked to insufficient financial support to encourage the media to televise women's soccer. It could also be linked to the way in which the game is played, how it is talked about and how players are valued, which is constructed in masculine terms. Thus, this discussion seems to suggest that if the discourse of soccer continues to favour male hegemony, girls 'and women's soccer in South African communities and universities could continue to be disadvantaged.

Universities are acknowledged as one of the platforms on which dialogue, interrogation and critical analyses of social issues, including gender biases in soccer, take place. Tight (2003, p. 23) reiterates this point and claims that "sports at universities are perceived as relatively under-researched", although assuming greater importance in promoting participation at the highest levels in national and international sporting competitions. In this regard, during the literature search I noticed that some women soccer players at university were selected to play for the South African senior national women's team. This means that universities do play an important role in promoting women's participation in soccer at the highest levels, which makes it significant to investigate the state of gender equity practices, or lack thereof, at universities. In particular, given that some players are selected to play for the senior national women's team, they could be able to problematise and interrogate gender equity practices in soccer. Therefore, this study intends to understand women's and men's soccer players' experiences and perceptions of gender equity practices in soccer.

3.5.3 Research on women's soccer at institutions of higher education (HEI)

Before an elaboration of existing research on women's soccer at university, it is significant to briefly review the structures of soccer at university in order to contextualise developments with respect to women's soccer in HEI. In 1994 the former South African Students Sport Union (SASSU) was established to promote participation in all sporting codes for competitive purposes (www.ussa.org.za). This organisation was criticised for not necessarily promoting mass participation in sports in general and in particular female participation (Goslin, 2006). Rather, the focus was on ensuring that competitive sports codes at universities continued to supply SASSU national teams and the South African senior national teams with 'quality' competitive players. SASSU was replaced by the University Sport South Africa (USSA) in 2009 and was regulated to organise and coordinate student sports activities at regional, provincial and national levels in the tertiary education sector of South Africa. Its mandate is to "maximise student participation and encourage sporting practice", although it is not clearly explained how this is done (www.ussa.ac.za). In addition, and important for this study, it is not clear how USSA ensures that gender equity is practised in soccer considering their mandate. Given that the aim is to increase women's participation in soccer, if USSA only focuses on competitiveness, they could discourage women's participation in soccer at university and perpetuate gender inequity practices.

Arguably, although the intention is maximisation, it should be noted that the discourse of competition still exists, given some coaches' emphasis on and pressure for players to win at all costs. This could potentially discourage the participation of students who would like to play soccer for fun and health purposes. Grundlingh's (2009, p. 18) study with Stellenbosch women soccer players found that some play soccer "to get fit, enjoy themselves, to express themselves and to relieve tension". Thus, if this group of women is marginalised, women's soccer could eventually be destroyed if the focus is only on promoting competitive soccer. Along the same line of discouraging women's participation, when talking about the high performance

centre that was established at the University of Pretoria[16] (Naidoo and Muholi (2010, p. 25), are concerned that "channelling resources towards a highly elitist form of competitive soccer that can only ever be restricted to the fortunate few girls and women soccer players" does not address the fundamental levels of inequity and inequality in women's soccer in South Africa. In addition, the selection criteria for girls and women to the centre is unclear and the role the centre plays in providing 'quality' players for the national teams (senior and junior) is also not clearly communicated.

Given the discussion above, it is important for this study to question the principles and practices of the organisation that was mandated to promote students' participation in soccer, particularly when the organisation(s) could unintentionally perpetuate gender inequity practices. Moreover, the lack of research and literature on gender equity in soccer in the university context is of concern for this study, given the "national discourse around gender equality and equity in sport" (Pelak, 2005, p. 54). Informal observations of soccer practices in and out of universities suggest that this discourse seems to have been discussed minimally in South Africa and needs to be revitalised, which is the aim of this study. It needs to be acknowledged that at the recent indaba in sport that took place in Johannesburg in November 2011, the Minister of Sport, Mr. Mbalula, actively encouraged the promotion of sport in schools and universities after the launch of school sports to the University of Johannesburg, Soweto campus. Although it could be argued that this initiative could have occurred earlier than 2011, it raises hope in re-activating sport participation in schools which could influence the number of girls participating in soccer. Of concern, however, is the dearth of information on how sport facilities will be established or improved, given the existing imbalances in township and rural schools.

Along the same line of discussion and without overlooking the development, it is still not clear how the formal girls and women's soccer league will be launched, 20th years after democracy. In particular, the media bias against popularising women's soccer games, tournaments, even national team games, means that there is minimal

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[16] The High Performance Centre is Southern Africa's first elite sports facility that offers a venue for high-profile international and local athletes and teams for pre-season or pre-event training (www.up.ac.za).

information on women's progress in soccer. Recently, Eng's (2009, p. 19) paper on "issues of physical empowerment and power in the lives of women footballers in South Africa", documented that the choice of venues, timing of games and limited media coverage illustrated clearly how limited and conditional the support of women's football in South Africa is. This information acknowledges the number of women soccer players from the different universities playing for Banyana Banyana (national senior women's team). For the universities participating in this study, there were five women players that played for Banyana Banyana. Again, this shows the role that universities play in supplying 'quality' players for the senior women's national team, who are selected from the USSA tournaments. However, having these representatives in the senior national women's team does not mean that gender equity in soccer is addressed inside and outside of university.

Thus, given the role played by women soccer players at university in supplying the national team with quality players, this study argues for the significance of gaining insight into their experiences and perceptions of gender equity practices in soccer generally and specifically at university. The concern is that if such perceptions remain unknown and unaddressed, male dominance in soccer, and hence gender inequity practices in soccer, could be perpetuated. Notwithstanding this view, while acknowledging recent research into women's soccer in general, this study has identified little existing research on women's soccer in the university context and particularly lack of research in the area of gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer in the context of higher education. This is particularly of concern considering that universities and other educational sectors have been identified in international research as a potential resource for gender transformation. In addition, it is still worrying that only a few studies on gender equity and equality have been conducted in South Africa, while inequity practices in soccer are still noticeable in our community soccer teams and national soccer teams, and there is a lack of research in the university context.

The identified research gap resulted in the development of this study to explore university soccer stakeholders' experiences and perceptions of gender equity practices in soccer. It seems to have been taken for granted that gender equity practices in soccer exist in the university context, which might not be the case. Thus,

it is hoped that this study will provide valuable information on the unknown experiences and perceptions of soccer stakeholders on issues of gender equity practices in soccer at the selected universities. In particular, this study gives voice to women soccer players, considering a general concern that male soccer experiences and perceptions have influenced the way female soccer is constructed.

3.6 Conclusion

The chapter reviewed the literature on women's and girls' access to and participation in intercollegiate soccer internationally as well as African and South African experiences in soccer, including the social roles that influence gender equity practices, or lack thereof. The literature on women's and girls' access to and participation in intercollegiate soccer internationally highlights success stories in developing women soccer players that are identified after the introduction of the Title IX Law of 1972 in the United States. The success of this law is reflected in the increased participation of young girls and women in sports, particularly codes that were previously associated with men such as rugby, cricket, soccer, and basketball. In addition, the breakthrough is identified in countries that were religiously and culturally unsupportive of female participation in sports, and allowed women to wear revealing clothes. Given this, it is evident that notwithstanding continued challenges related to expected gender roles and male dominance in sport, it appears that women's soccer is strengthening globally.

In this respect, the review has identified an enormous improvement of women's soccer in the United States, Scandinavia, and Asia. The US national women's team has won the Women's World Cup twice, and is the only country to have done so. Their success is attributed to the support and development of soccer from an early age, and popularisation of women's soccer in colleges and universities. It is mentioned that women who play for the national team are exclusively from the American colleges and universities, indicating the important role that these institutions play in providing quality players. In general, the success of women's soccer internationally is attributed to the monitored implementations of Title IX and any government policies. It was therefore argued that it is important for the government, schools and universities to monitor the implementation of gender equity

policies in their respective contexts, if women's soccer development is to increase and succeed.

Within the successes in women's soccer engagement internationally, there have also been challenges and constraints. The introduction of the Title IX Law was not easily welcomed as it was perceived as a threat to the historical dominance of men in soccer. Attempts have been made to control women's sport by placing it under NCAA governing structure in order to control their growth and possibly benefit from them. Given this, women's sport was considered to have been seized by men who have limited the career progression of women, which is perceived as women's 'surrender' of their senior positions in sports. The possible effect of this surrendering is slowing the development and promotion of girls' and women's participation in soccer.

The review of the documented literature on experiences in soccer in African contexts other than South Africa highlights the lack of recorded information on the state of gender equity practices in soccer within the school and university contexts. Consequently, there is a serious absence of research and documentary materials on women's football, and much of what is written is not widely circulated. In addition, it is unclear whether there are any existing committees or gender equity legislation which could be watchdogs for the implementation and practice of gender equity in school and university sports. There are various community projects that have been established in some African countries to promote girls' and women's participation in soccer, however, there is minimal literature on gender equity practices in soccer and the nature of soccer development for women in the university context. Of the existing studies on soccer in some African countries, there is silence on the issue of how gender equity practices in soccer could be promoted in schools and consequently at universities. Another noted practice in the existing studies is the use of neutral language when addressing youth sports development. This could potentially conceal gender bias towards girls' and women's participation in sports generally and particularly in soccer.

The South African experience on sport in general and particularly in soccer illustrates some differences relative to the rest of Africa as a result of the interwoven nature of

gender, race and class in the apartheid socio-political structure that continues in many ways in the post-apartheid context. Sport has been a site reflecting and reproducing racial, gender and social class inequalities, resulting in the powerful association of soccer with men and also historically used for the development of masculine identity through gender inequity practices. During this period and currently, female soccer players still compete for soccer facilities and resources with males. To address this, the new government's discourse of 'non-sexism' and ideology was intended to enforce gender equity and encourage women's empowerment in social, cultural and economic life, including sport. Notwithstanding the development and introduction of the gender equity policy by the government, the development of comprehensive equity between males and females in soccer has been very slow, and the allocation of resources remains uneven. This policy is floundering given that the structures, processes, and practices of sport have never transformed, and continue to exclude women. The lack of monitored implementation of sport policies in community and education institutions may be implicated in this lack of progress. Thus, conducting this research could be one way of monitoring how sport policies with respect to gender equality are understood, implemented and practised, if at all.
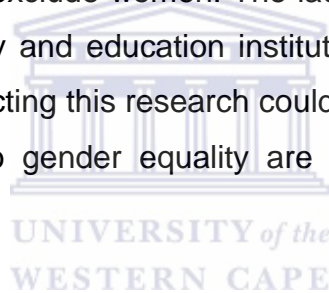
The literature on contemporary research on women's soccer in South Africa highlights a long history of women's participation in soccer, disappointingly largely without formal documentation, especially for Black Africans. Research shows that women's soccer continues to experience minimal social and media support, despite the increased interest and participation of girls and women. Emerging from both the local and international research is a clear argument that the commitment of schools and universities could play a valuable role in increasing the participation of girls in soccer and indeed contributing more generally to gender transformation in sport and in society. The struggle for recognition, financial support and resources for girls and women has been noted as far up as the national senior women's team, which has its roots in deep seated male hegemonic discourses in sport and is represented in a lack of media representation of the former in comparison to male senior teams.

Nonetheless, it is also important to note the social support for women's soccer. In addition to promising research on women's soccer, are the sponsorships by ABSA

and SASOL companies. This support influenced the increase of girls and women's soccer and also assisted with the salaries of selected soccer players, possibly marking the professionalisation of women's soccer. Of concern for this study, however, is the lack of existing research on women's soccer in a university context, and an interrogation of gender equity practices in this context. The value of this study's focus on gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer is therefore evident.

This literature review paints a picture of successes and challenges that women soccer players experience internationally and locally. Although internationally some research exists on women's soccer at university, in South Africa there is little contemporary research on gender equity practices, especially in the light of government policy on gender equity in sports. This study offers important contributions to addressing such a gap. Having developed the theoretical framework and reviewed key bodies of scholarship, the following chapter turns to the current study, serving to elaborate on the research methodology followed.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCHING GENDER EQUITY PRACTICES: METHODOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology the study used during the research process. A central argument of this thesis is that gender equity practices in soccer within university contexts are unknown. The purpose of this study is to explore soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity and the nature of gender equity practices in soccer at university, to gain insight into the existing practices and to improve gender equity practices, or lack thereof, informed by the soccer stakeholders' discourses of gender equity in a university context. As such, the main question in this study has been what are female and male soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer at four Western Cape Universities. This chapter focuses on answering this question and sub-questions, in relation to the theoretical framework of this study. The lens of feminist poststructuralism has been adopted to interrogate and gain in-depth understanding of soccer stakeholders' meanings of gender equity and the perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer at selected universities.

In this chapter I give details on how the research methodology approach, research methods, research processes and data analysis produced a useful and credible account of soccer stakeholders' understandings of gender equity and perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer at university. I begin the chapter with a discussion on feminist qualitative research, which challenges and deconstructs grand narratives and their claims that are taken for granted explanations about social reality (Mills, 2003).

4.2 Feminist qualitative approach

Feminist research has paid attention to studying how cultural meanings that circulate through women's and girls' everyday lives shape their lived experiences (Gall et al., 2010). It has, however, never been a united or homogeneous movement (de Jong, 1992) as it embraces a variety of movements and ideologies. For instance, orthodoxies such as Classical Marxism, socialism, liberalism, black feminism, and radical feminism have all proposed specific answers to reasons for existing inequality and inequity between men and women and boys and girls. In sport, considering that the cultural meanings and gender roles have the potential to restrict women from participating in male sports and further determine their experiences and perceptions of gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer, it is important to interrogate these meanings. Thus, feminist research emerged out of the critique of male bias in social science research methodology, which was viewed as contributing to the perpetuation of patriarchal society (Small, 1995; Riger, 1992; Peplau & Conrad, 1989; Cook, 1988). In general, feminist research addresses women's and gender issues, including struggles to be recognised and respected in various sports, particularly in soccer.

According to Charmaz (2006) feminist research studies the social conditions of women in a sexist, 'malestream' and patriarchal society. It also enlightens people about the taken for granted sexist practices and the gender-blindness of state and popular practices. It is within such an understanding that this study intends to explore soccer stakeholders' awareness of gender equity practices or lack thereof in soccer in four universities, which could have been taken for granted. Of concern for Charmaz (2006, p. 17) is that the "social conditions displace, ignore and silence women", which lead to an unequal social order that is also identified in soccer. Feminist research then challenges the basic structures and ideologies that oppress women by fostering empowerment not only for women but also for marginalised men (Brooks & Hesse-Biber, in Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2007). This study, therefore, is not *about* women but *for* and *with* women and men involved in soccer in the university, to understand the unknown perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer.

De Vault (1995) explains that feminist research seeks a methodology that will do the work of 'excavation', shifting the focus of standard practice from men's concerns in order to reveal the locations and perspectives of all women. Although it is not clear how all women's perspectives are catered for, central to feminist research is to bring women in, to find out what has been ignored, censored, and suppressed (Berg, 2007). This is done to ensure that women's subjective narratives are listened to and understood, considering that in sport, and particularly in soccer, they have been silenced. For this study, to challenge the grand narratives in soccer, interrogating and analysing critically the perceptions and experiences of stakeholders plays an important role as they reflect socio-cultural ideologies and practices that are considered common sense. Feminist qualitative research provides this opportunity because it reveals both the diversity of actual women's lived experiences and the ideological mechanisms that have made so many of those lived experiences invisible (De Vault, 1995). This serves as one of the goals for feminist research to embrace the apparent conflicting subjectivity and, as in this study, centre inquiry on women's experiences and knowledge (Fonow & Cook, 1991). Consequently, feminist research puts emphasis on starting the research from women's experiences as a way of pointing the researcher to sites where people live their lives (Scott, 1990).

Although this study does not start from women's experiences, an attempt is made to give female soccer players a voice and gain an understanding of gender equity practices or lack thereof from their perspectives and experiences. This is done through individual and focus group interviews with female soccer players, because in mixed gender focus group interviews males are identified as usually dominating the process, irrespective of having an interview leader. The process is discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Notwithstanding the above discussion, the experiential approach to research has been questioned and criticised by some feminists working in the quantitative tradition (Fonow & Cooke, 1991). Central to this criticism is that individual views are always partial and often distorted by ideology in such a way that a woman's own testimony may simply reflect the biases of the larger society (Patton, 2001). In this regard, Smith (1995) contends that women's 'bifurcated' consciousness encompasses both the knowledge required to participate in social relations organised largely through

ideological processes, and the often incompletely articulated knowledge that comes from activity. She calls for an explicit analysis of how women's activities are connected to the interests of 'ruling', and how the ideological processes of ruling shape, without fully determining, women's accounts of their experiences. Of interest, as Collins (1990) emphasises, is that perspectives and experiences are always located and claim only a 'partial truth' for the knowledge produced from a particular standpoint. This seems to highlight the point that knowledge that is partially admitted is more trustworthy than partial knowledge presented as generally true. The perspective relates to the postmodern challenge to objectivity and science that is based on a single narrative truth and emphasises multiple versions of truth (Richardson, 1993).

Along the same line of discussion, the feminist qualitative research also challenges, deconstructs and questions traditional commitments to truth, objectivity, and value - free and neutral research (Cohen et al., 2007). On this basis, a qualitative feminist research seeks to demolish and replace neutral and value-free research with a different substantive agenda of empowerment, emancipation, equality, and representation for oppressed groups. The emphasis is on the socially constructed nature of reality, answering questions that stress how social experiences are created and given meaning, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape enquiry (Babbie & Mouton, 2007). Thus, feminist qualitative research is used in this study to understand soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity and to express their perspectives on gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer within their respective institutions. Although the study focuses on soccer stakeholders, its main attempt is to present women's perspectives and, given the gender focus of the study, at the same time gain insight into the male perspective that has predominated in the development of soccer. It is an opportunity for this study to see the world and understand issues of gender equity from the multiple perspectives and experiences of soccer stakeholders.

By approaching this study this way, I am not overlooking Scott and Morrison's (2007, p. 108) argument that "key interests relate to the absence of women from public life coupled critically with the extent to which knowledge, policies, and practices were

seen from a male perspective". For this study, this argument means that applied research in soccer, the knowledge worth knowing, as constituted in research literature, books, media, and policies have been seen as dominated by men's discourses and interpretation. It is because of this point that feminist research is chosen, considering its intention to reveal and replace the distortions by prioritising female perspectives and experiences as a way to incorporate women's voices that have historically been marginalised and/or silenced. This, however, is done alongside male perspectives and experiences, to examine their awareness of the events and actions that happen in their respective institutions.

While Henning (2004) points out that the emphasis on qualitative research is on observing events and actions as they happen, without any intervention or interference, Babbie and Mouton (2007) contend that qualitative research approaches always attempt to study human action from the insiders' perspective to get an in-depth understanding, rather than explaining and predicting human actions. This study incorporated both processes by attending soccer matches to observe events and actions as they happened, and using different interviewing techniques to understand actions from the insiders' perspective. However, this study does not use observation as a research method, but I realised the importance of attending soccer matches to gain insight into the relationship between women and men's soccer players and also between women's players and coaches. On this, McMillan (2008) posits that researchers should attempt to become more than just participant observers, they should make a deliberate attempt to put themselves in the situation of the people they are observing and studying and try to understand actions, decisions, behaviour, practices and rituals from their perspective. For this study, this process was done through informal conversations with soccer players and coaches during the soccer games to understand actions and behaviours as they happen. This was productive because it limited misinterpretation of practices, actions, and decisions as made by players and coaches. For example, there was a quarrel between a player (female) and the coach (male) in one soccer match, and I was able to converse with both to understand the actions and the coach's decision to take out the player during the game. This incident forms part of gender practices in soccer, given the power relation and/or imbalance between a (female) soccer player and the (male) coach.

Thus, for feminist qualitative research the primacy of the participants' personal subjective experience is recognised for the purpose of promoting their interests (Cohen et al., 2007), which is privileging the participants' voices through interactions. Of importance for feminist qualitative research is the preference to study the participants' world as it naturally occurs, without manipulating it. Thus being immersed in the context of the study (including attending soccer matches) became important for the current study, in order to understand the existing interaction between soccer players, coaches, and administrators if available. This addresses the significance of methodology for feminist qualitative research, since its core concerns are human beings, given that they construct meanings for the events in which they participate. This study therefore believes that even if participants are possibly not interpreting the events as they occur, they are aware of them as they take place around them.

The purpose of this study is to encourage soccer stakeholders to recall and reconstruct the events of gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer, which occur in their respective institutions. If this practice is taken into consideration, it impacts on "what is knowable about human beings and how researchers could come to know it (methodology)" (Scott & Morrison, 2007, p. 154). Considering the discussion, the methodology for this study is feminist discourse analysis because, according to Gee (1996), discourse is socially accepted associations or rules governing the ways of using language, of thinking, valuing, acting and interacting. This means meaning making cannot be separated from embodied action (doing), ways of thinking and understandings of truth (believing), and ethics (valuing) (Janks, 2010). In relation to practice, it is who we are, where we come from, what and how we see, and what we say, consciously or unconsciously, that shape how we perceive gender equity and consequently gender equity practice(s), or lack thereof, in soccer. A detailed discussion on feminist discourse analysis is presented later in this chapter in the section on data analysis.

With this detailed discussion on feminist qualitative research approach, it is important to examine my values, knowledge, position and purpose in order to uncover the influences in the construction and production of the research knowledge (Stanko &

Lee, 2003). Thus the next section focuses on self-reflexivity as an important aspect of feminist research.

4.3 Self-reflexivity

This study acknowledges the point that the process of knowledge construction in any research is largely determined by the researcher. Thus feminist research has advanced arguments that the "politics of the researcher" are a central issue in the production of knowledge (Griffiths, 1998, p. 130). Considering this aspect, feminist qualitative researchers encourage "an awareness of self and the forces which shape the self" (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 51). Reflexivity, according to Cohen et al (2007, p. 171), recognises that "researchers are an inescapable part of the social world that they are researching, which is already interpreted by the actors, undermining the notion of objective reality". I was aware that the reason this study was formulated is because of the socio-cultural and political practices I was always and still am part of. Thus, my identity in this study is both as an 'outsider' and 'insider'. I consider myself an 'outsider' in that I am studying soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices in soccer as a research student, but I am also an 'insider' because I have been a soccer player for six years in one of the institutions and interacted with some soccer administrators from other institutions during this period. It is interesting but also challenging to examine one's own 'society', where the familiar is made strange (Marcus, 1998); even though I have adopted a critical position on gender equity practices in soccer. Considering this position situates me beyond the "binary of insider/outsider polarity and familiarity and strangeness" (Atkinson & Hamersley, 1998, pp.110-111), as my identity in this study, therefore, involves a hybrid of insider-outsider positions.

Along the same line of discussion, Gomm (2008, p. 292) adds that reflexivity is interpreted as the need to tell "the inside story" of the research and sometimes broadening to tell what it is like to be a female researcher. Feminist research has alluded to the difficulties of being a female researcher because of power relations. For example, in this study the interviews with soccer administrators who were males and in high positions and being a female student researcher, address an imbalance in power relations. However, due to my past relationship with two soccer

administrators when I was a soccer player, the power relation was not as serious a challenge compared with the other two I did not know. During the interviews I noticed that it was easier to guide the interview with the administrator I knew than with the two I was unfamiliar with, particularly when they talked for a long time and deviated from the research interview questions. It was challenging for me to stop them as I thought it could jeopardize the study and the responses and consequently the quality of information, given that they had important information from the management position. From this experience I realised that power relations between a researcher and the researched, irrespective of gender, could sometimes be shaped by the relationship of understanding between the researcher and the participant(s). I also acknowledge that the latter may not apply to all research.

Reflexivity therefore suggests that as a researcher I should acknowledge and disclose my own self in the research, seeking to understand my part or influence in the research as a Black African woman and a former soccer player in the university (de Vos et al., 2005). Scott and Morrison (2007, p. 202) talk of "personal reflexivity which foregrounds the personal characteristics and values of the researcher both in the conduct of the research and in the way it is written up". These characteristics include race, gender, and social class as they are considered "fundamental to the type of knowledge that is eventually produced" (Scott & Morrison, 2007, p. 202). Throughout this research I have been aware that I am a research instrument and have continuously and closely monitored my interactions with participants, some of whom I knew well from when I was a student soccer player. I have been cautious of my reactions, role as a researcher and not a soccer player, and biases particularly with men, given my experiences as a student soccer player. This awareness allowed me to make ethically accountable choices in the way I engaged with the participants in my study.

The dynamic processes involved in the sharing of knowledge place me as a researcher in a position where, according to Kincheloe (2003, p. 72), I am "always concerned with the expansion of self-awareness and consciousness ... engaging in a running (meta)dialogue, a constant conversation with self, a perpetual reconceptualisation of his/her systems of meaning". Cohen et al., (2007, p. 172) emphasise the point that highly reflexive researchers will be acutely aware of the

ways in which their selectivity, perception, background and inductive processes and paradigms shape the research. My experiences as a soccer player, involvement in soccer management at university, and informal observations shaped the design of this study, as I realised that little focus continues to be given to women's soccer at university. Basically, being involved in soccer management, I realised that women's soccer was not taken as seriously as male soccer within and outside university contexts. This study suggests that overlooking this has resulted in gender inequity practices in soccer, because the voices of women soccer players were given little attention, if at all. If they happened to be heard, it was in relation to males' needs, resulting in women's needs (e.g. training resources, transportation, and uniform) not being completely dealt with. This treatment, particularly in my institution, did not consider that the women's team was winning games and represented the university in local and national tournaments, than the male team. Given these experiences, it was important for me to take note of them to ensure that they did not make me biased towards research participants or the way the study was written up. I argue, however, that these experiences made me more cautious and critical in the way I interacted with all soccer stakeholders.

It is my understanding that I have clarified my position and experiences in this study, and appropriate to introduce the objectives and research questions for this study.

4.4 Research objectives and questions

The study focuses on soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer at four Western Cape universities in South Africa. The purpose is to explore and critically analyse soccer stakeholders' understanding of gender equity. In addition, the study seeks to examine, problematise, and interrogate stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer in their respective institutions.
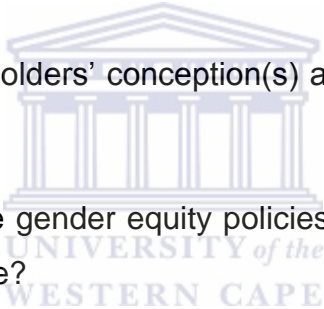
4.4.1 Research objectives

Within this broad aim the study seeks to achieve the following objectives: to explore, describe, and analyse soccer stakeholders' understandings of gender equity and gender equity policy, which could shape their awareness, or lack thereof, of gender

equity practices in soccer within their institutions; to undertake a critical examination and interrogation of soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices in soccer at four Western Cape Universities; and to examine and critically analyse female soccer players' subjective experiences at universities representing diverse cultural, religious and racial backgrounds. Given these objectives, the study seeks to address several research questions presented in the section below.

4.4.2 Research questions

The overriding research question which informs this study is as follows: "What are female and male soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer at four Western Cape Universities"? Within this broad question the following sub-questions were asked:

- What are soccer stakeholders' conception(s) and understanding(s) of gender equity?

- Do the universities have gender equity policies and interventions in soccer, if so what do these include?

- How is gender equity practiced in soccer at four Western Cape Universities?

- What role do the universities reportedly play in promoting gender equity practises, in soccer?

- What are women soccer players' experiences in soccer at their universities with respect to gender inequities in particular?

- Why does gender inequity in soccer persist despite government attempts to address it?

Thus far, the chapter has engaged with the discussion on feminist qualitative research, self-reflexivity, and objectives of the study. The next section presents the sampling strategies and the selection process of research participants including their demographics. This includes a brief discussion of background information on the universities where the research was done.

4.5 Participants for the study

The quality of a piece of research, according to Cohen et al (2007), stands or falls not only on the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation, but also on the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted. Before the selection of the sample, this study considered the research topic and the purpose of the study, which was to gain insight into soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices in soccer in four Western Cape universities. Given this aim, the purposive and snowball sampling strategies became relevant for this study. In purposive sampling, research participants, including research sites, are chosen because of "… some defining characteristics that make them the holders of the data and also, considering participants' experiences within a context of a study, beliefs that they have rich information on the research topic" (Maree, 2008, p. 22). This study intentionally used purposive sampling to select relevant informative soccer stakeholders for individual interviews.

In addition, some research participants particularly for focus group interviews were recommended without being initially approached by the researcher, because of the relevant experiences and perceived rich information on the topic (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2010). This process represents snowball sampling which, according to Best and Kahn (2006, p. 19), refers to a "process whereby participants are recommended by individuals who know other individuals likely to yield relevant rich information data". The selection of the two sampling strategies were shaped by the nature and research methods used for this study; which are individual interviews, focused group interviews with male and female soccer players (mixed gender), and focused group interviews with female soccer players (single gender) only. Scott and Morrison (2008) posit that methods used to select the sample determine the nature and validity of the findings that are generated from the study of that sample, as different approaches yield different kinds of data and, therefore, different constructions of knowledge. This notion was considered during the selection of the sample for this study.

According to Johnson and Christensen (2008), qualitative researchers must first decide whom or what they want to study, and consider which populations are

relevant to the research focus being developed. During the construction of this study, soccer stakeholders (soccer administrators and soccer players) were the centre of information in the four selected universities. Because it was important for this study to gain in-depth information on the topic, senior soccer players were specifically selected for individual interviews with the assumption that they had relevant experiences of the context and could reflect on gender equity practices, or lack thereof, within their respective institutions. Thus, the initial sample consisted of purposive sample of four soccer administrators and 16 senior soccer players, that is, eight females and eight males, for individual interviews. For clarity, a table is used to present this sample. This is followed by the snowball sample of recommended soccer players for all focus group interviews, that is, female only and mixed gender interviews per institution. The section commences with the research sites where the study was done and is followed by a discussion about the selection process of research participants for the study.

4.5.1 The research sites

This study was done in the Western Cape, which is one of the nine povinces in South Africa. This province was selected because I played soccer in one of the universities for six years while observing soccer flourish in the other four universities, as we played with them in intervarsity and league games. Women's soccer was growing also in the Black African and Coloured townships, which I found interesting for me. Through participating in different tournaments I knew that women's soccer was played in the universities in other provinces; however, it was the accessibility, knowledge, and information about the four Western Cape Universities that made it suitable to conduct this study in this province. In addition, having studied in the province for seven years and played soccer for six years, it was appropriate to conduct the study in a familiar place. In the Western Cape, women's soccer is active alongside men's soccer in the community and the university, and some men and women soccer players reside and participate in the community league in addition to the university league. This means there is some sort of a relationship between community and university soccer which could shape the practice of gender equity, or lack thereof, making this study significant. The reason, as mentioned earlier, could be that practices which happen in the university might be the extension of what

occurs in the society, and if this is the case, change in gender practices in soccer might take time.

4.5.1.1 The University sample

Four universities, the Universities of Cape Town, Western Cape, Stellenbosch, and Cape Peninsula University of Technology were targeted for inclusion in this study, and three of these are located in an urban area and one in a semi-urban area. A brief overview of each university and its sport history and context, particularly regarding soccer, is provided.

The University of Cape Town (UCT) was founded in 1829 as the South African College, a high school for boys, and was formerly established as a university in 1918. It was specifically set up as a White English institution, and later in the 1920s it admitted a relatively low number of Black African students. Although the university boasts over 40 sports clubs with a total membership of over 9 000 students and staff, rugby was a popular White sport for English speaking male players and continues to be a popular sport with a small number of Black African and Coloured players (www.uct.ac.za). Soccer was not popular in this university until the late 1990s, possibly because of the number of Black African students enrolled there and considering that soccer was associated with them.

The Stellenbosch University (SU) became a university in 1916 and, similarly to UCT, rugby was a popular sport, however, as compared to UCT, it is played particularly by Afrikaans speaking male players and continues to be dominated by Afrikaans speaking men. In the 1980s players included Coloured students as they were enrolled as students and in the late 1990s a small number of Black African players also began to be active (www.su.ac.za). At SU soccer was played by a small number of Coloured males but was not popularised and resourced as has been the case with rugby at this university.

University of the Western Cape (UWC) is a historically black university targeted at Coloureds in the Western Cape that was established in 1960. In 1959, Parliament adopted legislation establishing the University College of the Western Cape as a constituent college of the University of South Africa for people classified as

Coloured. In 1970 the institution gained university status and was able to award its own degrees and diplomas (www.uwc.ac.za). In this institution, rugby was also popular for Coloureds and a small number of Black African players, but was developed alongside soccer as a popular sport for Black African men.

The Peninsula Technical College was established in 1962 to cater for the steady growth in the number of Coloured apprentices in a variety of trades, and classes were conducted in Cape Town until the relocation to the venue in Bellville in 1967. This resulted in the legal establishment of the Peninsula Technikon in Bellville and Cape Technikon in Cape Town in 1979. In October 2003 the Minister approved the new name, Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), and announced that the status of technikons would be changed to universities of technology (www.cput.ac.za). Soccer was popular in both campuses, especially in Peninsula Technikon in Bellville as compared to the Cape Technikon in Cape Town. The possible reason for the popularity in the former campus is because of the high number of Black African students who were admitted and who were mostly from the Cape Town townships.

Considering the history of the universities, it could be argued that the history of soccer within each institution is shaped by the socio-political background and history of sport in South Africa. As discussed in chapter three, during apartheid sport was organised according to racial and social class and soccer was relegated to a Black African working class sport after White people left it for cricket and rugby. For example, in two universities that were specifically set up for Coloured and later Black African students during the apartheid era, soccer was more popular than in the other two universities that were specifically established for White English speaking and White Afrikaans speaking students. The differences between the universities were also observed in the style of soccer and to some extent the racial representation of soccer players. This study assumes that the style of soccer and the racial representation of soccer players institutionally are possibly shaped by the student intake in the university and the interest of the students in soccer. Thus, the different historical backgrounds in soccer, which are shaped by the institutional cultures, could provide rich data for this research.

The four universities participate actively in the University Sports South Africa (USSA) tournaments and community soccer leagues. For example, in 2009 all four universities participated in the then SASSU (South African Students Sports Union) summer tournament. However, I noticed that for the winter tournament where 'best' players were selected from each university to represent the Western Cape Province in a provincial tournament, Black African female and male players were mainly selected from UWC and CPUT. Again, this is possibly because of the style of soccer players played and the socio-political history of the universities. Of interest is that as I conversed with soccer managers and players, the two universities continued to dominate the selection process for the winter tournament. It appears that in the universities soccer is also associated with Black Africans, as in the community and national teams.

4.5.1.2 Sample of soccer administrators

As mentioned earlier, purposive sampling was used to select soccer administrators and soccer players. Before I met with the soccer administrators and commenced with the interviews, I decided that it was important to read about their background for the preparation of interviews. This meant knowing about their number of years in the position, their soccer background, if any, and interest in soccer. The sample comprised four soccer administrators, three men and one woman. The table below presents a summary of the participants.

Table 2.1: Sample of soccer administrators

Participant	Age	Gender	Race
Administrator: 1	48	Male	Coloured
Administrator: 2	63	Male	Coloured
Administrator: 3	29	Male	Black African
Administrator: 4	33	Female	Black African

The soccer administrators are responsible for the development and promotion of male and female soccer within the university. On the one hand, they represent an institution to the soccer players and the coach, and on the other, they represent soccer players in the institutional management. They are therefore expected to be aware of what is happening on the soccer fields, and how the institution promotes gender equity practices in soccer, given the knowledge of the institution's policy on

gender equality and equity in sport and particularly in soccer. Considering the discussion, the reason soccer administrators were included in this study was to explore their understanding of gender equity, to explain the gender equity policy in sport and specifically in soccer in their respective institutions, and to gain insight on their awareness of gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer in their respective institutions. McGregor (2004, p. 18) posits that "… our words should be seen as having meaning in a particular historical, social, cultural and political condition". Thus, soccer administrators' perceptions and experiences on gender equity and gender equity practices in soccer are important because they could reveal if there are any taken for granted stereotypes and possible biases that are normalised.

While I was reading about the soccer administrators' background and preparing the interview questions, I noted Johnson and Christensen's (2008, pp. 243-244) caution to researchers that sometimes "decisions about whom to study are affected by logistical constraints, such as the availability of appropriate participants, the accessibility of the potential participants, and the costs of locating the people and enlisting their participation". This caution was taken into consideration as email was used for the initial conversations with soccer administrators to set up first appointments and to exchange phone numbers. The phone numbers were helpful to confirm administrators' availability until the day of the interviews, and for them to alert me to any interview appointment changes due to unforeseen meetings. The latter happened once with two administrators, within hours of the scheduled interviews but this did not affect the study as the interviews were re-scheduled.

Following this discussion is the sample of soccer players for individual interviews. Unlike the soccer administrators' sample, soccer players were not asked their age because of importance was their number of years playing soccer within the institution. The table below represents a summary of the sixteen individual interview participants at the four institutions.

4.5.1.3 Sample of soccer players for individual interviews

For individual interviews I ensured that I selected female and male soccer players who had been playing soccer in the institution for more than three years, with the hope that they would have in-depth information about gender equity practices, or lack thereof in soccer. As mentioned earlier, purposive and snowball sampling were used for the selection of soccer players I approached because I knew them from when I was a student soccer player. The team managers selected players I did not know, and I requested that they select players who had played soccer in the institution for more than three years and would be able to reflect on the practices of gender equity, or lack thereof. Given their experiences, I believed that players could help develop a detailed understanding of what and how practices relating to gender equity in soccer had been experienced over the years. The table below represents the sample of soccer players for individual interviews; participants were not asked their ages but the number of years they had been playing soccer in the institution was considered relevant for this study.

Table 2.2: Sample of soccer players for individual interviews

Participants	Race	Gender	Institution	Years
Participant: 1	White	Male	**UCT**	**3**rd
Participant: 2	White	Male	**UCT**	**3**rd
Participant: 3	White	Female	**UCT**	**4**th
Participant: 4	Black African	Female	**UCT**	**3**rd
Participant: 5	White	Male	**SU**	**3**rd
Participant: 6	Coloured	Male	**SU**	**3**rd
Participant: 7	Black African	Female	**SU**	**5**th
Participant: 8	White	Female	**SU**	**4**th
Participant: 9	Coloured	Male	**UWC**	**4**th
Participant: 10	Black African	Male	**UWC**	**3**rd
Participant: 11	Black African	Female	**UWC**	**3**rd
Participant: 12	Coloured	Female	**UWC**	**4**th
Participant: 13	Black African	Female	**CPUT**	**4**th
Participant: 14	Coloured	Female	**CPUT**	**3**rd
Participant: 15	Black African	Male	**CPUT**	**3**rd
Participant: 16	Black African	Male	**CPUT**	**3**rd

The selection process for the participants took place during the April 2010 vacation. It is important to explain that players with less soccer experiences were not treated differently, but all soccer players' experiences were considered important, however

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for individual interviews it became important to have at least three years playing in the institution. Sixteen soccer players had individual interviews, thus - eight females and eight males, as presented in the Table above.

4.5.1.4 Sample of soccer players for focus group interviews

Due to time limitations, the selection process for mixed gender and female only focus group interview participants also took place during the June 2010 vacation. Again, team managers assisted in identifying players who could have information and an understanding of the research topic. I explained to the soccer managers that I needed four female and four male players who would participate in the mixed gender focus group interviews per institution, and six female players who would participate in female only focus group interviews in each institution. After being introduced to the selected soccer players, I introduced myself and briefly explained the purpose of my study and exchanged email addresses and cell phone numbers to make plans for interviews during 2011.

The total number of participants for the mixed gender focus group interviews was 32, and the table below represents a sample of mixed gender focus group interviews. As explained earlier, participants' ages were not considered, but rather the number of years they had been playing soccer in the institution.

Table 2.3: Sample of mixed gender focus group interviews

Participants	Race	Gender	Institution	Years
Participant: 1	Black African	Male	**UWC**	**2nd**
Participant: 2	Coloured	Male	**UWC**	**2nd**
Participant: 3	Coloured	Male	**UWC**	**3rd**
Participant: 4	Black African	Male	**UWC**	**2nd**
Participant: 5	Black African	Female	**UWC**	**3rd**
Participant: 6	Black African	Female	**UWC**	**2nd**
Participant: 7	Coloured	Female	**UWC**	**2nd**
Participant: 8	Coloured	Female	**UWC**	**2nd**
Participant: 9	White	Male	**UCT**	**2nd**
Participant: 10	Black African	Male	**UCT**	**2nd**
Participant: 11	Black African	Male	**UCT**	**3rd**
Participant: 12	Coloured	Male	**UCT**	**3rd**
Participant: 13	Black African	Female	**UCT**	**2nd**
Participant: 14	White	Female	**UCT**	**3rd**
Participant: 15	Black African	Female	**UCT**	**2nd**
Participant: 16	Black African	Female	**UCT**	**3rd**
Participant: 17	Black African	Male	**CPUT**	**3rd**
Participant: 18	Black African	Male	**CPUT**	**3rd**
Participant: 19	Black African	Male	**CPUT**	**2nd**
Participant: 20	Coloured	Male	**CPUT**	**4th**
Participant: 21	Black African	Female	**CPUT**	**2nd**
Participant: 22	Black African	Female	**CPUT**	**3rd**
Participant: 23	Coloured	Female	**CPUT**	**2nd**

Participant: 24	Coloured	Female	CPUT	3rd
Participant: 25	White	Male	SU	3rd
Participant: 26	White	Male	SU	3rd
Participant: 27	Coloured	Male	SU	2nd
Participant: 28	Black African	Male	SU	3rd
Participant: 29	White	Female	SU	2nd
Participant: 30	White	Female	SU	3rd
Participant: 31	Coloured	Female	SU	3rd
Participant: 32	Black African	Female	SU	2nd

The second focus group interviews were conducted with female only soccer players and consisted of six soccer players per institution. The total number of female participants for focus group interviews was 24 and the Table below presents the sample, with the number of years they have been playing soccer in the institution.

Table 2.4: Sample of female only focus group interviews

Participants	Race	Institution	Years
Participant: 1	White (R)	SU	4th
Participant: 2	White	SU	2nd
Participant: 3	White	SU	2nd
Participant: 4	Black African (R)	SU	5th
Participant: 5	White	SU	3rd
Participant: 6	Coloured	SU	2nd
Participant: 7	Black African	CPUT	2nd
Participant: 8	Black African (R)	CPUT	4th
Participant: 9	Coloured (R)	CPUT	3rd
Participant: 10	Coloured	CPUT	2nd
Participant: 11	Coloured	CPUT	3rd
Participant: 12	Coloured	CPUT	2nd
Participant: 13	Black African (R)	UWC	3rd
Participant: 14	Black African	UWC	3rd
Participant: 15	Black African	UWC	3rd
Participant: 16	Black African	UWC	2nd
Participant: 17	Coloured (R)	UWC	4th
Participant: 18	Coloured	UWC	2nd
Participant: 19	White (R)	UCT	4th
Participant: 20	White	UCT	2nd
Participant: 21	White	UCT	2nd
Participant: 22	White	UCT	3rd
Participant: 23	Black African (R)	UCT	3rd
Participant: 24	Black African	UCT	2nd

It is important to explain that because of the shortage of female players to participate in the female only focus group interviews, participants also included all eight female players who participated in the individual interviews per institution and they are represented with R in the Table. The majority of participants for both focus group interviews were Black African female and male soccer players, possibly because of their dominance in the sport. The following discussion introduces the data collection process for this study.

4.6 Data collection

This study used a variety of research methods to collect data from diverse racial, cultural, and religious research participants. Given that the purpose of this study was to explore and interrogate soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer at university, semi-structured individual and focus group interviews were conducted. Gomm (2008) posits that in choosing research methods it is important for a researcher to interrogate the reasons the chosen method/s are the correct and best way of gathering relevant and needed information to answer research questions. Thus, semi-structured individual and focus group interviews were considered appropriate to gain insight into the soccer stakeholders' meanings and experiences of gender, gender equity, and gender practices, or lack thereof, in soccer that could have been normalised. It was important for this study to allow participants to critically reflect on the taken for granted issues of gender, gender equity, and gender equity practices in sport, and particularly soccer, without constraining them to focus specifically on particular structured questions. It does not mean that semi-structured interviews do not have a structure but that they allow some independence to participants to respond openly.

While Maree (2007, p. 34) explains that "we interview people to find out from them things we cannot directly observe…", Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) posit that we cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions, the way people have organised the world, and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. The interview, particularly semi-structured and unstructured interviews, becomes appropriate as an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest for knowledge production, and emphasises the situatedness of research data (Kvale, 1996). I concur with Cresswell (2008, p. 18) that semi-structured and unstructured interviews "enable research participants, including a researcher, to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view". Considering that this study intends to gain insight into the participants' understanding of gender, gender equity and how they regard gender equity practices in soccer within their respective universities, it was imperative that I selected semi-structured interviews to ensure that I did not confine their freedom to think and express their experiences.

Babbie (2007, p. 23) asserts that feminist interviews treat interview participants "as co-constructive", which was the approach of this study.

4.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are mostly used to gain detailed accounts of participants' beliefs or perceptions about a particular topic, adding that they are particularly suitable for researching issues that are complex, personal or controversial (Greeff, 2005). The issue of gender equity in soccer could be regarded as controversial because it disturbs the normalisation of soccer as masculinist, hence it challenges men to reflect on their biases. According to Babbie (2007), although the interviewer has some established general topics for investigation, semi-structured interviews allow for the exploration of emergent themes and ideas. For this study, as an interviewer for individual and focus group interviews, I was not concerned with the order of the questions, but ensured that all planned questions were covered in the interviews. I therefore made sure that a similar set of questions that were prepared for soccer administrators were asked of all soccer administrators, and this also applied to individual soccer players and the mixed gender and female only focus group interviews. This was to make sure that a possible comparison between answers was clearly made (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Thus, I went to interviews with different research questions for individual soccer administrators and players to answer, but I also took into consideration the importance of listening to emerging ideas from participants' responses that were not part of the questions. Thus, in semi-structured interviews, participants are seen to have their own agency and selfhood, and are not simply 'participants' answering the questions posed by the interviewer (Roberts, 2001).

The research questions were structured such that they adequately reflected and probed the information that I, the researcher, wished to gather, that is, an understanding of gender equity, the current gender normative practices in soccer, and the extent to which gender equity is being achieved in soccer at universities. The questions were devised chronologically, starting with the soccer stakeholders' early experiences of soccer in their respective communities, at school, and then university. In addition, participants were asked about their general understanding of gender and

different relations between men and women which shape different treatment and expected practices of gender roles within these communities. It is useful to start with these questions to trace participants' understanding of gender equity which possibly result in different treatment and stereotypes in soccer. These questions were asked to ensure relaxation, as Johnson and Christensen (2008) advice researchers start interviews with memories of early experiences before moving to the main research questions. Most interview questions allowed participants to reflect critically on practices of gender that have been normalised and consequently taken for granted, the perceptions and experiences of gender equity, and then gender equity practices in soccer, because these questions encouraged reflection and openness. It took four weeks to complete the fieldwork given the number of universities, distance between universities, and challenges with time.

4.6.1.1 Soccer administrators' interviews

The individual interviews commenced with soccer administrators and were held in the morning in their offices (see Appendix G) because it was easy to access them before they engaged with their everyday work. Interviewees were briefed on the nature and purpose of the research interview, and before the interviews started I requested that they read and sign the consent forms (see Appendix A). As mentioned earlier, I designed different interview questions for soccer administrators in relation to the research questions, because of the role they play as part of management. Interview questions that were specific to them included talking about the existing gender equity policy in sport and particularly for soccer, whether universities informed players about the existing gender equity policy, whether they had any gender equity interventions in soccer, and the role that universities played in ensuring that gender equity was practiced in soccer. I believed that the prepared interview questions could provide insight on how the university perceived gender equity in sport and particularly gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer. The interviews lasted between one to two hours, depending on the participant's response to questions, and were all conducted in Englih. The length of the interviews indicated that participants seemed to have enjoyed talking about their soccer experiences as they took time to think of their responses, as I explained that nothing was insignificant and I needed their critical reflection. I would say that the interviews represented relaxed critical conversations because participants were allowed to

structure their responses in any order as long as they addressed the research questions. With the permission of the soccer administrators, all interviews were tape - recorded to ensure that detailed information was captured for later transcription.

4.6.1.2 Soccer players' interviews

Individual interviews with female and male soccer players (see Appendix F) were organised around their availability, and most players preferred late morning and afternoon interviews. Because most players stay in residences, interviews took place in common rooms, where students watch television and hold meetings. Considering that interviews were conducted during vacation, the common rooms were not busy as most students had gone home and those who were there spent most of the time in their rooms. Thus, three interviews with female players in two institutions took place in their rooms. Before interviews commenced, interviewees were briefed on the nature and purpose of the research interview and were handed the consent forms to read and sign (see Appendix A). There were some differences between administrators' and soccer players' interview questions because for the latter the questions focused on whether they were informed of any existing university policy on gender equity in sport and particularly in soccer, their understanding of gender equity in sport, and their personal experiences with gender equity practices in soccer, or lack thereof, within their universities. The interviews lasted between one hour and one hour and forty minutes, depending on the participant's response to questions. Of interest and importance with regard to the interviews was that players took time to reflect on the questions, possibly because they felt comfortable with me as a former soccer player in one of the universities. All interviews were conducted in English as a common language and were also informed by the assumption that players understand English as a language used in all universities. Again, with the permission of the soccer players, all interviews were tape - recorded to ensure that all information was captured.

4.6.1.3 Focus group interviews

In this study, focus group interviews (see Appendix H) were conducted with groups of soccer players including in some cases, for female only focus group interviews, players that had already been interviewed for individual interviews. As mentioned earlier, I included focus groups with both mixed gender participants, which were

males and females together, and also female only focus groups in order to understand their experiences and perceptions of gender equity and gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer as a group. For the latter the interviews were done to give them the opportunity to express their experiences and perceptions of gender equity in sport in general and gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer without being interrupted and challenged by male soccer players. The purpose was to gain insight specifically on their experiences of gender inequity practices in their respective universities, if any. As mentioned earlier, some players who participated in the female only focus group interviews were part of the individual interviews, due to the shortage of women players as most were first year students. For focus group interviews, players were required to be playing soccer for the second year in their respective institutions, because I assumed that they would have developed some kind of experience. I acknowledged the possibility of having repeated information from the players that had been interviewed, but at the same I realised the opportunity of new information emerging that could be shaped by the responses of other players.

For both focus group interviews the interviewees were briefed about the purpose of the research and the reason for doing focus group interviews, and for mixed gender focus group interviews, were requested to allow each other time to talk. After that they were handed consent forms to read and sign individually before the interview process started (see Appendix A). While the mixed gender focus group interviews generally took about two hours and sometimes more than two hours depending on the debates, the female only focus group interviews lasted for about an hour and thirty minutes. The length of interviews was shaped by the responses and discussion on particular questions and also institutional experiences. For example, at Cape Peninsula University of Technology both mixed gender and female only focus group interviews took some time because soccer players had a lot to say about their soccer experiences, and also due to the merging of two institutions as explained earlier.

Something else that was noted was that at the University of Western Cape and Cape Peninsula University Technology, which were dominated by Coloured and Black African soccer players, mixed gender focus group interviews took long time. This was because players, particularly women, in contextualising the discussion

explained the relationship between the social construction of gender and expected gender roles that shape gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in sport and soccer particularly. I noticed that it became important for female soccer players to explain this relationship to illustrate the seriousness of gender inequity practices in sport and specifically in soccer. It was interesting to hear them drawing their experiences of gender equity practices, or lack thereof, from the community to university soccer, resulting in detailed discussions and arguments. This was in line with this study because the purpose was to examine, in detail, how the soccer players think and feel about a topic, given that little is known of gender equity practices or lack thereof in soccer in the university context. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2007, p. 172) posit that focus group interviews "allow the researcher to gain data, such as attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and personal experiences, from a range of respondents at once". It was the purpose of this study to gain insight into the soccer players' attitudes, thoughts, and personal experiences as a group in a discussion environment where different people expressed their feelings at once.

I noticed that body language also played a role for some participants to express their attitudes towards either female or male soccer. For example, in one university two males decided to go in front of the common room[17] and demonstrate in a slow pace the way women play soccer to make their point clear, which for me emphasised the argument that women's soccer is boring and slow. There was some kind of generalisation in the demonstration, which resulted in intense argument between males and females, at the same time providing detailed important information about players' perceptions and attitudes towards women's soccer. Without simplifying the perceptions, they possibly illustrate the reason women's soccer experiences little support in the community and possibly the media. It seems to be taken for granted that perceptions could perpetuate gender inequity practices in soccer in general and particularly at university, because they seem to have shaped the reason women's soccer games are free of charge. Of interest and importance with the mixed focus group interviews was the 'aggressiveness' and detailed approach of some women soccer players in engaging with the topic, irrespective of men's dominance during the interviews. It could be argued that the male presence in the interviews

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[17] In the students' residences there are common rooms where students watch television and hold meetings. This room was used to conduct focus group interviews.

encouraged women to be vocal of their experiences and perceptions of gender equity in sport and soccer particularly, because of the opportunity to respond directly to men's perceptions.

Creswell (2008) cautions that all participants should be encouraged to talk and to take their turns talking, because it is from the interaction of the group that the data emerge. For the mixed gender focus group interviews, I realised during the first interview in one university that it was challenging to ensure that everyone participated, because male players tended to dominate the interviews and interrupt while female players were still explaining. Thus, for the next interview it became important to have an assistant to keep an eye and ensure that at least some order was maintained and that everyone participated in the discussion during the interviews, because everyone's responses were crucial for this study. Considering that it was my first time conducting focus group interviews, I felt I lacked the expertise and obtained assistance from a researcher. Krueger (1994, p. 6) emphasises that the focus group is "a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment". It was therefore important for me to contract an assistant to make sure that all participants had a say and also that I captured the information in as detailed a manner as possible.

Thus, the discussion needed to encourage participants to think in more holistic ways and "bring together attitudes, opinions, and experiences in an effort to find out not only *what* participants think but also *how* they think about the topic and *why* they think the way they do" (Morgan, 1997, p. 20). This study anticipated that for male players, sharing their experiences with female players in multilogues (focus group) could help them to come to an understanding of their structural isolation that portrays and requires them to act and be powerful and strong. By meeting with female soccer players, sharing of experiences, and realising group commonalities in what had previously been considered a specific group problem (e.g. ill-treatment of female soccer players), male soccer players could develop a clearer sense of the social and political processes through which their experiences were constructed (Wilkinson, 1998). This could lead to a collective sense of male and female soccer players gaining "solidarity among difference" (Wilkinson, 1998, p. 115).

It is significant at this point to mention that the organisation of mixed gender focus group interviews was challenging because we had to agree on suitable times and places for everyone, and male and female teams train at different times. I planned to conduct the focus group interviews during training times with the consent of the coaches because almost all soccer players are on the field. The male teams usually start training 30 minutes to an hour after female teams have started training, which males found challenging. I requested that female teams cancel their training so that interviews could start early, as I anticipated long discussions and arguments. This made sense for me, to ensure that everyone could leave for home early, given that, although it was vacation, students had to relax. As mentioned earlier, common rooms were used to conduct the interviews.

The female focus group interviews were not difficult to organise and lasted for about an hour to two hours, and varied institutionally depending on responses. On the importance of feminist focus group interviews in relation to women, Mies (1983, p. 127) argues that "the collectivisation of women's experiences is not only a means of getting more and more diversified information but also helps women to overcome their structural isolation and to understand that their individual sufferings have social causes". These interviews encouraged female soccer players to reflect critically on their experiences and perceptions of gender socially, gender equity in sport, and gender equity practices or lack thereof in soccer in their respective universities. This they did without pressure from male soccer players, as they discussed and shared their soccer experiences in a calm atmosphere. Some women soccer players were able to relate the gender inequity practices in soccer at university to the gender inequity practices in community soccer, because some play soccer there. The cultural bias towards women was also identified as responsible for the continuing unfair treatment of girls and women in sport, and particularly in soccer. In general, the focus groups interviews were useful because male soccer players, while discussing, informed each other and at the same time enriched the data for this study. Of importance for this study is that "the word does not forget where it has been and can never wholly separate itself from the dominion of the contexts of which it has been part" (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 167). Thus soccer players were drawing from and represented their habitus and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1994) when discussing their

perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices and/or lack thereof in soccer at university.

4.7 Reflection on the process of research

When I started conducting the interviews with soccer administrators I did not think much about what I was bringing with me into the research (Thorne, 1993), although I was aware that interviews were dominated by men. Of interest was that all of them made me feel at ease during interviews and even printed documents they thought were important for the study. From the interviews with soccer administrators I gained confidence in the way I conducted the interviews, because they became discussions and conversations as administrators reflected on their work. As they described and thought about the way they engaged with their work, some became aware of various practices they had been taking for granted. For example, some administrators became aware that some of the decisions they had made were biased against women's team and favoured men's teams. They became aware that as innocent as the decisions were but reflecting on them highlighted that they perpetuated inequity practices. For me this meant that the study achieved its aim of making soccer administrators aware of their common sense practices for the purpose of changing them.

Compared to the interview experience with administrators, my interaction with individual soccer players was tricky because I knew some players as I was a former soccer player. Although this could assume effortless interviews, I engaged with these interviews as reflective conversations because, again, I wanted participants to think and remember incidences that had been taking place in their respective institutions in relation to gender equity practices in soccer. I noticed that male participants needed time to think of responses to most questions, particularly when they needed to think of incidences that resembled gender equity practices, or lack thereof. It was fascinating to observe some participants repeating questions and conversing amongst themselves as a process of remembering, in my presence before responding to my questions. For me this process meant that participants were trying to make sense of their taken for granted practices. At the end of the interview process, it was liberating to hear participants indicating that the interviews gave them

the opportunity to reflect and be aware of everyday incidences that had been taking place but had been considered common sense. Again, that was the purpose of this study to make participants aware of the normalised practices, considering that I was once a soccer player who did not problematise gender practices in soccer.

For the female only and mixed gender focus group interviews I enlisted a person with experience in conducting focus group interviews, because I did not have the skills. Of importance for me was to make sure that I got in-depth responses from all participants, and I was not confident that I would be able to do that considering that I had never conducted them before. The most challenging interviews were the mixed focus groups because men always tried to dominate the discussions in a defensive manner resulting in arguments with women players. We constantly had to intervene in during interviews to bring order, because of the tension between men and women players. Notwithstanding the tension and arguments, it was interesting to be part of the interviews as I learnt a lot about the difference between perceptions and experience. I noticed that female responses involved experiences as compared to the majority of male responses that were based on perceptions, and consequently led to the arguments and tension. Of importance to realise in this process is that women players' responses made male players aware of the role they played in marginalising women's soccer, given that they had been ridiculing and ill-treating women's soccer. It was these revelations that eventually caused confrontations during interviews, because men were shocked to hear about their behaviour. Overall, the interview processes revealed the role that common sense played in normalising behaviour and discriminatory practices.

4.8 Data organisation and analysis

The initial preparation for data analysis required organisation of the enormous amount of information because qualitative research often results in voluminous information gathered from the study (Creswell, 2008; Best & Kahn, 2006). This was particularly the case for this study as I used semi-structured individual and mixed gender and female only focus group interviews (see Table 2), consequently the interview transcripts provided a mass of information. This also meant organising data using files representing each institution's individual interview respondents, mixed

gender focus group interviews, and female only focus group interviews, identifying various characteristics (when, where, and with whom). To reiterate the abovementioned point, De Vos (2002, p. 339) states that data analysis is the process whereby "the researcher brings structure and order to the vast amount of data collected, and looks for patterns in the data in order to make sense of it, leading to interpretation and meaning-making". Considering the sixteen individual interviews, four sets of mixed gender focus groups and four sets of female only focus group interviews for this study, this resulted to large amounts of information after the transcription of all the interviews.

4.8.1 Transcription of individual and focus group interviews

I personally conducted all the individual interviews and all the focus group interviews with the help of the experienced research assistant as mentioned earlier. All the interviews were recorded with the permission of participants using a digital tape recorder to ensure quality and clarity of responses. For the purpose of immersing and understanding participants' responses, I listened to all interviews the same night of the interviews without transcribing them. This was to identify any gaps or misunderstandings and to refine questions for the next interviews where necessary, particularly for individual interviews. In the interests of time, the task of transcribing all the interviews was outsourced to a qualified transcriber, who was instructed to include all non-verbal cues in the transcripts and given clear transcription conventions to follow. I have to mention that the transcription process took almost eleven months, because the transcriber also had working commitments on some days. When some transcriptions were completed, I listened to them to make sure that everything that was discussed was written, at the same time making sense of the data to start identifying patterns.

Transcription, according to Creswell (2008, p. 239) is the process of converting audio-tape recordings into text data by hand or through computer, and in this study I insisted that the transcriber use the latter to speed up the process. The individual transcriptions took approximately two months to be completed (May to mid-June), and were done verbatim followed by appropriate filing, as discussed earlier. As mentioned above, I listened to and read all individual transcriptions after they were

being transcribed to ensure that respondents' responses were correctly represented before the focus group interviews were transcribed. When I was satisfied with the transcription of individual interviews, the transcription of focus group interviews commenced at the beginning of July 2011. Although I did some focus group interviews during April 2011 and others during June 2011, I decided that all the transcriptions would be done at one time from the beginning of July 2011. Due to the nature of the interviews, particularly the mixed gender focus group interviews, the transcriptions took approximately five to six months. The transcription of mixed gender focus groups was not easy because of the different male and female voice, and particularly when participants spoke at the same time arguing about various issues. Considering this difficulty, I decided that because the interviews were transcribed per institution, it was important to make sure that discussions and arguments were captured and transcribed. This meant listening and making sure that participants were well represented in the transcription. For the female only focus group interviews it took approximately three months to complete, because some responses were not detailed given that arguments were not common, but mostly there was agreement. Actually, it also took me almost two months to listen to all the focus group transcriptions. Thus, the overall transcription of all interviews, including reading and confirmation of transcripts, took almost a year, as the process was intense and detailed.

4.8.2 Data analysis: Critical Discourse Analysis

I have to mention that the analysis of the data produced during the fieldwork followed some complex, systematic and reflexive processes. I read and re-read transcriptions to familiarise myself with the data, then colour coded important responses in relation to the research question(s). The codes also represented key concepts and ideas in the transcripts which assisted in making sense of the data. Creswell (2008, p. 243) asserts that coding is an "inductive process of segmenting and labelling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data". In elaboration, Best and Kahn (2006) posit that also included in this process is the selection of specific data to use and disregarding irrelevant data that do not specifically provide evidence for the themes. It is then important to be selective of relevant data given that individual interviews and focus group interviews characterise an "ordered system" (Foucault, 1972b, p.

47) that is constitutive of statements. Therefore, participants' statements could not be the intentions of individuals in situations, although individuals still have to enact discourses and statements, but are produced (diachronically) in an ongoing discursive stream. This, according to Diaz-Bone (2007), means that the preceding statements build the (virtual) context of previously enacted statements, which is how the status quo is maintained. It is therefore important to code and identify themes in the data that formed the first and second stage of data analysis (see Appendices E and F respectively), which resulted in the identification of discourses for interpretation and discussion in chapter five.

The fact that soccer stakeholders make choices, whether consciously or unconsciously, about what they want to say regarding gender equity and practices in soccer, presupposes that attitudes, ideologies and power relations are inherent in those choices. These choices could best be understood using critical discourse analysis (in relation to feminist poststructuralism theory discussed in chapter two) because it argues that discourses contextualise participants' prioritised meanings and understandings within the "matrix of social action" which it forms part of (Fairclough, 1992, p. 11). Thus, critical discourse analysis helps to deconstruct discourses to reveal any taken for granted biases and inequities. Fiske (1994, p. 11) cautions that "our words are never neutral, they have meaning in a particular historical, social, and political condition and the meaning we convey with those words is identified by our immediate social, political, and historical conditions". This, as also discussed in chapter two, highlights the notion that our access to reality and the construction of 'reality' and knowledge is always through language, which is not neutral but is shaped by socio-cultural and political structure. Similar to the feminist poststructural theory, language is also an important aspect for critical discourse analysis because it represents stakeholders' reality and their social context and practices, which are never neutral. Thus, in this study, critical discourse analysis is used to analyse all interview transcripts as written texts, to reveal any possible discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and biases, if any.

While Price (1999, p. 23) states that critical discourse analysis "draws inspiration, whether directly or indirectly, from Foucault's genealogical work", Wickham and Kendall (2007) posit that critical discourse analysis emerges from other forms of

discourse analysis and conversation analysis. Of importance for this study is the marriage of discourse analysis and critique, where the critical edge is supplied by the commitment to the demystification of dominant ideologies in the service of various forms of emancipation (Diaz-Bone et al., 2007). The purpose of critical discourse analysis is therefore to analyse "opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language" (Wodak, 1996, p. 204). Silverman and Torode (1980, p. 11) add that critical discourse analysis is an "intervention in the natural flow of talk and text that attempts to interrupt everyday common sense". Common sense, if not problematised and interrogated, has the potential to be naturalised and to pass unquestioned while causing inequities and prejudice. For example, in this study, it could be taken for granted that because women's soccer is not popular, lack of media coverage is understandable, while perpetuating gender stereotypes. Thus, Janks (2010) argues that denaturalisation of common sense assumptions is needed to reveal them as constructed representations of the social order, serving the interests of some at the expense of others.

In particular, when discourses are linked to a wide range of social identities and are embedded in diverse social institutions, they provide the "need and the means to reflect on our own taken-for-granted ways of saying, writing, doing, thinking and valuing" (Gee, 1990, p. 142). Along the same line of discussion, Batsone (1995) asserts that critical discourse analysis seeks to reveal how meanings are constructed so that particular (and potentially indoctrinating) perspectives can be expressed delicately and covertly. Because they are covert, they are difficult to challenge directly, facilitating what Kress calls the "retreat into mystification and impersonality" (1989, p. 57). The exposure of hidden meanings is important because they are not obvious to the speaker, particularly when the role of habitus is taken into consideration. Thus, the aim of critical discourse analysis is to reveal the role of discursive practices, such as those related to normative gender and gender equity, in the maintenance of the social world, including social relations that involve unequal power relations (Jørgensen & Philips, 2002). The deconstruction of perceptions and experiences is important, as Stubbs (1980, p. 6) explains: "If people and things are repeatedly talked about in certain ways, then there is a good chance that this will affect how they are thought of". The aim of this study is to interrogate and analyse

critically constructed meanings of gender equity by soccer stakeholders, in relation to gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer within the university context. This is because, as Janks (2010) argues, it is possible that even if one tries to move into new discourses (gender equity), normative and entrenched patterns of speaking about the world influence the choice of words.

Thus, in order to obtain the whole meaning of stakeholders, as both stated and implied, an analysis of discourses should take into account both the immediate context (where and when the words are uttered/written) and the broader context (which exists in the mind and experience of the recipient) (van Dijk, 1993b). This study finds critical discourse analysis an invaluable analytical tool for getting at meanings and gaining awareness of soccer stakeholders' beliefs, ideologies, discourses and attitudes towards current practices of gender and gender equity, or lack thereof, in soccer.

4.9 Issues of reliability and validity

The purpose of this study is to explore, interrogate, and analyse soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity or lack thereof in soccer in the university context. Of importance for this study is to gain deeper understanding on the nature of gender equity practices in soccer as experienced and perceived by soccer stakeholders, and not to search for causal relationships or 'truth'. Richardson's (2000, p. 934) concept of crystallisation is relevant for this study, because "it allows for an infinitive variety of shapes, substance, transmutations, dimensions and angles of approach to the data". It is this process that provides us with a complex and deeper understanding of the phenomenon because this study used different methods to gain information, as discussed earlier. The purpose is to 'see' and understand gender equity practices, or lack thereof, in soccer from various angles and different people; this includes the analysis and interpretation of data that uses different lenses.

When qualitative researchers speak of research "validity and reliability", they are usually referring to research that is credible and trustworthy (Maree, 2007, p. 80). This addresses issues of research instruments, which for this study were the

researcher and research assistant, as well as the data gathering instruments that they applied (focus group and individual interview schedules). Given that this study used individual and focus group interviews with both male and female players and also with female players only, trustworthiness was maintained through the triangulation of these techniques. In relation to credibility, Babbie and Mouton (2007) suggest that a prolonged stay in the research field until data saturation occurs is important. Considering the nature of this study, I visited four universities, watched university and community league (SAFA) games, and conversed with soccer players while we waiting for the games to start. During breaks I also used the opportunity to speak with the players that were not playing during the games, that is, sitting on the bench as substitutes and/or injured. This was done during the 2010 and 2011, and for the former it did not take place for a long time due to the preparations for the 2010 Soccer World Cup in South Africa.

4.9.1 Ethical considerations

For this study, each institution was visited to identify the relevant person(s) to discuss the study and at the same time request permission to conduct the study. This is because it is always advisable and important that the researcher gains access into the research field before conducting the study (Maree, 2007). After I discussed with the sport administrators in all four universities and access was granted, I organised a meeting with soccer coaches of the men's and women's teams to explain my research and request permission to speak with the soccer players. After explaining my research to the soccer players in all four institutions, they granted me permission to work with them and to record all the interviews with the assurance that their identities and interests would be protected. In addition, I assured them that the information they provided was to be treated in strict confidence. Identities of the institutions have not been concealed in the presentation of the sample but will be kept anonymous in the presentation of the findings and pseudonyms will also be used for participants. In addition, I explained to participants that the information and responses shared during the study would be kept private in a password access computer. All participants were fully informed of the goals of the research and assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and that they could leave the research at any point if they so desired. The participants all signed a consent form

(see Appendix A) prior to the interview or focus group. For the dissemination of knowledge through journal articles and conference presentations, participants were assured that they would remain anonymous to protect their identities.

Having discussed the research methodological approach for this study, chapter five presents a detailed critical analysis and interpretation of data.

CHAPTER 5

DISCOURSES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN SOCCER

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses findings on the discourses that emerge from the participants' responses with respect to their understandings of gender equality and equitable participation of women in soccer. In order to answer the research question for this thesis and in so doing produce new knowledge, this chapter seeks to provide insights from the participants regarding their understanding of gender equity. Of interest is that gender equity was for the most part conceptualised as gender equality, and represented the notion of liberal feminists that promote the provision of equal and same treatment. In chapter three I unpacked the differences between the concepts of equality and equity, and acknowledged that they are generally used interchangeably. However, it is important for this study to understand the different meanings of these concepts to promote the legislation for equality of opportunity and also equity of respect. This means shifting the focus from an emphasis on counting numbers of women participants in soccer to include larger understandings of power and gender. I use gender equity then to foreground an understanding of power imbalances that shape continued inequalities, especially when women participate in soccer, and any male oriented sports. Considering the nature of the study, as discussed in chapter four, the interviews generated rich data, revealing many commonalities as well as more marginal discourses. In this chapter I have arranged the analysis of the findings through a discussion of the following dominant discourses that emerged in the narratives of participants in talking about women in soccer: discourses on gender equality; discourses of gender equity as an issue in theory but not practice; discourses of 'favours for women' and male bias; and rationalising discourses for continued male dominance in soccer.

5.2 Discourses on gender equality

As has emerged in the previous chapters, sport cannot be described as a neutral practice and one cannot participate in it as a neutral person, rather, it is important to problematise and interrogate its gendered and gendering discourses. If gender is normalised it might allow male authority to be granted on the basis of apparently neutral criteria of performance (Theberge, 1998). Instead it is crucial to reveal that male authority is partly reproduced through the perpetuation of unfair practices and discourses towards women (Hall, 1996). Thus, the awareness of the relationship between the genders is crucial to any understanding of male power in sport and society. This is because remedies to inequity and inequality in sport cannot occur if gender is seen to be an irrelevant characteristic which must be ignored in order to be just (Shogun, 1998). Similarly, Houston (1988) states that if the social construction of gender-appropriate behaviour and normative gender practices are ignored, inequity and inequality practices that limit men and women's access to various sports will also be ignored.

Liberal feminists argue that differences between men and women have been used to legitimise the unequal treatment of women in sport, making their starting point of equal opportunities a popular and crucial mechanism in dealing with the maleness of authority in most sports. The discourse of equal and same opportunity and treatment, disconnected from understandings of power, emerged regularly in the responses of most participants in their understanding of gender equity in soccer:

> Gender equity, well equal means the same … we must treat everybody the same … women deserve equal treatment by men. (62 yrs, Coloured male soccer administrator, university 2)

> … [gender equity] means making sure that all human beings are treated equally, regardless of gender or sex and everyone get the same opportunities with respect. (35 yrs, Black African male soccer administrator, university 3)

> … when we talk of gender we look at male and female, and when we talk of equality we should be treated as equals. (23 yrs, Coloured male soccer player, university 4)

These responses seem to have overlooked the power inequalities that shape the understandings of power and also assume a binaristic understanding of men and women, and that these genders are unquestionable. Although the findings confirm the dominance of liberal ideology, notions that equal treatment is enough to resolve inequalities in a South African context, where the study was done, might also be shaped by the government's Affirmative Action Policy of 2000 (Jones, 2003). This policy was introduced to redress the biased treatment that girls and women of subordinated groups experienced in sports during apartheid, and was in line with the liberal vision of a 'global city' without unequal practices (Benit-Gbaffou, in Tomlinson & Bass, 2009). The participants' responses seem to address the perceived inequality of affirmative action, hence the discourse that promotes the same treatment and equal allocation of resources between boys and girls. The purpose of encouraging women to be allowed to assume their rightful place as the equals of men in soccer is dominant for most participants in this study.

The liberal statement that focuses on allowing women their rightful place as equals of men was expressed by the first participant *"Gender equity … means … women deserve equal treatment by men"*, explicitly addressing men as possibly responsible for the unequal treatment of women. The direct call is presumably shaped by the recognition of the male dominated soccer structures in South Africa, which institutionalise the conceptions and understanding of male and female soccer. The role of social understanding in the structuring of soccer was also mentioned by other participants:

> It is believed that football is a male sport and not a female sport and promotes gender inequity... (32 yrs, Black African female soccer administrator, university 1)

> What I see here the chairperson is male and the secretary is always a female, league coordinator is male, vice is male. So your high profile positions will always be male… (24 yrs, Coloured male soccer player, university 4)

> … students are coming here with a mind-set that soccer is for boys … we need to change the mind-set when they come to university … it's a reflection of the way the society thinks and where we are on gender equality… (62 yrs, Coloured male soccer administrator, university 2)

The responses suggest that because soccer, like any other sport, is socially constructed, it has been a site reflecting and reproducing gender inequalities, as men have been privileged resulting in the powerful masculinised association of soccer. Considering the proposition to encourage the change of students' mind-set about soccer and the recognition that managerial positions in soccer are mostly occupied by men, is an acknowledgment that soccer continues to be a site where unequal social relations that underpin women's experiences of social exclusion are very persuasively reproduced (Collins & Kay, 2003). Thus, soccer is not only a reflection of a society but also a site where "culture and social organisation are produced and reproduced" (Coakley, 2007, p. 41), resulting in the association of high profile positions with men. This study questions the normalised gendered social constructions and practices in soccer, to destabilise these taken for granted dominant discourses that promote male hegemony in university soccer. As discussed in chapter two, in the university context, knowledge about men's and women's soccer is inherently gendered and produced in various communication channels such as media and everyday conversations.

In addition, of interest is the usage of the word "deserve" which seems to suggest that although women should be treated as equals, it should be on merit. The response appears to have overlooked a long history of men's control over sporting discourses, which requires women to negotiate the undesirable position of performing in male dominated soccer practices. The requirement for negotiation is shaped by the public discourse about female athleticism throughout history, and suggests a genealogy of ideas which continues to limit women's participation and authority in soccer (Southall, Nagel, Anderson, Polite, & Southall, 2009). While it is unclear what the participant means by *"making sure … regardless of gender or sex, we should be treated as equals".* (22 yrs, Coloured male soccer player, university 4), it seems to allude to the liberalist feminist implementation of equal opportunity laws, which ensure that all humans, whether male or female, are able to develop their own full and self-governed "human potential" (Hall, 1985, p. 28). The discourse of equal and same treatment suggests that for liberal feminists gender "constitutes an arbitrary and oppressive constraint on the freedom of women and men, which is thus unjust and its abolition is in the general human interest" (Jagger, 1988, p. 39). Such

frameworks of gender equality therefore promote a gender-neutral discourse, which is critiqued for concealing the way that the male standard in most sport practices has become the measure of things, and how this is linked to a larger power of men in society (MacKinnon, 1987).

The liberal feminist notion of gender equality, according to MacKinnon (1987, p. 35) proposes that "we [women] are as good as you [men]" which is underpinned by the assumption that if women are given the spectrum of opportunities that men enjoy, they will achieve as well as men, or at least will have improved more than currently. This framework assumes that gender differences that have been used to discriminate against women are a form of social bias, and therefore changeable (Tapper, 1986, p. 37). A soccer player expressed a similar idea:

> Gender equity means fair treatment for girls and women to make sure that equality between men and women is maintained. (20 yrs, White female soccer player, university 4)

This comment proposes the importance of prioritising *"… fair treatment for girls and women…"* if equality between men and women is to be maintained, possibly because of the continuing neglect of women's participation in soccer. The response suggests that practices of gender inequality and/or inequity begin at an early age and shape girls' choices to participate in soccer, and influence participation at a later stage. For example, in Mathare (one of Nairobi's slums, in Kenya) and Zambia girls' participation in soccer is always hindered by parents through culturally accepted gender roles, as girls are expected to do household chores (van Beek, 2007). Parpart (2008) argues that the dominant patriarchal ideology locates women's roles in the domestic sphere, thus limiting their participation in any sport. Thus, the discourse of equal and same opportunity and treatment appears to have ignored that the general neglect of women's soccer in Africa, and South Africa in particular, has been rooted in ideas about 'African indigenous cultures' and sustained sexist practices in soccer that favour men's soccer.

While the practices of gender inequality in soccer seem to be continuing, the following response *"… make sure … [equality] is maintained"* appears to propose some kind of existing gender equality practices possibly because of the current emphasis on women's participation in soccer in South Africa. Although it could be argued that women's participation in some male sports is increasing, Brook (1999) asserts that "The long history of inequality between women and men has been strongly resilient when faced with the effects of equal opportunities legislation" (p. 25). It is supposedly because of an acknowledgement of this resilience that participants' choice of words: *"must", "should",* and *"make sure"*, seems to emphasise the importance of enforcing and monitoring the implementation of gender equality or affirmative action legislation in soccer. Thus, appeals for equality and/or equity practices remain an important ideal for women in sport and specifically women in soccer, where traditional forms of inequality in practice remain, regardless of the introduction of legislation.

The tradition and the history of gender inequality informs about the nature of and the role that the society plays in the construction of gender, which relegate women to the second class. Participants' narratives similarly acknowledge the role of the social in shaping gender roles but equally assume this can be overcome through equal treatment. The discourse of equal and same opportunity seems to be framed as a chance to address the socio-historical gender inequity practices in soccer, while appearing to conceal that soccer should be viewed as a social institution that perpetuates the gendered ideologies in wider society through appealing to discourses of the naturalness of men's privilege and domination (Haugaa Engh, 2010). One participant also mentioned the role of social constructions of gender when explaining the meaning of gender equity, which informs the significance of the society in making sense of the everyday practices and the manner of talking about them.

> Gender addresses boys and girls according to social construction, and equity, I think, is equal treatment between boys and girls. (19 yrs, Coloured female soccer player, university 1)
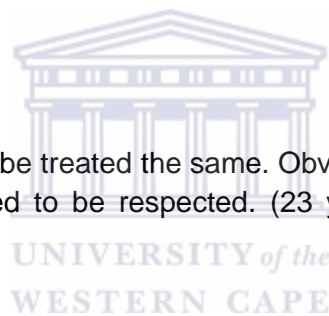
The response suggests the participant's acknowledgement that 'natural' sex differences have been used to construct the discourse of gender which addresses the different physicality between boys and girls, and equity is conceptualised as a hope to introduce equal treatment between boys and girls. In addition, to make sense of this response it is relevant to introduce Burke's (2001) idea of participation in "sport as a language without-words practice" (p. 64), conveying meaning through symbolic performance. This means as a platform of social communication, sporting participation conveys strong ideas about the hierarchical nature of men and women, and the imbalance in the relationship between the two genders. Acker (2000) argues that languages of sports, which are played exclusively by men, contribute symbolic support to the general oppression of women in sport and society. Thus, the exclusion of women from certain sports, which Bryson (1987, p. 359) describes as "flag carriers" of masculinity, makes plain the uneven relationship between the two genders as socially constructed. It is sports such as rugby, boxing, bodybuilding, as much as the sports in which women and men compete, such as soccer, that makes apparent the concept of two separate and distinct genders. Considering the discussion thus far and the general status of women in the society and sport, as mentioned earlier, it is unsurprising that the discourse of gender equality as 'equal and same treatment' is dominant for the participants.

It is evident from the data that the liberal feminist ideology is foregrounded in the findings because they created new ways of speaking authoritatively for women and men in sport, which were previously seen as eccentric (Burke, 2001). The new ways of speaking are observed in participants' statements, as mentioned earlier, as they place value on the role that equality can or should play through the choice of words: *"we must", "we should", "make sure"*. It is possible that participants' responses are shaped by dominant discourses within the larger context of nation-building and transformation in South Africa, from racial segregation policy and gender bias to the post-apartheid ideology of a 'non-racial' and 'non-sexist' nation through an affirmative action plan to redress structural inequality. The democratically elected government's discourse intended to enforce gender equality and encourage women's empowerment in sport, and soccer in particular (Chappell, 2003; Hagreaves, 2000). Of concern, as the participants' choice of words also suggest, is that promoting the development of comprehensive equality and equity between

males and females in soccer has been very slow, and the allocation of resources remains uneven in South Africa (Richardson, 2001). As discussed in chapter three, although the government introduced laws and legislation to empower women to take advantage of the limited and conditional opportunities provided in sport and soccer, the slow change suggests that "just because all sections of the communities are equal according to the law, it does not follow that there will be equality and equity of opportunity" (Chappell, 2003, p. 4). Thus, participants' dominant discourse of gender equality as meaning 'equal and same treatment' as emerges in this study seems to have overlooked that the structures, processes, and practices of sport, and soccer in particular, are resistant to transformation (Pelak, 2005).

Furthermore, it was evident from the responses that a binaristic and determinist discourse on 'natural' differences between men and women was used to explain gender equity.

> … boys and girls need to be treated the same. Obviously, boys and girls are different and their differences need to be respected. (23 yrs, White male soccer player at university 2)

The response suggests that although boys and girls "need" to be treated the same, however, the 'obvious' differences also 'need' to be respected. The participant seems to propose the notion of biological essentialism and determinism whereby all human beings are assumed to fit, by nature, into unambiguous and oppositional bipolar categories of 'boys' and 'girls' (Frye, 1983). The participant's emphasis on the "need to" recognise differences between the sexes correlates with the initial response *"… I haven't paid attention to it [equity] seriously…"* proposing a normalised stable and fixed 'natural' sexuality that is taken for granted. This serves to rationalise sex/gender as an unquestionable system of differentiation between people, able to be reformed to some degree, but never replaceable (Lorber, 2000). Although awareness of the 'need' to treat boys and girls the same to promote equity is encouraged, it seems that the notion of masculinity as the central organising principle of patriarchy was dominant, emphasising discourses of toughness and aggression (Thornton, 1986). Thus, the mentioning of 'obvious' appears to suggest, consciously or unconsciously, the notion that girls are 'naturally' weak physically and

boys are 'naturally' strong physically, a socio-cultural discourse that reproduces and legitimises discourses of continued inequalities between men and women in sports and elsewhere (in Adams St. Pierre, 2000).

The participant response appears to mean that we [males] are the same as conceptualised by the law but socio-culturally different to girls, "focusing on female difference as a political strategy that places women in a position of weakness" (Messner, 2000, p. 40). By limiting and excluding ways of talking about sex/gender differences, the participant gives strength and force to the already recognised discourses of biased gender differences whilst simultaneously preventing the emergence or recognition of alternative or competing discourses of fluidity and multiplicity of gender identities and practices. This highlights the ability of discourses to limit and confine the ways in which a concept or object can be understood and foregrounds arguments that "discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block…" (Foucault, 1978, p. 101) to counter-discourses. The patriarchal culture that shapes the organisation and gender-based practices in soccer should be interrogated and critiqued, rather than being 'packaged' for 'equal treatment' before they are addressed. I argue that we should not turn a blind eye to the everyday ongoing gender bias practices in soccer, and encourage consciousness to statements that attempt to undermine, pervert or resist dominant discourses of soccer that circulate within soccer structures. This is to ensure that new discourses, meanings and gender supportive practices might emerge in soccer socially and within universities. The reason is because discourses, according to Fairclough (1992, pp. 3-4), "do not just reflect or represent social entities and realities, they construct or 'constitute' them", meaning they constitute key entities in different ways and position people in different ways as social subjects. With this in mind, it is therefore important to problematise and interrogate statements which serve to maintain the status quo, and intensify inequity and/or inequality and gender stereotypes in soccer.

The liberal intervention of equal opportunities has been criticised as inadequate because it leaves in place the structure of ideas that oppresses women's participation in sports, and maintains the masculine reasoning as a standard

(Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The argument is that women have been granted access to participate in male dominated sports and have been judged through male historical rules and structure of control. It is therefore important to problematise the dominant discourse of 'equal and same treatment' in the findings, because it treats women as an 'add-on' to the supposedly natural and hierarchical structure of soccer. The current structures of South African soccer at social and university level are male dominated and women's soccer teams participate within the rules that historically favour male soccer, because they were never re-written to consider women's inclusion. While the liberal feminist idea challenged the oppressive discourses at the level of participation, Duncan (1990) argues that the ideology may also perpetuate many of the biases which restrain females' participation in sport. Similarly, Meyerson and Kolb (2000) are concerned that the liberal feminist perspective does little to confront the conditions that create and sustain gender inequities, even though these policies have resulted in some increases in women's participation in soccer. Thus the notion and usage of equal and same treatment and/or affirmative action laws have done little to change the authoritative position of men in sport, and have not been effectively used to challenge the symbolism associated with exclusively men's sports such as soccer (Kane, 1995). The same could be mentioned about soccer in the university context, because the findings indicate the continuing gender inequity and inequality practices in soccer and might be shaped by the conceptualisation and understanding of gender equity and/or equality by the soccer administrators and players. In addition, the reason could be that the knowledge produced about men's and women's soccer has been taken for granted socially, because what is written and talked about is usually normalised as the way it is about soccer (Hoeber, 2007). This consequently affects the potential for the re-development of different structures and languages of soccer produced by men and women as co-participants in soccer.

5.3 Discourse of gender equity as a superficial practice

If it is considered that soccer was developed to distinguish between men, in terms of features that were valued by men, thus the criteria chosen to distinguish men were skills important to men to the exclusion of women (Burke, 2001). Yet skills such as fast versus slow paced soccer were equally important in distinguishing men's soccer from women's soccer and seem to be one of the reasons for not taking women's

soccer seriously, resulting in gender inequity practices in soccer. Bearing in mind the continuing dominance and favouritism of men's soccer and the on-going marginalisation of women's soccer, it seems that the discourse of gender equity is a superficial practice. This is especially true when considering how male dominance is practiced in the way in which the game of soccer is played, how it is talked about, and how men's players are valued is constructed in masculine rather than feminine terms. Thus change in soccer to recognise women's soccer is far-fetched as one participant said:

> Regarding gender equity issue I do not see that much change, it supposed to be fair treatment of men and women, no discrimination at all, but it's everywhere in sport and soccer in particular. (41 yrs, Coloured male soccer administrator from university 4)

The response suggests that regarding the gender equity issue there is little change in soccer, irrespective of the democratic South African government's encouragement of women's participation in the popular three male dominated sports[18]. While there is *"supposed to be fair treatment"* between men's and women's soccer, the continuing discrimination of women's soccer makes the discourse of gender equity practice superficial. This is especially true when the discourse and ideology of 'non-racial' and particularly 'non-sexism' for the study is considered, as the government created developmental policies and programmes to promote equal opportunities for girls' and women's sports alongside boys' and men's sports in South Africa. The universities were also expected to enforce gender equity practices and encourage women to take advantage of the limited and conditional opportunities provided in soccer (Pelak, 2005). Considering the expected conformity for the universities, the lack of change regarding gender equity, and the continuing discrimination of women's soccer within the universities, the role of soccer administrators to redress gender equity and/or equality practices in soccer seems to be questioned. If it is considered that practices of discrimination *"are everywhere in sport and soccer in particular"*, addressing gender equity in soccer becomes a superficial practice that could perpetuate inequality and inequity practices in soccer.

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[18] The three popular male dominated sports in South Africa are soccer, rugby, cricket.

However, due to apartheid racial segregation that dictated which sports were played by whom within the universities, it seems to be a challenge to focus on gender equity in this university because

> … as a formerly white university, race sports play a vital role at this university…I am not saying gender equity is less important but I am sure we must first address the issue of colour or race and then others [issues] will come as well. (41 yrs, Coloured male soccer administrator from university 4)

While addressing gender equity is perceived as no less important however the prioritisation of race issues in sport and relegating concerns about gender equity practices addresses the role of power in determining "what constitutes the mandatory, the permissible, the forbidden, and the boundaries of common sense" (knowledge) (Jacobson & Jacques 1997, p. 48). It is possibly because of this prioritisation that *"…not much change is happening…"* regarding gender equity practices in soccer after nearly 20 years of democracy, and shows insignificance and lack of urgency, which might perpetuate gender inequity practices in soccer consciously or unconsciously. The participant's emphasis that *"I am sure we must first address … others will come as well"* relate to Rao et al.'s (1999) concept of agenda-setting power, that given the power to determine topic(s) of discussion, if issues of gender equity practices or lack thereof are not considered problematic by the leadership, it is unlikely that they would be openly and frequently discussed. This means what is not on the agenda is often what is not important to men, although it may be important to women, resulting in continuing gender inequity practices in soccer within the university.

Notwithstanding the insignificance of addressing gender equity practices, the participant's observation that not much has changed because unfair differentiation between men and women is everywhere also seems to address men's negative attitude and lack of respect for women's soccer. The importance of instilling respect in men and women soccer players is believed to be able to change men's attitudes towards women's soccer.

We encourage them (males and females) to support each other with the hope that female soccer will be respected by men … boys can be naughty. (41 yrs, Coloured male soccer administrator from university 4)

… men attitude that says we are not getting off the field, we don't care if you have the official game … we are playing now and you can wait … the attitude that women football is not important. (25 yrs, White male soccer player from university 4)

These responses suggest that men's 'naughty' behaviour and egocentric attitude show disrespect for women's official games, because they are not prepared to get off the field and expect women to wait for them to finish playing. Thus to ensure that the respect for men's and women's soccer succeeds, Schwager (1997, p. 142; also see Thornton, 1986, pp. 96-98) encourages feminist thinkers to distinguish between 'equality' and 'equity', which have often been treated synonymously. The reason is because in soccer equality of access does not necessarily produce equity of treatment between the men and women, in particular when the allocation of resources and opportunities continue to be unbalance. This study suggests that to address superficial and discriminatory gender equity practices in soccer, it is important to pay attention to the historicity of discursive events in soccer. This could be done by showing both their continuity with the past and their involvement in making history, meaning their remaking of orders of discourse and gender equity and/or equality practices. Thus, to encourage respect and positive attitudes towards both male and female soccer it is crucial to "de-normalize the taken for granted assumptions" (Gramsci, 1971 in Janks, 2010, p. 36) and practices that favour male dominance and continue to mark women players as outsiders in soccer and weaken their collective challenge to men's dominance. Without sounding utopian, this could be done by not necessarily shifting the purpose of legislation from equality of opportunity to equity of respect, but by utilising both to promote conscious judgements about the manner in which access is provided and treatment is practiced between male and female soccer, to ensure equitable respect for both.

Furthermore, the participants' response that *"… I do not see that much change…"* proposes the superficial practice in the development of girls' and women's soccer, which is possibly shaped by lack of commitment to transforming the male historical

and traditional structures, ideologies, and discourses in soccer. It is therefore important to problematise the lack of change and men's attitudes towards women's soccer within universities, because they privilege one version of meaning that promotes the male game as the "real game" and entertaining and women's soccer as "unreal", slow and "boring" (Burnett, 2007, p. 3). As discussed in chapter two, if these discourses are taken for granted and not interrogated they can perpetuate gender inequity practices in soccer at universities, and consequently would disperse power and authority for male soccer. Equally, Thornton (1986) encourages the eradication of discrimination and attitudes to everyone "regardless of gender or sex" (p. 33), to ensure the elimination of barriers to the full participation of both genders. Without overlooking Thornton's statement, the perception that *"… [gender inequity] is everywhere…"* is of concern because it suggests that although there should not be discriminatory practices, barriers continue to exist for women [and some men] to participate in soccer in South Africa. This reflects Theberge's (1991) statement that the question may have changed from "whether women should be allowed to compete" to "how women should participate" in soccer, with the idea of male dominance and control remaining the same (p. 385).

Continuous interrogation and problematisation of gender inequity practices in soccer could provide insight into the various reasons for persistent male hegemony in soccer and tenacious marginalisation of women's soccer. In addition, given that universities are acknowledged as one of the platforms on which dialogue, interrogation and critical analyses of social issues, including gender biases in soccer, take place, research needs to be done in all South African universities to establish what they do to encourage and support practices of gender equity in soccer. Similarly, Tight (2003, p. 23) reiterates this point and claims that "sports at universities are perceived as relatively under-researched", although assuming greater importance in promoting participation at the highest levels in national and international sporting competitions. As mentioned in chapter three, most women who play for the senior national team are selected from the university teams, which means they do play an important role in promoting women's participation in soccer at the highest levels. This participation makes it significant to investigate the state of

gender equity practices in soccer at universities, to encourage continuous practices of gender equity awareness in soccer in and out of universities.

The nature of women's participation in soccer was questioned by a participant:

> ... are we saying as long as they [women] get the balls and coach then it is equity, no or maybe, but for me it is superficial. I don't think the opportunities are seriously the same. (62 yrs, Coloured, male soccer administrator from university 2)

It is interesting that both soccer administrators question the practices of gender equity in soccer in general and within their universities, and perceive the superficiality of fair treatment for women's soccer. The soccer administrators interrogate whether women's soccer is seriously recognised and accepted by the structures of soccer organisations, because the *"…opportunities are seriously not the same…"* as covert 'window-dressing' practices are dominant. Cox and Pringle (2011) state that in New Zealand and the Netherlands football administrators did not take women's football seriously and believed that it would be a short-lived phenomenon, and did not invest financially in the growth of women's soccer. This suggests that as long as women's soccer continues to exist in the shadow of men's soccer, the development of alternative gender equity practices to the male epistemological discourses and 'reality' will be constrained and suppressed. Thus, the focus on increasing the number of girls and women participating in soccer without changing the prevailing discourses, structures, and operating norms (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003) in soccer organisations is far-fetched. The reason is because in soccer the ideas and beliefs about gender have played a role in determining who should be included and excluded, who should get what and how much in the field of play and management positions. As discussed in chapter two, this means gender ideology "influences how we think of ourselves and others, how we relate to others, and how social life is organised at all levels" (Coakley, 2007, p. 262) including in soccer organisations. Thus, prioritising sex equality and neutrality of gender and/or "equal and same treatment" might deprive women of the opportunities to authoritatively challenge the historical conditions for the existence of authoritative statements, to deconstruct the normative and common-sense discourses (Ritzer & Goodman, 2003, p. 223).

The perceptions of the lack of material authority for women in soccer and the continued dominance of men in soccer have come through strongly in participants' responses:

> We supposed to be equal; [gender equity] it's equality between men and women, but no ways. It's a fight; it's a struggle because men will always take preference in terms of football. (32 yrs, Black African female soccer administrator at university 1)

> ... there should be same treatment between men and women soccer, because men always get preference... (24 yrs, Black African female soccer player at university 1)

These findings propose that the ideology of equality between men and women appears to involve a struggle because of the apparent naturalness of men's superiority and authority in soccer. Although *"... there should be same treatment..."* but it seems to be given that men *"... always get preference..."* in soccer, possibly because socio-historically practices and discourses of soccer have been communicated as 'naturally' or 'normally' for men (McArdle, 1999). Thus, the entrance of women into the social space of soccer, so that it is no longer exclusively a male activity, created problems for the male continuous production of the 'normal' knowledge and the preservation of power/knowledge in soccer. According to the post-apartheid affirmative action legislation *"We supposed to be equal … equality between men and women … but no ways…"* in practice there are constraints that hinder girls' and women's involvement in soccer in various ways. It seems that there has been unwilling support to provide unreserved access for women to fully participate in a high profile symbol of vibrant male-orientated soccer, representing one of the exclusive national ideology. With this discussion in mind, it is inevitable to agree with Burke that the inclusion of females into soccer was the 'accident', and demanded men to create newer and subtler discourses in order to maintain their powerful position in the modern versions of soccer (Burke, 2001).

Men's reluctance to tolerate and encourage women's participation in soccer makes it suspicious and challenging to accept the concept of equality as a prerequisite, particularly if it is considered that in a world that is structured by the male production of knowledge, simple equality of opportunity could only reinforce this dominance

(Code, 1986; Thornton, 1986). The male dominance was identified by participants and they also perceive the continuation of this dominance in soccer, as the choice of their words thus far suggests: *"… [men] always get…": "… men will always take preference in terms of football"; "[discrimination] in soccer is everywhere".* Young explains that the "redistributive remedies for injustice … do not change the conditions that produce this injustice and, in some ways, tend to reinforce those conditions" (1997, p. 152). The findings appear to propose the reinforcement of naturalisation and normalisation of socially constructed realities of soccer as the male sport, resulting in gender stereotype and prejudice. This study suggests that researchers in soccer need to problematise superficial gender equity practices through window dressing, for future research in soccer practices in and out of higher learning institutions. It is significant to interrogate these practices in the society because they might be transferred to the institutions of learning, to gain insight into their originality and the conditions that allow their continuation which perpetuate biases towards the development and sustainability of women's soccer in South Africa. I suggest that this could be one of the ways in which to address the politics of gender inequity and/or inequality and continue to problematise and interrogate the normalisation and common sense in soccer in the 'teenage', democratic South Africa.

5.4 Discourses on 'favours for women' and male bias

It is not easy to ignore the long history of male domination in sport, and the resistance to let go of that dominance in soccer particularly. To maintain the dominance, various discourses have been used to rationalise the restriction of women's participation in historically male dominated sports such as rugby, body-building, boxing, wrestling, and American football, especially since such sports are associated with strength, toughness, bravery, tolerance for pain, and muscularity (Hums, Bower & Grappendorf, 2007). One of the discourses is linked with the traditional distribution of resources to male sports, which was thought 'natural' and worthy of being defended by men when the Title IX Act in the US and affirmative action in a post-apartheid democratic South Africa were introduced and legislated. The increased opportunities for females to play male oriented sports were viewed as an unwarranted attack on the position of males in sport (Lovett & Lowry, 1995a).

Thus, in the US male resistance sought both to defer and deter any changes to the then system of sport in colleges (Staurowsky, 1995), and to produce more subtle methods of reproducing the dominance that was once produced by men's exclusive participation in sport.

One of the methods and practices that was noted in this study was that of allowing women to participate in soccer but within a framework of neglect in which minimal support is provided, and rather women's inclusion is perceived as the offering of a favour. The response illustrates this:

> … treatment is not the same between men and women teams … they are not doing enough … we struggle because we end up asking other things to men for us to train. (22 years old, Black African female player at university 3)

> Things that we used to complain about two years ago are still not addressed ... not having changing rooms opened for us and [women] players changing in a taxi or cars. (22 yrs, Coloured female player at university 1)

The responses suggest that due to the continuing unequal allocation of resources and use of infrastructure, for survival women rely on the men's teams to share their resources to be able to train. Although it could be perceived as 'normal' for soccer players across gender differences to share training soccer resources, it is notable that the practice of asking for assistance is usually unidirectional and signals power struggles in the soccer field. The narrations about the lack of changing rooms and support for transport to attend games appear to address the history and culture of minimal support for women's soccer teams in South Africa. Acker (2000, p. 146) suggests that "the knowledge that informs assumptions and interpretations of sport participation and allocation of resources is influenced by discourses concerning socially produced distinctions between male and female, masculine and feminine". The soccer administrator's response below reiterates these practices of historical bias:

> … the issue of success comes up where preference is sometimes given to men because they have many teams … so training fields are a challenge. (41 years, Coloured male sport administrator from university 4)

These kinds of responses were predominantly made by male soccer players when they were justifying the reasons male teams receive more support than women's teams. Having said this, the practices discussed above require a full examination of the assumptions, values, and beliefs about men and women's soccer teams that are deeply entrenched in soccer organisations (Shaw & Penney, 2003).

It was evident that administrators' perceptions were similarly articulated by the women interviewees, who also argued that women's teams are overlooked because the focus is seemingly on the development of boys' and men's soccer. It appears that the reason(s) to have 'many male teams' is not interrogated and problematised, but perceived as common sense and a socially understood practice. The normalisation is the result of soccer being "a product of culture and a reflection of the ideologies of dominant social values and ideals" (Schell & Rodriguez, 2000, p. 38) that maintains, reproduces and rewards male participation and female subordination. Considering the earlier response, I argue that because men have 'many teams' in the four universities this results in women soccer teams, which have mostly two teams, having minimal resources and eventually having to ask for 'hand-outs' from the men's teams. It is because of this request for assistance that male teams possibly think they are doing women's soccer teams a favour by sharing soccer resources, infrastructure, and fields in the contested 'space', that has been traditionally and 'naturally' declared theirs.

The sense of ownership was also mentioned by some participants:

> … women team got pushed aside [out of the soccer field] … the men team wanted to train and they had to go and train in the rugby field … the men team is the most important team and women team got demotivated… (25 yrs, White male soccer player from university 4)

> … we lost our coach … the male first team coach left and the women's first team coach stepped up to coach the male team because there was a bigger need … not much for the girls… (21 years old, White female soccer player at university 2)

The responses highlight practises that women's soccer teams have been experiencing in most countries, since, as elaborated in chapter three, they mostly

needed male approval to use 'their' facilities to train or play soccer matches. A reason given why women were *"pushed aside … to go and train in the rugby field … men team is the most important …"* suggests that playgrounds are still key sites of gender negotiations and interactions, or lack thereof (Renold, 2004). As a contested soccer space, playgrounds are known to be historically dominated by males, and only recently has women's participation begun to gain reluctant acceptance in this space (Clark & Paechter, 2007). Although 'being pushed' does not necessarily mean physically, rather figuratively, of concern is that the women's team *"… had to go … [because] men team is the most important team…"* This appears to mean that there was no alternative for women other than to comply and give space to the male soccer team as the most important team, to train on the comfortable fields and the women's team on the uneven rugby field. Considering this experience, it could be argued that participation in soccer contributes to the gender order and subordination of women, by providing male soccer players with a public forum with which to emphasise their differences "vis-à-vis women" (Pringle, 2003). Furthermore, given that the public sporting space is an embodied male space, it may be threatening for women who wish to occupy it, particularly if they experience forceful language. Thus language consistently puts women as the secondary sex and gives males dominance, a situation that is not driven by nature but is socially constructed. I argue that the gendered public space and the use of threatening language could continue to limit women's access to sporting facilities, and this utilises symbolic power by confirming the common-sense belief that women should be excluded from the powerful world of soccer (McKay, 1997).

Thus, the mere provision of opportunities in spaces, which are sometimes perceived as threatening by women soccer players, is likely to be ineffective in promoting women's access, let alone authority, in soccer, particularly if women's experiences are seriously taken into consideration. For example, while the Dutch Football Association (KNVB) limited the use of soccer fields by women, allowing them to use it for one hour after a men's amateur team (KNVB, 1997), in New Zealand the women's team was not allowed to train on the club grounds if the men's team was going to play on it on Saturday (Ruane, 1999). Even in the US, women's soccer had to "contend with their male counterparts for use of facilities, as men were given

priorities in the use of soccer fields" (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2003, p. 356). These experiences are important for this study because they highlight the point that access for women in soccer may be limited by the general traditional male control over women (wives, daughters and girlfriends) who wish to play soccer. The limitation, according to Thompson (1999), is consciously or unconsciously imposed on females, and is mediated by male attitudes to appropriate female activities and priorities. These socio-cultural structured experiences and practices cannot simply be explained away as women enter the public male dominated spaces and practices that were previously exclusively male. It is because these structuring characteristics already exist that continuous interrogation and problematisation of the gendered character of social space, which shape gender equity and/or equality practices in soccer, should be encouraged. Tapper (1986) argues that the public space is not a space where abstract individuals reside, but is structured according to relations between the genders and reflects gender normative practices as well as other practices of exclusion/inclusion along different social divides.

In addition to the contested space of soccer fields, sharing or taking away of coaches to prioritise men's teams is another challenge for women's teams at universities. The response illustrates this point: *"… the women's first team coach stepped up to coach the male team because there was a bigger need…not much for the girls…"* (21 yrs old, White female soccer player at university 2).This biased practice of coach exchange is unsurprising because the women's senior national soccer team had a similar experience when they lost a coach because a male junior national soccer team was prioritised. According to Hilton-Smith (in Naidoo & Muholi, 2010) the coach for the senior women's national team chose to prioritise the junior male national team on the eve of an important game for the women's national team because it clashed with the men's team (Naidoo & Muholi, 2010). Such biases have similarly been identified in Zimbabwe when a male senior soccer team coach threatened to resign because of being associated with coaching the women's senior national team to prepare for the African Women's Championship. He was reported to have said he would rather quit than work with the women's side (Daimon, 2010). These experiences signify the history of women's soccer as always second in value with regard to men's teams. Thus, the 'doing women a favour' discourse has a long

history since for many years women's national teams did not have committed and dedicated coaches, rather sharing coaches who were already committed to men's teams (see Pelak, 2005, 2010; Burnett, 2007; Naidoo & Muholi, 2010). Wigmore (1996) asserts that as long as soccer remains a male preserve it will always be perceived as what boys and men naturally do, and what girls and women either do not do, or do at the peril of their own gendered identities. In this respect it is important to acknowledge the recent appointment of Vera Pauw as a women's senior national coach, who is to focus specifically on developing and strengthening the senior women's national soccer team, which may go some way to challenge this history.

It is noteworthy in this study that university women's soccer teams report that they complained for two years about the lack of access to changing rooms and the limited provision of transport to attend soccer games. This foregrounds the discursive construction of women's soccer as inferior and second to men's and shows the continuing lack of support and recognition for teams that represent institutions in local and national tournaments. This practice was similarly reported by the Netherlands' women's soccer teams who shared experiences of how before they were allowed to use the changing rooms, they used to "change behind bushes outside, in public toilets or in their cars" (Cox & Pringle, 2011, p. 228). Similarly, a 2007 report by the UN on women and sport in Africa has listed several hindrances that affect women's participation in soccer such as lack of separated sporting facilities including changing rooms, bathrooms, dressing issues, and negative media portrayal of women in sports (Onwumechili, 2011, p. 2208). Thus, the biased practices against women's soccer teams at universities validate various authors' arguments that sport is a structure ordered according to a dualistic understanding of gender that may continue to constrain sport participation for girls and women to varying degrees (Hargreaves, 1993; Krane, 2001; Krane et al., 2004; McCallister et al., 2003; Shaw, 1994). It could be argued that the different treatment of men's and women's soccer teams are consequences of socio-cultural and historical practices that have normalised men's behaviour and practices as superior.

The preservation of male power is reportedly further practised in the allocation and distribution of financial support due to the perceptions of the management about

women's soccer, which consequently shapes the treatment of women's teams. The responses demonstrate the attitude of the management towards female soccer:

> … right now we are treated as useless. The mentality is why we should provide finances for ladies soccer because it is not as competitive as the male soccer. **(**21 years old, Coloured female soccer player from university 4)

> … they are not coming to the party in terms of helping women's football to go forward. We've got one set of soccer poles and obviously men get preference… (32 years, Black African female soccer administrator at university 1)

These comments propose that the attitudes towards women's soccer are historical and structural as mentioned earlier, because the management seems not to provide support to ensure that men's and women's soccer are promoted together rather than marginalising the latter. Of concern with the management's attitude is that they are expected to be at the forefront and encourage the implementation of the governments and institution's policy and laws, to guarantee that the past inequity and inequality practices are redressed. The attitude and the behaviour of the management possibly addresses the male participatory and organisational discourses in soccer, which are not well researched in South African soccer, and result in a particular action and practice. The university management's attitude seems to coincide and correlate with the behaviour and performances of the South African Football Association that has the power to distribute resources, monitor the use of infrastructure, and allocate financial support to different soccer organisations. It is argued that all these resources were unequally distributed between men's and women's soccer organisations and that the association appointed ill-suited male coaches to the women's national teams which led to poor performances (in Naidoo & Muholi, 2010, p. 84). Thus, the practices of "SAFA disregard and marginalise women's football in South Africa" (Hilton-Smith interview in 2006, in Naidoo & Muholi, 2010, p. 119), a practice that appears to continue at universities, as participants explained.

With the management's attitude in mind, Hoeber and Frisby (2001) argue that it is because of the management that the development and implementation of policies, laws and programmes are fundamentally flawed because they are (re)produced by

individuals who are not required to reflect on their own discourses, beliefs and positions of power. Foucault (1979) alerts us to the concern that if the [male] discourses are left unchallenged over time they will become institutionalised organisational truths that are difficult to challenge. The management positions in South African soccer organisations at community and university level are dominated by men and promote their discourses about soccer, which are taken for granted as 'normal'. To address the normalised discourses one participant said: *"… maybe that's the least they can do ... it is interesting that we take it [biased treatment] for granted … we just never thought about it seriously…"* (23 yrs, Black African female soccer player from university 3). Thus, the acceptance of taken for granted practices leads to the "failure of organizations to change prevailing work practices" (Ely & Meyerson, 2000a, p. 105). The fact that some universities are failing to "come to the party" and encourage "the principle and practice of fair and equitable practices" in soccer (Schwager, 1997, p. 142), suggests the reluctance to allow females to occupy the soccer space as an embodied male space. Thus, without criticising the liberalist notion of equality, Hall (1996) argues that it implicitly endorses the way men are, validates what men do and think and ignores issues of systematic power and privilege.
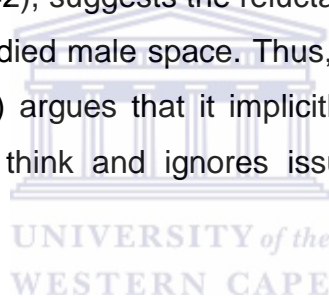
5.5 Rationalising discourses for continued male dominance in soccer

The entrance of females on the soccer field, a space that has been historically and 'naturally' perceived as made for men, challenged the male dominant discourses within that space and the confining structures of society. The widespread inclusion of women in greater numbers in sports, and especially in traditionally male sports, unsettled the territory that is determined by male structures and a masculine functional logic (Palzkill, 1990). The uneasiness of women entrants in soccer was also noticed in the participants' responses:

> … women have exactly the same rights as men, but when it comes to the level of football we are playing at, the women structures have to understand that they are not at the same level as men. They cannot expect the same treatment, money or facilities yet, they have to get to that level. (25 years old, White male soccer player

from university 4)

… ladies have most of the resources we use for practice. But it will never be equal because men have been playing soccer for a long time and soccer is known to be for men than girls. (25 years old, Coloured male soccer player at university 3)

The responses seem to suggest that gender equality is 'conditional' for women's teams, because the different levels of soccer they are playing at are not the same as the men. The comparison of gender proposes the apparently normalised and legitimised ideology of men's superiority in soccer as the reason for the continued favouritism towards men (Theberge, 1998). Thus, even though women's teams *"... have exactly the same rights …"* as men's teams, women's structures *"have to"* understand the current reality that they cannot expect the same treatment until they reach the level of men's soccer. Similarly another participant reiterated this ideology: *"I don't think that women and men team at [university 4] should be at par at all times…"* (25 yrs, White male soccer player from university 4). Considering that language is how one makes sense and meaning of one's world, it is noted that the participants' choice of words such as "the level of football we [men] are playing"; "they [women] are not at the same level"; "soccer is known to be for boys than girls", emphasises the differences between men's and women's soccer. The participants' responses address Ritzer and Goodman's (2003, p. 520) point that "people are endowed with a series of internalised schemes through which they perceive, understand, appreciate, evaluate, and practice in certain ways in the social world." If these statements are taken into consideration it means that the participants' choice of words are not of their own making but are shaped by the internalised schemes that Bourdieu (1989) associates with habitus. For Bourdieu (1989, p. 18) habitus refers to the "internalised product of history, embodied in social structures" that produce individual and collective practices, akin to common sense. It is therefore a person's "habitus" that engenders all the thoughts and perceptions which operate at conscious and/or unconscious levels (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). While this might be the case, the participants' statements disregard the history of soccer in that the sport was organised according to a dualistic understanding of gender that constrained participation for girls and women to varying degrees (Hargreaves, 1993; Krane, 2001; Krane et al., 2004; McCallister et al., 2003; Shaw, 1994) and rather draws on the historical disadvantage of women to rationalise the privileging of male sports.

Furthermore, the responses seem to suggest men's strategies to maintain the ideological control over women's participation in soccer, such that any transformation to the notion of soccer is still limited to the beliefs in male discourses and authority (Theberge, 1991b). One of the strategies was a narrative on differences between the level of the game, pace of the game and the number of years' experience between men and women.

> … it goes down to number of years. Men game is always faster, harder and stronger … the game itself is more intense making it more exciting, and pulls bigger crowd as compared to ladies … I don't think [women's soccer] is that tense. People are most likely to watch a men's game than a women's game. (24 yrs, White male soccer player from university 2)

> … women have not played soccer for long to be at the men's level … [women] attend male games, they seem not to have the same interest with women's games. (21 yrs, Coloured male soccer player at university 3)

These responses seem to have been used as a rationale for continued gender bias, constructed as a determinant of women's standard of soccer and to explain the reasons for inequality in the provision of resources. The comments further address the long history of actively excluding female participation in soccer at all levels, through statements like *"Men's game is always faster, harder and stronger … more intense making it more exciting, pulls bigger crowd as compared to ladies…"*, and suggest various challenges that South African women's soccer teams experience socially and within higher learning institutions (Pelak, 2010). The challenges relate to the argument that the gender-typing of sports has historically been reified to the point that most African countries have normalised a belief that reserving soccer for boys was part of a 'traditional African culture' (Saavedra, 2007). I argue that participants' responses in this section also address the power of discourse which illustrates how language gathers itself together according to socio-historically and institutionally constructed rules and regulations that structure and allow certain statements, terms, categories and beliefs to be made and not others (Foucault, 1972 in Adams St. Pierre, 2000; Scott, 1988). The narrations also address the existing relationship between historical practices that are socially constructed, and the

conscious or unconscious socio-cultural practices that perpetuate the existing [gender] inequities in the society and extend into soccer. Without overlooking the role that equal opportunity legislation played in providing access to male oriented sports, it has not been easy to address equity and equality practices in soccer.

As is evident from the above analysis, even though men dominate soccer in multiple ways, women's involvement in soccer continues to break the barriers as they take control of their games and increasingly participate competitively. Their presence in competitive soccer seems to be perceived as challenging the male control of the public domain, a challenge that often elicits violence against those women perceived as transgressors (Parpart, 2008). Signs of irritation regarding the presence of women in soccer were identified in some participants' responses:

> What do you want actually, that you don't get? You want everything we have, you can't have everything now. (24 yrs, Black African male soccer player from university 1)

> ... why don't you start your own Premier league, no one is preventing you, so that you feel equal to men soccer. (24 yrs, White male soccer player from university 4)

To try and make sense of these responses it is relevant to introduce Fiske's (1994, p. 11) caution that "our words are never neutral but have meaning in a particular historical, social, and political condition and that the meaning we convey with those words is identified by our immediate social, political, and historical conditions". Thus, the seemingly intolerant attitudinal responses *"What do you want … You want everything we have…"; "… so that you feel equal to men soccer"* suggest the perceived male dominance in soccer that has been socio-historically and culturally constructed as a boy/male sport at an early age. This early construction has been normalised by the taken for granted, socially constructed experiences and meanings of soccer that determined who should be included and excluded in the field of play. Furthermore, without homogenising male soccer players, it appears that the abovementioned participants' responses are, consciously or unconsciously, shaped by the historical conditions of the existing statements and meanings about male authority in soccer.

As mentioned in chapter Two, in this study participants' statements are interpreted as articulated words that privilege particular ways of seeing and codify certain practices and norms. In relation to meanings, I acknowledge Foucault's (1972) argument that meanings are not fixed but always plural and produced through the discursive and interactive processes of everyday life. Thus, the participant's response *"... why don't you start your own Premier league, no one is preventing you…"* seems to suggest the social discourse that shows resistance to the current developments with respect to women's participation in soccer. In addition, the responses appear to address Janks' (2010) point that "who we are and how we think is profoundly influenced by the discourses that were inhabited" (p. 63), as men's responses could be representing discourses they were and are still exposed to socially and in the media. This response seems to be entrenched in the everyday discursive and interactive conversations about men's soccer in relation to the women's entrants in soccer. These entrants seem to have disrupted and threatened the socio-culturally "bound ideas of gender and nation ... where the collective imagination stereotypically identifies soccer as a male domain" (Yumiko, 2005, p. 22).
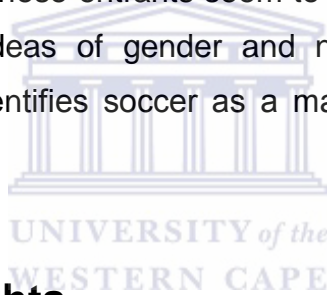
5.6 Concluding thoughts

The aim of this chapter has been to identify and discuss various discursive themes that emerged in the data. The first discourse highlighted the dominance of equal and same opportunity and treatment, as high value has been placed on the role that equality can or should play in South African soccer. Liberal feminist and neo-liberal discourse has been dominant possibly because of the democratic government's ideology of affirmative action, which was introduced to redress the biased treatment that girls and women experienced in sports during apartheid. Although the emphasis on the importance of monitoring the implementation process of gender equality or affirmation action legislation in soccer is acknowledged, of concern is the lack of problematising the treatment of women as 'add-on' to the supposedly natural and hierarchical structure of soccer. There is a need to interrogate and de-stabilize the continued male dominant structures and practices in soccer, which became the measure of support and participation in soccer for male and female within the universities and society. This means questioning the role that the universities play in

confronting and addressing the historical rules and structure of ideas that created and sustain preference for men's soccer, consequently perpetuating gender inequities and/or unequal practices in soccer.

This was followed by the discourse of gender equity as a superficial practice, because women's soccer reportedly continues to experience discrimination in the soccer field as a space that reasserts maleness in soccer. Participants question the lack of respect for women's soccer, and whether they are seriously recognised and accepted by the structures of soccer organisations. This is in relation to the perceptions of the lack of material authority for women and the continued dominance of men in soccer, because of the apparent naturalness of their superiority and authority in soccer. Considering this, the study suggests that to promote gender equity practices and address the superficial practices, it is crucial to problematise the discourses that favour male dominance and continue to mark women players as outsiders in soccer and weaken their collective challenge to men's dominance. This could be done by not necessarily shifting the purpose of legislation from equality of opportunity to equity of respect, but by utilising both to promote conscious judgements about the manner in which access is provided and treatment is practiced between male and female soccer, to ensure equitable respect for both.

The discourse on 'favours for women' foregrounds the overriding male bias in which women's participation in soccer continues to be viewed as secondary and less valuable than men's. The embeddedness of this discourse in practices of soccer at universities is evident through the way in which women's teams are provided with minimal support, expected to share or borrow male resources, and lose coaches to men's teams which are always prioritised. Participants report that more support goes to men's soccer due to the presence of many teams as compared to women's soccer. Furthermore, the preservation of male power is reportedly further practised in the allocation and distribution of financial support, due to the perceptions of the management about women's soccer, which consequently shape the treatment of women's teams. The lack of development for girls' and women's soccer is of concern because it could perpetuate gender inequity and inequality, normalising the dominance of boys' and men's soccer. There is a need to problematise and

interrogate the reason(s) for the presence of 'many male teams', which is clearly normative and unquestioned. This means questioning the role that the universities play in encouraging the growth of women's soccer and the allocation of resources for all teams, to make sure that women do not ask for 'hand-outs' from the men's teams. It is because of the request for assistance that male teams possibly think they are doing women's soccer teams a favour by sharing soccer resources, infrastructure, and fields in the contested 'space' that has been traditionally and 'naturally' declared theirs. The discourse on 'favours for women' and male bias suggests that the attitude and the behaviour of the management possibly address the male participatory and organisational discourses in soccer, which are not well researched in South African soccer, and result in a particular action and practice.

Rationalising discourses for continued male dominance in soccer suggests that gender equality is 'conditional' for women's teams, because the different levels of soccer they are playing at are not considered or valued the same as the men. This is supported by signs of irritation, particularly from men, regarding the presence of women in soccer and the soccer fields, as a contested space. Rationalising discourses are founded on the 'common sense' argument that women soccer players should not expect the same value and equal treatment as male teams since they are not at the same 'level' as men's soccer. This discourse allows for a silencing of the history of social inequalities globally and particularly the way in which gender inequalities and gender normative practices have constrained the participation for girls and women to varying degrees. It rather draws on the historical disadvantage of women to rationalise the privileging of male sports.

The findings from the study suggest that little research has been done to interrogate the role that men's behaviour and attitude play in limiting women's interest to participate in soccer within university contexts. The discourse that male soccer teams are most important and deserve to train in specialised soccer fields, may be threatening for women who wish to participate in soccer, particularly if they experience forceful language. It is further evident that the naturalised gendered public space and the unquestioned use of threatening language could continue to limit women's access to participate more fully and successfully in soccer. It is

therefore important to continue to interrogate and problematise the gendered character of soccer space and the normalised masculinist discourses in the soccer fields, which could reinforce gender inequity and/or inequality practices in soccer. Chapter six presents findings on gender equity policy and interventions in soccer at universities, including the experiences of gender equity practices in respective universities.

CHAPTER 6

PERSPECTIVES ON THE VALUE AND ROLE OF GENDER EQUITY POLICY AND INTERVENTIONS IN THE FOUR UNIVERSITIES STUDIED

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the results on the extent to which participants report universities as having gender equity policies in place and whether they are perceived as promoting interventions in soccer. Following this discussion are findings about the narrated experiences of gender equity practices in soccer at the four universities studied. How soccer administrators and soccer team managers in universities report on the policies and interventions is a particular focus in this chapter, since they are responsible for initiating and overseeing the implementation of such policies in soccer.

There is no doubt that policies that address structural barriers to the development of soccer for women and men are greatly needed in South African soccer in general and particularly at universities, in order to promote gender equity practices. As discussed in chapters three and five, the impact of apartheid policy in ensuring that sport development for women was racially segregated and gender biased, constrained their opportunities to participate in soccer. It further shaped the unequal distribution of sports resources and use of sport infrastructures, which is still noticeable in sports like soccer. For example, the SASOL women's league[19], including the national women's teams[20], continue to be restricted from playing in popularised male associated World Cup stadiums[21]. To address the past, the post-

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[19] The Sasol Women's League was launched in February 2009 as a provincial women's league, and consists of 144 clubs nationwide with each province being represented by sixteen clubs (www.safa.org.za)

[20] There are three women's national teams: under 17; under 23; senior team, and men have four national teams: under 17/19; under 20/21; under 23; senior team (www.safa.org.za)

[21] This refers to the stadiums that were built for the 2010 World Cup, and women's teams, including the senior women's team, never play in these stadiums while the male under 19 played a tournament in Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban on 31 July 2014.

apartheid democratic government introduced a White Paper on Sport and Recreation to institutionalise gender equity in sport (South African Government, 2004), and also promoted a notion of non-sexism by introducing an affirmative action policy to also encourage active participation for girls and women in sports, particularly those that were male dominated. Notwithstanding the change, it is however important to ensure that the government policies are constantly monitored, to guarantee that they do not only exist on paper but are put into practise in the sports field. This chapter focuses on the findings about the perspectives on the value and role of gender equity policy and intervention in the four institutions, and three themes are identified and discussed.

6.2 "A blanket approach to gender equity policy in sports": Gender equity policy in soccer at universities

In chapter three I discussed the lack of research and literature that focuses specifically on gender equity practices in soccer, which is one of the most popular sports in South African universities. It was noted that the university is powerful in shaping attitudes and behaviours, and creating a particular identity, power relation, and knowledge about male and female soccer. As state-run tertiary educational institutions, universities are also expected to design and implement the gender equity policies, and also monitor the practices of gender equity in sports. This is to ensure that they also redress past inequity practices, because universities played particular roles in perpetuating racial and gender segregation in sports, as discussed in chapter three. For example, if the current structuring and participation in sports like rugby, cricket and soccer are considered, they continue to be dominated by particular racial groups and women's teams are not popularised in the media. In a democratic South Africa, all sport codes are expected to implement and encourage the practices of gender equity, and in soccer the administrators and team managers are responsible for ensuring that soccer players are aware of and practise gender equity on and off the soccer field.

With these responsibilities in mind, it is of concern that the soccer administrators and male and female team managers in three universities confirmed the lack of existing gender equity policy in soccer. The findings highlight the existing sport policy in three of the four universities:

> Yes there is a policy for all sports … but not necessarily for soccer… (62 yrs old, Coloured, male soccer administrator from university 2)

> I know nothing of the existing policy for soccer other than the overall sport policy for the university… (32 yrs, Black African female soccer administrator at university 1)

> Yes, they do have a policy ... but not necessarily for soccer… (35 yrs old, Black African, male soccer administrator from university 3)

The responses suggest that the universities are reported to have the existing gender equity policy for all sport codes to implement in the individual sports. However, in soccer the policy has not been utilised to ensure that the practices of gender equity are implemented and monitored on and off the field of play. While soccer administrators did not explain the reason for not prioritising the implementation of the policy, it seems that the familiar and normalised practices in soccer took precedence. It might be easy to overlook a new policy that tries to change the historical tradition of gender practices in soccer because it needs constant checking and questioning of regular behaviour. While Shaw and Penney (2003) suggest that equity policies should be created or modified in order to overcome the structural limitations and gender biases in sports, Acker (2000) is cautious of a disjuncture between the development of gender equity policies and programmes and the ways in which gender relations are expressed and played out. The gender equity policies were designed with a belief that they might improve the current uneven participation between men and women in soccer and organisational practices. The reason that the existence of gender equity policy was overlooked and taken for granted by soccer administrators and consequently team managers, was because it addresses the naturalised association of and normalised soccer practices with men.

Even though the administrators know that the policy exists, they either *"... haven't read much on that [gender equity] specifically…"* (32 yrs, Black African female

soccer administrator at university 1), or are *"… not sure what it says…"* (62 yrs old, Coloured, male soccer administrator from university 2), because they have not made time to read and understand what the policy entails, in particular, understanding the implications of the policy to the existing practices in soccer. Research has shown that it is because of this lack of determination that gender equity policies and programmes have struggled to meet their espoused purposes and may even work to the detriment of their stated equity aims (Hoeber, 2004; Hoeber & Frisby, 2001; Shaw & Penney, 2003). The reason could be the continuing male dominance that is historically and deeply entrenched in soccer. This results in a conscious or unconscious lack of support to oversee the successful implementation of the policy, to ensure that change takes place in soccer within universities.

As mentioned earlier, it is evident from the data that in all four universities the male and female soccer team managers were never informed by the administrators about the existing gender equity policy at the beginning of the year:

> I don't know of any policy in soccer, we were never informed at the beginning of the year… (24 yrs, Black African female senior team manager from university 4)

> I don't know really, nothing was said early in the year. I'm not sure of any [gender equity policy] for soccer, but maybe for the university sport. (24 yrs old, White male senior team manager from university 2)

> I don't know but possibly they do have a general policy as an institution. … For soccer we were never told anything by our administrator, so I am not sure. (25 yrs old, Black African male senior team manager from university 1)

The team managers do not attend the sport council meetings because only administrators attend and then discuss the outcomes with the team managers. Although it is understandable that team managers might not know about the existing policy unless they are informed by the administrators, it is however alarming from the findings that they have never inquired about the policy, considering they have been playing soccer for their respective universities for more than two years. The discourse on gender equality in sport has been addressed by various sport ministers since 1994. Notwithstanding the discourse, it seems that for team managers it has been 'business as usual', that is, focusing on playing soccer rather than interrogating

the state of soccer practices in their respective universities. The 'common sense' behaviour, which is focusing on playing soccer as usual, is probably expected from the team managers, rather than problematising practices of gender equity. The reason for this is the nature of social structure and practices that contrast women's roles with those of men, and are usually based on gender stereotypes and biased against women. It is evident that normalised gender practices in soccer are barely questioned and problematised but perceived as common sense within universities, since they are similarly naturalised and unchallenged in the larger social context. It could also be argued that even if soccer players have heard of gender equity in the media and public discourse, because it is not taken seriously, awareness is not intensified. It is however of concern that male soccer continues to be dominant in the media and favoured by sponsors. Women's soccer continues to struggle for development and recognition by the society, media and sponsorships, 20 years after the introduction of the White Paper on affirmative action in sports.

Considering that the study was conducted during the year 2011 and the discourse about promoting girls' and women's participation in sports and particularly in soccer, as a popular sport, was still prevalent in the media, it was surprising that players were ignorant. It appears that for soccer players of importance was to play soccer and they were comfortable with the 'usual' training resources rather than enquiring about the policy:

> … I don't know if the policy exist in soccer … I never heard of it … no one thought it was important for us to know, we just play soccer that's all. (23 yrs old, Black African male soccer player at university 3)

> I am not sure because I never heard anything. No one tells you about this and I never asked because I never thought about it, but just to play soccer…
> (21 yrs old, Coloured male soccer player from university 2)

> No one told us anything, I really don't know if it exists or not… (21 yrs old, White male soccer player from university 4)

The findings strongly suggest that soccer players had never heard of the policy on gender equity, and were waiting to be informed about its existence by the team managers. Of interest is that although they had never heard of the policy per se, but

as the findings suggested in chapter five, players were aware that men's soccer teams are always favoured and receive more resources than women's soccer teams. The gender inequity practices were particularly observed on the soccer field but were never conceived as practices of inequity, probably because the concept of gender equity was unpopular. Ely and Meyerson (2000) posit that the underlying limitations of gender equity policies are due in part to "the limited conception of gender traditionally used to define and address problems" (p. 105). Thus, the challenges with implementing gender equity policy are perhaps shaped by lack of interrogating, critiquing, and understanding the meaning of gender and equity, because it has been conventionally theorized as a women's only issue. Bryson (1987) states that this statement was mostly conceived by men as they recognise that the number of exclusively male sports, which was used to maintain gender hierarchy, is declining. It could be possible that the continued dominance of men in organising, coaching and owning women's soccer teams is another reason participants have normalised bias and practices of gender inequities in soccer, particularly when the ways of practising and playing soccer seem to continue as usual, irrespective of continuing complaints by women soccer players. It is also worth noting that soccer, as practiced currently, is a social union that is sharply divided between those who have an authoritative voice, exclusively males, and those who do not, mostly women. It is therefore the 'normalisation' of practices in soccer that participants *"… did not think about this until now as we talk about it…"* (22 yrs old, White male soccer player from university 2), considering that they grew up watching men playing soccer on television, observed them playing in community soccer, and have participated in soccer that still prioritised men's knowledge of soccer.

In addition to these responses, I noticed that women players had different perceptions of the policy on gender equity at university. The lack of policy on gender equity in soccer at university is associated with discriminatory treatment of women's soccer, considering their continuous complaints:

> Even if they have it, no one is checking whether it is working and how it is working. … There is no fairness in university soccer, we always complain about supporting men soccer… (23 yrs old, Black African female soccer player at university 3)

I won't be surprised that they don't have it, it's a disaster here when it comes to women soccer (24 yrs, Black African female soccer administrator at university 1)

I really don't know because I never heard of it, and if you don't ask, why should I tell. (22 yrs old, Coloured female soccer player at university 4)

The findings suggest a lack of trust of the university and the structure of soccer, because it seems that no one from the management visits the soccer fields to monitor everyday soccer practices. Given the lack of monitoring and the continuing biases in soccer, it is not surprising that universities do not have the policy, especially seeing that soccer is perceived as a "disaster" because women's soccer is not well supported as compared to men's soccer. Saavedra (2004, p. 225) states that "women's football has been met with skepticism, neglect and sometimes outright hostility", which is the reason *"there is no fairness in university soccer… [as women soccer players] always complain about supporting men soccer…"* (23 yrs old, Black African female soccer player at university 3). It seems that women's soccer is perceived as not worthy of much attention, because women's soccer is a tragic experience at university, as the findings have suggested in chapter five. It appears that as long as men's teams are not complaining, everything is running as normal as expected in soccer. The complaints about the lack of "fairness" and women's soccer being a disaster at universities suggest that the initiatives of the White Paper on Sport and Recreation are not well implemented in soccer within the participating universities. The universities' commitment to inform soccer players about the exiting gender equity policy is questioned: *"… if you don't ask, why I should tell"* (22 yrs old, Coloured female soccer player at university 4), because it appears that if questions are not asked or information is not requested it is not disseminated. It is suspicious that soccer administrators, as representatives of the universities, did not inform players about the existing gender equity policy in sport generally, and particularly did not design a policy for soccer. This practice raises a question about the seriousness of soccer administrators in promoting and implementing gender equity practices in soccer within the universities.

6.3 Interventions to promote gender equity practices in soccer within universities

Although the findings indicate that the three universities do not have a clear or at least well known policy on gender equity in soccer, I investigated whether universities are engaged in interventions directed at gender equity. Of interest is that, irrespective of the overlooked gender equity policy for soccer, the findings suggest that universities have different interventions they promote to symbolise practices of gender equity. The interventions are however conceptualised and focused on encouraging women to participate in soccer. For example:

> They [all soccer players] usually campaign during registration, I am not sure how else because it's hard. We do have residential tournaments, and that also helps to encourage the ladies to become interested in soccer. (62 yrs old, Coloured, male soccer administrator from university 2)

> We are working hard to mobilize the residences ... We have created more competition for soccer events in residences and promote 5-aside games, for females only and for guys also, and then later mixed gender like mixed doubles in tennis. (35 yrs old, Black African, male soccer administrator from university 3)

> We have fun-filled tournaments at the beginning of the year, and we have a 6 aside tournaments… (41 yrs, Coloured male sport administrator from university 4)

It is evident in the data that in addition to the 'usual' beginning of the year registration campaigns for soccer players, residential tournaments are used to encourage women's participation in soccer. It seems to be a strategic move to organise some kind of once off tournaments, if the choice of words such as "usually", "beginning of the year", and "not sure how else" are taken into consideration. The organised competitions seem to symbolise intentions to attract large numbers of players to join soccer, and be seen as encouraging the development of both male and female soccer teams. The assumption seems to be that attracting many players, particularly women, will address gender equity because women's teams will have more than one team, as discussed in chapter five. Without sounding pessimistic, it is hoped that the interventions will be innovative and produce space for women to appropriate positions of authority in soccer, positions that are difficult to discern within contemporary soccer organisations and communities (Burke, 2001). It is therefore

important to interrogate and problematise the strategic practice to increase the number of women that participate in soccer, as a way of enforcing gender equity.

While it is important to draw more women into soccer, it should also be important to increase the participation number with the purpose of keeping women in soccer through continuous developmental programmes, rather than once off tournaments. It has already been noticed that women do not stay in soccer, *"The problem is after 19/20 years girls start to leave and we need to start again, but for men there is continuity"* (62 yrs old, Coloured, male soccer administrator from university 2), possibly because of a lack of interest in proper development and sustainability of women's soccer: *"I don't see any interest in pushing women development, there is no longevity"* (41 yrs, Coloured male sport administrator from university 4). Participation in, and reflection on, the existing developmental programmes in soccer is crucial for men and women, rather than an "add women and stir" (Hall, 1987, p. 34) approach that overlooks the sophisticated relational issues of power and domination in soccer (Andrews, 1993).

In addition to the residential tournaments, levelling the number of competitions between men and women is conceived as some kind of intervention because *"… for all competitions we have for males there should be one for females as well…"* (41 yrs, Coloured male sport administrator from university 4), to address gender equity practices in soccer. It seems that the university pays attention to the ways in which soccer is gendered and tries to make sure that "… there should be [competition] for female [soccer] as well…" every time a men's competition is organised, to address the unequal gendered power relations in soccer. In addition, the choice of words "… there should be…" seems to suggest that to be seen as addressing gender equity in soccer 'just add' a women's soccer team for every event that is organised for a men's soccer team, while this practice does not necessarily challenge male domination in soccer. Again, the liberal notion of equal distribution of resources and organisation of equal tournaments to ensure equal participation of both genders, continues to emerge in participants' responses. This means that when parties agree on the allocation of resources, reform may occur by means of distributive justice and when disagreement occurs, reform may be realised through political activity by using

rules, regulations and procedures (Hargreaves, 1994). Considering that the allocation and distribution of resources between men's and women's soccer teams is always contested, as the findings have suggested, it is of concern that even the rules, regulations and procedures seem not to be working to ensure gender equity practices in soccer at universities. Having said this, it does not mean that the liberal conception of equality is unnecessary and that "equality is not something to be fought for" (McLaren, 1997, p. 116). As mentioned in chapters two and five, it is important to make sure that equality, fairness, and discriminatory practices are addressed in soccer, if equity practices are to be promoted.

The data indicates that one institution declared not having any intervention because *"… it's a bit complex here, people are not looking at players' development, as I have been requesting financial assistance for players but none … there is nothing internal"* (32 yrs, Black African female soccer administrator at university 1). The lack of intervention is shaped by complex situations due to lack of financial supporting structures from the institution to develop women's soccer. Given that the development of soccer relies on sound financial support, particularly women's soccer as the continuing marginalised gender, it is understandable that the provision of finance is the main intervention for this administrator. Although the reason women's soccer continues to experience financial support is unclear, Sabo (1994, p. 45) is critical of the predictions that "doom will occur if female sports are funded equally to male sport", a perception that seems to be also dominant in soccer. The argument suggests that gender equity will lead to reduced standards of excellence in male sports and also decrease support from sponsorship and alumni, resulting in finances drying up not only for men but this will also affect women (Sabo, 1994). Of concern with this notion is the perception that "the fate of women's soccer is inextricably linked to the profitability of male revenue-soccer" (Staurowsky, 1995, p. 31). Sabo (1994) contends that the unspoken assumption supporting this argument is that "the male system of sport is the best for sport and that supporters of gender equity oppose the development of sports" (p. 206). Considering the findings, this study argues that soccer seems to be supported by this ideological and structural framework, that male soccer financial sponsorships are dominant and authoritative, whilst female soccer is seen as dependent on the male 'breadwinners'. According to

Clark, Mills and Haugaa Engh (2009) women's teams that are affiliated to a male club seem to experience less pressing financial constraints, although lack of sustainability is a concern. With this discussion in mind, the next section presents practices of gender equity as experienced by participants in the respective universities.

6.4 Experiences of gender (in)equity practices in the respective universities

As noted in chapters one and two, men participated in this study because it was important to also measure how they respond and react to dialogues of gender issues and practices in soccer, as men have to be invested in gender justice too. However, a primary focus of this study is on women's perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices in soccer. The focus is shaped by the need to unpack the impact on gender equity intentions on the historical dominance of men, masculinity and male authority in soccer. This section focuses on women's experiences of gender (in)equity practices in soccer within their respective universities.
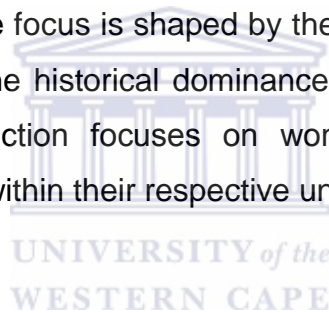
The dominant gender discourses and in particular social expectations of femininity have dictated who is suitable to play what sport, what behaviour is socially appropriate and acceptable for which gender, and who is entitled to hold management positions in soccer organisations (Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2011). Consequently, the social discourses and expectations have naturalised the ways of talking about soccer, at the same time it has shaped and undermined girls' and women's interest and capacity to progress in soccer as a strongly male associated sport. Even though this was the case, women did not give up attempts to participate in soccer but persisted in an environment that continues to be associated with male competence and prestige. Acosta and Carpenter (2006, p. 56) caution that "with female soccer participation numbers currently at an all-time high it might be assumed that soccer environments are now more inclusive". Actually, a paradoxical situation has been noted in soccer where girls and women are admitted to the realm of soccer, but continue to be discriminated against (Sabo & Messner, 1993). This

means girls' and women's participation in soccer has been tolerated and even encouraged, but in practice there are on-going constraints that hinder their involvement and development in various ways (Clark & Paechter, 2007).

Since 1994, women's participation in soccer has been increasing in the South African university contexts, which is possibly shaped by the interest and increased participation in community soccer. Notwithstanding the increment, it is noted from the data that women's soccer teams continue to experience various constraints in the university context, as the following responses illustrate:

> … we fought for soccer jerseys with men because there was not enough for both of us ... it was unfair because we should understand that men always need to play wearing a soccer jersey, and it should be understandable if ladies don't play wearing a soccer jersey (24 yrs, Coloured female soccer player at university 1)

> … the transportation to the games … we struggle to have the transport to attend the games and we have to use players' cars ... it happened couple of times now... (21 yrs, White female soccer player at university 2)
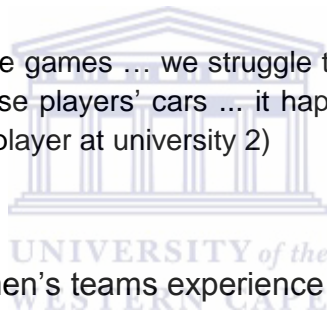
The findings suggest that women's teams experience challenges with various soccer necessities and it has been recurring, which means they are not given attention but are expected to be understanding. It is unclear why the university only has one set of soccer jerseys, actually how did they buy one set of soccer jerseys when it is known that at least two teams [male and female] represent the university competitively? It appears that this discriminatory practice against women's teams within the universities has been a norm as the participant stated: *"… it happened couple of times now…"* and also in another university the same practice was experienced *"… limited resource provision such as soccer balls and soccer jersey, because they cannot only buy for men and leave us…"* (22 yrs, Coloured female soccer player at university 4). These biased practices against women's teams could be shaped by the history of female exclusion in soccer participation, and the beliefs and association of men's soccer as a national sport. The decision, whether consciously or unconsciously, to buy one set of soccer jerseys could be interpreted as meaning that the women's teams are not as important as the men's teams. It further emphasises the perceptions that women's soccer is invading and challenging the 'culture' of

soccer (Daimon, 2010). It is probable that the decision to buy one set of soccer jerseys is shaped by the exposure to historically powerful discourses that prioritise men's needs in soccer, which are perceived as obvious and equated with truth, and the truth that has been hard to refute.

It is worrying that women's teams should 'fight' to own and wear soccer jerseys during the games because of the shortage. At the same time they are expected to be understanding and accept that men's teams are entitled to always appear in full uniform. The sense of entitlement is presumably in comparison to the women's team that is relatively new in the game, considering the history of soccer. I am inclined to assume that this discourse has to do with the nature of soccer that men and women have been labelled to play, because, as mentioned in chapters three and five, women's soccer is perceived as slow as compared to men's soccer which is fast and entertaining. It is unclear why women should 'understand' that men are 'always' entitled to wear soccer jerseys, and it is commonly accepted when a women's team plays without wearing soccer jerseys. This proposes that women's needs are not urgent issues as compared to ensuring that men's teams have all the necessary resources to play soccer. Considering that men's teams are always prioritised at the expense of women's teams, it makes sense that they never complain, as mentioned earlier. Speaking from the Zimbabwean context Daimon (2010, p. 45) states that it is unfortunate that women's soccer does not enjoy the privileges that men do as they "encounter 'apartheid' in soccer participation". These unfair practices are also experienced by women's soccer teams internationally, as mentioned in chapter three, and are shaped by men's hegemonic discourses which consequently influence their choices and behaviour towards providing for a women's soccer team.

In addition to these experiences, it is also noted from the data that women's teams are treated unfairly in relation to media exposure:

> Men are obviously favourites here when it comes to publicity, because we always read about them as if women's team does not exist. (21 yrs old, White female soccer player at university 2)

> … what about publicity we are deprived here ... we are hardly represented in the university newspaper. (21 yrs old, Coloured female soccer player at university 4**)**

> Newspaper media mostly write about men soccer and very little about women's soccer ... media does play a role in promoting or marginalising women's soccer. (23 yrs, Coloured female soccer player at university 1)

The findings indicate that through the dominance of men's soccer in the media it is noticeable that they are favoured and women's soccer is not visible to the university community. The media arrangement and lack of exposure for women's soccer is reflective of socially constructed sex differences where soccer is dominantly written about, presented and understood from the male perspective (Sibson, 2010). In the three universities, featuring women's soccer in the university newspaper was conditional, as they only enjoyed minimal exposure when they won a competition and/or a trophy. For example, the participants said:

> … in 2002 when we won the Super league … we were in the papers and the publicity we got was unbelievable…everybody was talking about women's team, because we were taken photographs… (23 yrs, Black African female soccer player at university 4)

> … the varsity paper will take a picture of the boys team, write an article about the boys and not mention the girls … until we started winning and boys were not winning… (21 yrs, White female soccer player at university 2)

Although women's soccer experienced some kind of publicity and seemed satisfied with it, the findings provide evidence that the sudden conditional featuring in the university newspapers represent beliefs that women's soccer is not as important as men's. Men feature regularly in various media, especially the sport section in daily newspapers and television news during sport time, while there is virtually nothing on women's soccer. For example, during the 2010 and 2014 World Cup tournaments the news started with the updates on World Cup games, as compared to the women's 2011 World Cup tournament that was as well covered as for the men. Given that the media is seen as a major source of pervasive influence, its constructions have allowed for differential messages and images of men's and women's soccer (Serra & Burnett, 2007). The fact that university newspapers 'usually' took pictures of the men's team and ignored the women's teams until the latter group started winning, presupposes gender stereotype. As mentioned in

chapter three, stereotyping through the media may be one of the subtle and even unconscious forces that steadily erode the confidence and overall position of women in soccer, and seriously undermines the principle of gender equity and equality in soccer (Steyn & Slattery, 2013). According to George (2001), the mass media is one of the most important and powerful institutional forces that shape perceptions, values and attitudes in modern culture. Thus, the underreporting of women in soccer in the media can seriously affect general perceptions and insufficient knowledge of women in soccer in general and their accomplishments.

The socialisation patterns that have found expression in gender inequality pertaining to the allocation of resources are extended to media coverage as a resource of communication (Burnett, 2004). It could be possible that the male dominance in the media is shaped by the discursive strategy that soccer is traditionally regarded as a 'natural' phenomenon for men, whereas women's involvement in this traditionally androcentric arena has often been viewed as anomalous (Pirinen, 1997; Theberge, 1995 & 2001). It is interesting to hear participants stating that media does play a role in promoting or marginalising women's soccer, indicating awareness of bias in the media and that it can play a positive role by promoting awareness of the active role that women play in soccer. These findings probably reflect on the print media's adherence to a patriarchal stance of male superiority by male journalists and sport editors within the university context, and South Africa in particular (Serra & Burnett, 2007).

While the practices of gender inequity are unsurprising, as the findings suggest, it is discomforting that women's soccer teams struggle for recognition and space in the media, since this serves to further perpetuate stereotypes and devaluing of women's soccer. Of concern is that this practice is normalised, as Naidoo and Muholi (2010, p. 104) posit that "internet searches for women soccer including Banyana Banyana [senior national team] yielded very few articles and had presented a very different image of the women involved in football in South Africa". The structure of statements and the language in the media has dictated women's positions in soccer, because there has been silence on the state of women's soccer in South Africa. Similar to the experiences of women's soccer within the participating universities, the senior

women's soccer team only gained more media attention than they normally do after they met with former President Nelson Mandela during the year 2006 (Eng, 2010). The interest and publicity for women's soccer teams at university is determined by their success, while publicity for the male team does not depend on success in particular tournaments or competitions. This could be perceived as biased gender reporting and the construction of gender stereotyping in the media regarding men's and women's soccer.

Considering the discussion thus far, although media representation is not the focus of this study, male biases and an under-representation of women's soccer in the media appearances is evident. For example, this is noted in the current silence about the progress and/or games for junior and senior women's national soccer teams as compared to the men's senior and junior teams that are constantly in the news advertising their progress and future games. This continuation is possibly shaped by the power and dominance of men in the sport section of the media, and the minimal representation of women already places women's soccer in marginal situations (Serra & Burnett, 2007). I acknowledge that having women in the sport section of the media does not necessarily mean that women's soccer will gain more exposure, considering the current lack of popularity with the existing representation of women in the South African Football Association (SAFA) organisation. The continued practices of gender inequity and male bias in soccer, as discussed in chapters two and Three, could be linked to the way in which the game is played, how it is talked about and how players are valued, which is constructed in masculine terms. Thus, this discussion suggests that if the discourse of soccer continues to favour male hegemony, girls' and women's soccer in South African communities and universities will continue to be disadvantaged.

6.5 Conclusion

The findings reported on in this chapter, which focuses on perceptions of the impact of gender equity policy and practices, foregrounds that while the majority of the universities have policies on gender equity in sport, of concern is that none of the participating universities have gender equity policy in soccer and that there are

questions about the extent to which the policy is implemented and monitored. This means that even though the universities have addressed the government's call to design policies to recognise and promote gender equity practices in various sports, administrators do not prioritise the implementation of the policy in soccer. Of interest is that while some administrators read the policy, they did not focus specifically on the details about gender equity in sports, and what it entails specifically in relation to soccer. It seems that they did not consider the importance of a specific and directed policy in soccer. They also did not explain the reason for not implementing the policy, although they acknowledge the importance of it in soccer because of men's dominance. In addition, considering that the team managers receive information from the administrators about the university policies in sports, they did not know about such a policy because the administrators did not inform them. Team managers were waiting to be informed so that they could notify players of such a policy, consequently the latter did not realise that such a policy existed. The findings suggest that players were aware of practices of inequity in soccer, although they did not know about the policy on gender equity practices.

The findings also indicate that while universities did not have a directed gender equity policy in soccer, they had various interventions to encourage the participation of women. The focus was on beginning of the year recruitment of players, particularly women, and also different tournaments that inspired women to play soccer. Although it is unclear how universities ensure the sustainability of women's participation in soccer, they alluded to the fact that the competitions increase and keep women interested in soccer. While universities encourage the participation of women in soccer, some administrators also noted that it is challenging to promote women's soccer because of lack of continuity. Women leave soccer before they mature in the sport, however administrators do not seem to problematise or address the reasons why women are leaving soccer. It appears to be something expected, that is, that women will eventually leave soccer at a certain stage, without interrogation and consideration of strategies to keep women playing soccer. It was also strongly evident in the findings that women leave soccer because of lack of support and development in the university.

The findings on the experiences of gender (in)equity practices in the universities corroborated the lack of support for women's soccer and women soccer players' experiences of marginalisation and neglect. While these appear minor, they represent the lack of focus and proper valuing of women's soccer, that is, they are symbols of continued male bias, male centredness and devaluation of women's soccer. Women's teams experienced various challenges from the lack of soccer jerseys to transportation to the games to represent the universities. Women were expected to understand that the men's team need to always wear soccer jerseys when they play for their respective universities, and that it makes sense that women will sometimes not wear soccer jerseys. In addition to these challenges, there were biases in representation and publicity in the university newspapers. Men's teams were featured in the university newspapers, irrespective of their performance, but women's teams only featured if and when they had won something. It is therefore clear from the findings that women's soccer continues to experience inequity practices in soccer, that women's soccer is devalued and secondary to male soccer, and that men's soccer and men in soccer continue to be prioritised.
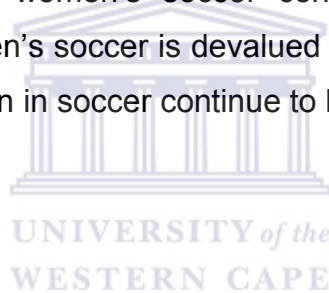
CHAPTER 7

PERSPECTIVES ON THE LACK OF PROGRESS IN GENDER EQUITY PRACTICES IN SOCCER

7.1 Introduction

The findings from this study suggest that gender inequity practices have long existed in soccer at the four participating universities. It is on the basis of these findings that participants were asked about their perspectives on the lack of progress in gender equity practices in soccer and to share their suggestions for the way forward. The participants' responses were categorised into four themes: the importance of developing soccer at grassroots level using schools and particularly primary schools; the role of the government in promoting girls' and boys' soccer together; parental involvement and motivation to participate in soccer; women's ownership and passion towards the promotion of their soccer.

7.2 "… one step forward and seventeen backwards…"

In South Africa, as in the US, sport policy was designed to promote gender sensitivity and consciousness in different sports. In addition, it was to encourage gender equity awareness and change in schools, colleges and universities (Thomas, 2007; Clayton & Humberstone, 2007), as places where gender awareness might be overlooked and taken for granted as normalised practices. Notwithstanding the government's policy on gender awareness in sports, participants' responses demonstrate dissatisfaction with the existing structures that are supposed to develop soccer at grassroots level. The schools are identified as important partners, particularly primary schools, to initiate and possibly ensure the sustainability of soccer developments while children are still young until they reach university. The responses illustrate the roles that schools can play to address the lack of progress in implementing gender equity practices in soccer:

> Due to lack of development for women's soccer from the early age, in primary school ... soccer only focuses on boys and very little on girls ... we need seriousness from schools … it's them who supposed to firstly address issues

of equity in sport. (23 yrs old, Black African female soccer player from university 3 – mixed gender focus group interviews)

For me soccer should be developed from the school level … I think if more structured leagues are developed for girls, like they do with the boys' under 7, under 9, and under 13, that will nurture football for young girls and appetite to play football… (62 yrs old, Coloured, male soccer administrator from university 2)

I think we need to do serious development in schools with teachers, it should be part of the curriculum … sport should be compulsory if we want to address inequity practices in sport generally, and soccer in particular. (22 yrs old, white male soccer player from university 4 – mixed gender focus group interviews)

The findings suggest that primary schools provide hope for the development and encouragement of young girls to participate in soccer. Participants have acknowledged that soccer is well developed for boys at an early age, considering the developments and leagues for various age groups. Very little attention has been given to develop soccer for girls in different age groups in order to nurture continuity and motivation in various age groups. It is possibly because of the marginal attention to the development of soccer for girls that *"…seriousness from schools"* is encouraged, as it seems to be perceived as not playing a significant role in promoting girls' participation in soccer. Schools are *"supposed to firstly address issues of equality in sport"* (23 yrs old, Black African female soccer player from university 3 - Female focus group interviews). It appears that the focus on schools is a way of legitimating the lack of urgency in addressing gender equity practices and encouraging women's soccer at universities, and thus schools might play a leading role *to "nurture football for young girls and appetite to play football"* (62 yrs old, Coloured, male soccer administrator from university 2). As discussed in chapter three, the role of the schools in constraining and/or promoting girls' participation in sport and particularly soccer has been well documented.

One participant suggested a *"… need to do serious development in schools with teachers…"* because they are in a position to encourage boys and girls to actively participate in soccer at an early age. The choice of words *"serious development… with teachers…"* seems to suggest that there has not been serious focus on training

teachers who can consciously address and promote gender equity practices in soccer. In addition, the response appears to suggest that teachers need to be offered basic instruction in coaching through the partnership between the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Sports and Recreation. This can be done by designing a curriculum that includes sports, which could make learners' participation in sports compulsory. In the South African context, as mentioned in chapters Two and Three, this discussion is handled with caution because of the continuing inequality and inequity in the building of sports infrastructure and the provision of resources in schools. Authors argue that gender ideologies remain firmly embedded within the content, teaching and practice of physical education (Scraton, 1992; Flintoff, 1993). The practice and recognition of separate sports according to gender starts on primary school sports fields, whether consciously or unconsciously, as teachers categorise boys and girls in relation to the 'normal' social organisation of sports. This categorisation and organisation of soccer is also mentioned by participants: *"… if you go there [school] it is only boys who play soccer … with teachers favouring boys to play soccer"* (21 yrs old, Coloured female soccer player at university 4 – Female focus group interviews). While it seems that teachers are perceived as favouring boys to play soccer, the attitude of female teachers towards soccer is also identified as needing change *"… towards the separation of sport according to gender… female teachers focus on netball and tell girls to play netball…"* (22 yrs old, Black African female player at university 1 – Female focus group interviews). It might be possible that teachers have been practising what they have known for a long time and have continued to perform without questioning the organisation and categorisation of sports according to boys and girls.

Although schools are identified as the place to encourage the participation of boys and girls in soccer, the participants were critical of South Africa's approach to developing soccer. One participant argued that: *"You cannot build a house from the top to the bottom … it starts with the foundation. I think that's what South African football is trying to do…"* (35 yrs old, Black African, male soccer administrator from university 3). The metaphor suggests that soccer development focuses on senior soccer teams with little attention is given at grassroots level. If the attention is on

senior teams, it is unclear whether and how issues of gender equity practices are addressed at an early age of the players' careers to ensure awareness. Considering the findings in chapters five and six that suggest continuing practices of gender inequity in soccer within participating universities, the participant's criticism appears to be confirmed. There is recognition that focusing on building soccer from the bottom-up might be a better approach to introduce and familiarise players with the issues of gender equity practices in soccer, rather than at a later stage. The challenge with a top-down approach is that *"For every one step we are taking forward, we are taking seventeen steps backwards"* (41 yrs, Coloured male sport administrator from university 4), possibly due to the lack of proper foundations for boys and girls, sustainable development of soccer and promotion of awareness about practices of gender (in)equity.

The participant added: *"We cannot start [development] at the top … right now it is window dressing without foundation and inequity will surely continue"* (41 yrs, Coloured male sport administrator from university 4) because attention continues to be given to men's soccer, as mentioned in chapters three, five and six, and women's soccer is known to exist but is unpopular in the media. For example, the concentration on senior national teams is considered window dressing presumably because the grassroots development is ignored, particularly for girls' soccer, and inequity practices will continue because they are not addressed at an early age. Therefore *"if we want to promote gender equity, it should start from the grassroots level … and right now we have little programmes for girls at that level …"* (22 yrs old, Coloured female player at university 1 – mixed gender focus group) to ensure that boys' and girls' soccer are seen to be developed together rather than, for example, the lack of soccer academies for girls as compared to boys. Some universities are known to have had an existing soccer academy for boys for a number of years:

> We want to establish leagues for all the different age groups because at the moment it's under 9, under 11, and under 13 for boys. We are starting with the girls as well. (41 yrs, Coloured male sport administrator from university 4)

This response suggests that boys have been the centre of development in soccer, unsurprising if the men's competitive league is taken into consideration. As

discussed in chapter three, men's soccer has financial support and benefit as compared to women's soccer because players are sold to clubs at great expense and this depends on how well they have been developed. It is possible that the lack of a competitive league for women's soccer influences the lack of interest in starting a soccer academy for girls, to ensure early development rather than the High Performance Centre in Pretoria that focuses on senior players.

7.3 "We always watch men's soccer … what is the government doing?"

As mentioned in chapter three, governments in different countries have passed laws and formulated policies promoting equal rights for girls and women in sports (see Chappell, 2003; Coakley, 2004; Pelak, 2005). In South Africa the government has empowered women to take advantage of the seemingly limited and conditional opportunities provided in sport, through the theme "Getting the nation to play" issued by the new Department of Sport and Recreation (Department of Sport and Recreation *Draft White Paper,* 1995, p. 16) and later the introduction of the Affirmative Action Policy of 2000 in sport (Jones, 2003). The participants also acknowledged the government's efforts to address gender equity in sport by designing policies, but were concerned with the apparent lack of committed people to implement them.

> The government only tries in policies … policies need to be implemented by people who are passionate about gender equity or promoting women's football... (26 yrs old, Black African female soccer player from university 3 – Female focus group interviews)

> The government … write the policies … but how are they implemented and monitored, I don't know ... they should not just write, but monitor, I don't know if they have serious people to implement and monitor the policies… (23 yrs old, White male soccer player from university 2 – Female focus group interviews)

The responses suggest that the government's role is to write policies as a guide for implementers, but noted that it should not end in the designing process but should include a rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the implementation process. It is the

implementation and monitoring process that will ensure progress in addressing gender equity practices in soccer. Furthermore, the government is expected to identify relevant people to implement the policy, but the findings suggest the lack of passionate and serious people to ensure the successful implementation of a policy that promotes gender equity in soccer. Although the responsible people are not explicitly mentioned, the choice of words "promoting women's football" seems to question the passion and seriousness of the people in soccer organisations and clubs. For example, women's soccer is part of the South African Football Association and should be developed the same as men's soccer, although the findings suggest continued lack of attention and underdevelopment. When the government designed the Affirmative Action Policy of 2000, the representatives from soccer organisations and clubs were also invited to the discussions (Mchunu, 2008). The purpose of the invitation was to ensure that the government's plan of promoting gender equity in sport, with the special target of girls as a group in need of special attention, was understood for appropriate implementation. It is therefore important *"to find the right people to run football … people who are passionate about pushing women development…"* (24 yrs, Black African female soccer player from university 4 – Female focus group interviews). This response strongly suggests that if the purpose of the policy is to encourage the participation of girls and women in soccer, it is imperative to question the role that soccer organisations and clubs play in promoting the practices of gender equity, in relation to the government focus on girls' empowerment. The partnership between the government and soccer organisations and clubs has been acknowledged as important for the development of a well-organised and constant monitoring of gender equity policy in soccer, to constrain the practices of gender inequity (Scraton et al., 1999).

Participants foregrounded impatience related to the impact of the policy. It was noted that the policy on gender equity in sport has been in existence for a while, and there was a lack of progress on gender equity practices in soccer because of the normalised practices.

> The policy was drafted around 1994 and we are still trying to implement it …
> We need to get the policy in place and stop talking … otherwise it will remain
> on paper while inequity continues in soccer. We haven't got the

implementation right unfortunately... (62 yrs old, Coloured, male soccer administrator from university 2)

What is the government saying about the slow development of women soccer after so many years of democracy … I think it promotes gender inequity… (26 yrs old, Black African female soccer player from university 1 – Female focus group interviews)

I am not sure of the attempts really. When they keep on watching men's soccer with very little women's soccer, what does it say for them? They are also promoting inequity, as men's soccer bring lot of money. (22 yrs old, White female soccer player from university 2 – Female focus group interviews)

The findings suggest that the government has been criticised because it seems not to problematise the continuing dominance of men's soccer in the media, and there is little interrogation of lack of media coverage on women's soccer. Considering the number of years of democracy, the slow development of women's soccer and the continuing prioritisation of men's soccer, the government is perceived as promoting gender inequity practices. As articulated by the participant above, there is some concern that there has been too much talking about the policy and little focus on implementing it, while inequity practices continue in soccer. It seems not surprising that the participants were sceptical about the government's role, especially given that research has shown that governments have adopted double standards in promoting girls' and women's participation in soccer. Onwumechili (2011) recounts one African government official's statement: "I don't see anything rewarding about it [women's football] as it is not in conformity with our culture" (p. 2214). As discussed in Chapter Three, the lack of progress on gender equity practices in soccer seems to be linked to the financial incentives that men's soccer provides as compared to women's soccer. It could then be argued that the lack of interest in women's soccer is because "there is not yet a lucrative market for female soccer" (Saavedra, 2003, p. 37). The reason could be the continuing perception of women soccer players as outsiders and their game and skills are devalued as compared to men's soccer (Pelak, 2005). Whereas men are playing football, women are seen to only be 'kicking' the ball around, and are thus not taken seriously as football players (Pelak, 2005).

Due to the rewards that men's soccer offers *"we are always made to watch men's soccer teams and hardly women's soccer teams … what the government is doing then"* (24 yrs, Black African female soccer player from university 4 – mixed gender focus group interviews). The response suggests that men's soccer is dominant in the mainstream media in South Africa and it has been normal to always watch men's soccer teams and barely women's games, not even profiling women's soccer, particularly the senior national women's team. Since men's soccer is always profiled in the mainstream media, it means that they continue to monopolise marketable and popularise their support because of the lucrative sponsorships and broadcasting contracts. It appears that the media, instead of being agents of inclusion for women's soccer, seem to exclude them by scarcely featuring them. While the continuing exclusion is suspicious, Naidoo and Muholi's (2010) statement seems to contextualise the bias that SAFA, the government and the mainstream media worked to deny Banyana Banyana their space in the imagining and construction of the 'rainbow nation'. It therefore makes sense that we continue to be made to watch men's soccer and hardly women's soccer teams because a choice is 'always' made about what to popularise and what not to popularise in the media. In Africa the governments have been accused of paying lip-service to addressing gender equity practices in soccer, as noted in Zambia and South Africa, where women's organisations have been forced to protest because they are "feeling neglected, ignored and irrelevant" (Meier & Saavedra, 2009, p. 1162). It is due to the continuing neglect and bias against women's soccer that the participants are critical of the government's lack of critical reflection on the policies it designed, and suggest the promotion of gender inequity.

The findings suggest that to promote progress on gender equity practices in soccer, the government needs to put pressure on the implementation and monitoring of gender equity policy in soccer - socially, educationally and in soccer organisations. While this is possible, of concern is that *"the government allowed SAFA to make women's game free entrance… how can I take serious something I watch for free?"* (25 yrs old, Coloured male soccer player at university 1 – mixed gender focus group interviews). The assumed reason for this practice is because *"… women's games are not taken serious … arguing that people are not going to attend if they charge*

fees…" (23 yrs old, Coloured female player at university 1 – mixed gender focus group interviews). These responses suggest that women's soccer is not taken seriously because watching their games is perceived as not deserving to be paid for. As discussed in chapter three, even the entrance to the senior national women's World Cup qualifying games were free, as compared to the senior national men's World Cup qualifying games which always charge entrance fees. In the US and other European countries, success in women's soccer is not only attributed to Title IX of the 1972 Federal Education Amendments, but also to monitored implementations of the Law at the elementary, middle and high school levels, and in colleges for young women (Martinez, 2008). As mentioned earlier, this highlights the importance of monitored implementations and the partnership between the government, education sectors, soccer organisations, and soccer clubs.

7.4 "Parents dictate what to play …"

While the government and the schools are identified as important in addressing the lack of gender equity practices in soccer, participants also acknowledged the role that parents play in the choice of sports that children participate in. Regarding the motivation of girls to participate in soccer, parents *"... need to encourage girls to play soccer at an early stage, because they also dictate what to play…"* (62 yrs old, Coloured, male soccer administrator from university 2). The responsibility is given to the parents to provide the necessary support for their children to participate in sport generally, and soccer in particular, because they play a role in shaping the attitudes of their children (van der Merwe, 2010). This role has been complicated in Africa, where many mothers insist that girls need to practice their gender associated social roles instead of 'wasting time' participating in sport, particularly those associated with men, such as soccer. The stigmatisation of girls and women who play soccer could be another reason parents seem reluctant for girls to participate in soccer, *"I cannot leave the parents out because they play a role of promoting or discouraging girls to play soccer, considering the negative stigma women's soccer has in the society"* (25 yrs old, Black African, male soccer player from university 1 – Female focus group interviews). As mentioned in chapter three and as will be seen below, girls and women who participate in soccer are perceived as 'lesbians', or at least 'unfeminine', which is probably the reason for disapproving their participation in soccer. This has

also been noted in African countries where fathers discourage their daughters from participating in male-oriented sports (van Beek, 2007).

Given the time that parents spend with their children, they are believed to be best placed to *"motivate and talk to girls, that girls should also play soccer and play sport as well"* (23 yrs, Coloured female soccer player at university 3 – Female focus group interviews). Although it is unclear whether 'parents' refers to both mother and father, the literature has noted the importance of such support in encouraging girls to play sport. Thus *"… parents have the power to discourage girls from playing soccer … Girls should not be programmed that there's sport for girls and for boys only, then they grow up with that discrimination"* (21 yrs old, White female soccer player at university 4 – mixed gender focus group interviews). Parents are responsible for providing children with initial opportunities to play sport and help to maintain their participation in sport. Research states that parents have the potential to affect their children's withdrawal from sport (Singer, Hausenblas, & Janelle, 2001), and also have the influence to encourage them to sustain their stay in sport. This kind of responsibility and influence appears to be prominent socialising agents, depending on how they are perceived and experienced by children. Mchunu (2008) states that perceived positive reactions from parents have led to a greater enjoyment and participation in sport by children, whereas perceived negative responses might lead to discouragement, and possible withdrawal from sport. Actually, to ensure the sustainability of girls' participation in soccer, father's support seems to be specifically important because *"… what is going on at home with the parents' support or lack of it … sometimes girls need father's approval to play certain sport due to a challenge of lack of safety for children…"* (23 yrs old, Coloured female soccer player from university 2 – Female focus group interviews). This response suggests that safety precautions could be one of the factors that cause girls' participation in soccer to be short - lived, possibly because the training fields are not in close proximity to their homes. Considering the uneven development programmes in soccer between boys and girls, it appears that girls' exclusion from some opportunities and slow progress in soccer is because of fears for their safety, as mentioned in chapter three. To address the lack of progress in gender equity practices in soccer, it is important that claims for gender equity practices remain important issues.

7.5 "… women need to take charge … no one will do it for them"

The continuing gender inequity practices in soccer at participating universities is an issue of concern, and participants also draw attention to the suggestion that women soccer players have, to a certain extent, colluded in gender inequity practices by not problematising unfair allocation of resources, sharing of infrastructure. It is possibly because of this recognition that participants encouraged women to take ownership of their soccer, because it appears they were viewed as having 'surrendered' and rather expect men to develop girls' and women's soccer for them. For progression on gender equity in soccer *"we [women] cannot rely on men to develop women's soccer, they have their own agenda…"* (23 yrs old, Coloured female player at university 1 – Female focus group interviews), it is therefore important that *"women step up, because we can't really expect them (men) to do anything for women's soccer..."* (22 yrs old, Black African female player at university 1 – Female focus group interviews). The responses seem to propose that women need to take ownership of the development and sustaining of girls and women's soccer, because men have their own agenda. Although the agenda is not mentioned, considering the dominance in the media, it is possibly to promote the development of their soccer. The fact that men's soccer is dominant in the mainstream media and women's soccer games continue to feature minimally in the media, appears to place women's soccer in a position of weakness. The mentioning of men's agenda is interesting because women's agenda in soccer is unclear, considering the representation of women in SAFA[22]. It is therefore important that *"[we] work together as women soccer players to develop our soccer, men are not going to do it for us … it should be obvious now that they are not planning to assist us … their soccer continues to prosper"* (22 yrs old, White female soccer player at university 2 – Female focus group interviews).

It seems that women have not yet prioritised the progression and improvement of their soccer, as they *"…need to take charge of their game, because no one will do it*

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[22] The South African Football Association is responsible for the development and promotion of men's and women's soccer and leagues for all ages.

for them" (25 yrs old, Coloured male soccer player at university 3 – mixed gender focus group interviews), consequently the superiority of men's soccer will continue to be not problematised and challenged. Alternatively, it could be asked: *"How can gender equity be practiced when ladies seem not to be interested in their soccer…"* (25 yrs old, White male soccer player from university 4 – mixed gender focus group interviews), because they possibly need to set their own agenda and ensure fair treatment and respect for women's soccer. For women, participants seem to be suggesting, one way of setting their own agenda may be the development of an alternative discourse, to assert their ownership of the sport and destabilise the entrenched meaning of soccer that formerly secured it as 'self-evidently' and 'naturally' masculine. For example, because men's soccer is known as the 'sport of strength' maybe women's soccer can be a 'sport of appearance'. In this way women's soccer could be able to appropriate a position within the world of men's soccer that continues to marginalise them. It is noted from the participants' responses that even in the call to agency they cannot seem to think outside of existing gender binaries. While sport can be an important arena for the disruption of the binary oppositions of masculinity/femininity and the emergence of potentially transgressive forms of sporting femininities (Scraton, Fasting, Pfister & Bunuel Heras, 1999), the binary system for Helen Lenskyj (1990) serves as the cornerstone of patriarchy and is supported through modern competitive sports.

Without sounding pessimistic, until men's and women's soccer are treated fairly and with respect, and both genders work together to improve soccer in South Africa, it looks like the lack of progress in gender equity practices in soccer will continue. One participant had this to say: *"We need to work together, men and women, to address the different treatments and ways to end them … we really need men to address these issues because I don't think we will win if we exclude them"* (26 yrs old, Black African female soccer player from university 3 – Female focus group interviews). Otherwise, to address gender equity in soccer, women need to show their support by attending women's games. While I acknowledge the lack of information about women's soccer games, women's lack of interest in watching and supporting women's soccer is also noted: *"I am really not sure why they (women) attend men's games, but they seem not to have the same interest with women's games"* (21 yrs old, Black African male soccer player from university 1 – mixed gender focus group

interviews). Though the possible reason women do not support women's soccer is because of lack of information from the media, like men's soccer, it also addresses the lack of progress in gender equity practices in soccer. Thus to raise interest in girls' and women's soccer it is important to encourage women, particularly retired soccer players, to 'take the front seat' and encourage girls' participation in soccer, because *"... there are no role models for girls so that they are motivated to play soccer..."* (20 yrs old, Coloured female soccer player from university 2 - Female focus group interviews). As mentioned in Chapter Three, it is important for women to take charge in developing women's soccer, and retired players can be role models for the girls and women soccer players. While girls' and women's soccer is increasing in South Africa, it cannot be taken for granted that all girls have access to soccer because *"the issue of role models is a point … I didn't have any role models because I didn't know who was playing women's soccer, only now as I get older"* (21 yrs old, white female soccer player from university 2 - Female focus group interviews). Considering the lack of publicity for women's soccer in the 20th year of democracy, and thinking of the retired women's soccer players in South Africa, it is tempting to question their role in problematising and interrogating the continuing lack of progress in gender equity practices in soccer.
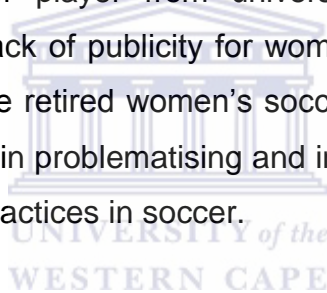
7.6 Stigmatisation of women soccer players within homophobic discourses

Soccer has always been known as the sport for men, and women who play it have entered the 'naturally' preserved male sport and, as mentioned in chapter three, could be perceived as a threat to the traditions of soccer. Thus, women who play soccer frequently experience stigmatisation through name calling for participating in the men's associated sport: *"…we like playing soccer but we are always called names … even if you are not what they call you"* (22 yrs old, Black African female soccer player from university 3 - Female focus group interviews). Even though it is unclear who does the name calling and that it is not explicitly mentioned, the generalisation that all women soccer players are the same is of concern because it does not consider the possibility of difference. In talking about the heterosexual paradigm, Kolnes (1995) mentions that it functions to police the appearances and

appropriateness of female bodies. Whereas 'athleticism' is easily compatible with masculinity, and thus male heterosexuality, it is not a normalised feature of femininity. The implications for women soccer players is that "unless 'proven' otherwise, that is displaying visible signifiers of heterosexuality or playing in traditionally women appropriated sport, they are likely and frequently presumed to be lesbians" (Cox & Thompson, 2001, p. 10). The need for women to 'prove' their femininity (and thus their heterosexuality) has been referred to by authors as the 'feminine apologetic' (Lawler, 2002; Theberge, 2000; Roth & Basow, 2004). In this study this mean girls and women soccer players are expected to behave in a particular way that does not seem to compete with men's behaviour.

In South Africa, since the emergence of women's soccer in the 1980s, lesbianism has been a concern for women who play soccer. This is because the world of football continues to be portrayed as masculine and within a heterosexist society where sex, gender and sexuality are understood within a rigid matrix of relations, and women who engage in soccer are viewed with suspicion, as transgressive with respect to expected gender and sexual identities (Naidoo & Muholi, 2010). It is therefore *"… not nice to be labelled because you play men's sport or at least that's how it is known … It is dangerous in South Africa to be perceive as that…"* (21 yrs old, Coloured female player at university 1 - mixed focus group). The participants' concern with name calling is understandable because their choice of soccer seems to be interpreted as indicating sexual preference (Cox & Thompson, 2001, p. 10). Thus homophobia in soccer functions to uphold the status quo and the current gender order. Griffin (1998) argues that "homophobia serves as glue that holds gender role expectations in place … the purpose of calling a woman a lesbian is to limit her sport experience and make her feel defensive about her athleticism" (Griffin, 1998, pp. 19-20). Consequently, name calling creates a situation in which many sporting women are policing their own bodies and appearances to fit with conventional femininity (Haugaa Engh, 2010). It is notable, in the current context of South African homophobia in which violence against Black lesbians in particular has been highly publicised, that accusations of being a lesbian in soccer is perceived as dangerous in this context (Naidoo & Muholi, 2010). This context clearly further exacerbates concerns amongst women and their parents, and especially within

certain communities where such 'hate crimes' have been well documented, for their engagement in soccer.

If the danger of 'name calling' is taken seriously and located within a context of material danger for women who identify as lesbian in South Africa, the participants' responses are understandable and unsurprising:

> "... if we want to encourage girls to play soccer we need to stop thinking that everyone in women's soccer is a lesbian … otherwise parents will not allow girls to play soccer…" (20 yrs old, White female soccer player from university 4 - Female focus group interviews)

> …it will always be difficult to address gender equity issues because men and the community label women that play soccer … it's not nice at all…" (23 yrs old, Black African female soccer player from university 3 - Female focus group interviews)

The responses suggest that not only will stigmatisation be disadvantageous for the development and promotion of girls' and women's soccer, but also that it might perpetuate the lack of progress in gender equity practices in soccer. It is already noted that when women enter the traditionally male world of soccer, their participation is often trivialised and/or devalued. It can be considered worse when the name calling is added in relation to the motivation of girls to play soccer. The name calling of women soccer players also addresses the struggle against exclusion but also the form and nature of inclusion in soccer. Considering the social attitude towards lesbianism, it is understandable that some parents will be reluctant to allow their daughters to participate in soccer because it defies social norms. It is also believed that the perceived and/or practice of lesbianism has affected the professionalisation and securing of sponsorship for women's soccer in South Africa, consequently perpetuating gender inequity practices in terms of resources and financial support (Naidoo & Muholi, 2010).

The sexual orientation, appearance, and dress code of some women soccer players has been identified as responsible for the name calling: *"…but women wants to look like us [men] and now walk like us … that's why they are labelled…"* (23 yrs old,

Coloured male soccer player from university 1 - mixed focus group). This response seems to suggest a continued assumption of rigid gender roles in which there is a restricted dress code and walk for men and women, and a woman that walks out of the socially gendered expectations is labelled, because she challenges the determined notion of appropriate femininity and sexuality. It seems to be overlooked that due to training soccer can shape one's body into what is viewed as a more androgynous form, but instead it appears that attempts at disciplining women's bodies and rendering them functional to the heterosexist norm is prioritised (Naidoo & Muholi, 2010). However it is perceived as *"… unfair to always think that all girls that play soccer are lesbians, but it's difficult not to because they do everything that men do…"* (25 yrs old, Black African male soccer player from university 3 - mixed focus group). This response, while seemingly sympathetic, also appears to represent the dominant social attitudes and beliefs about femininity and the construction of women soccer players as transgressive. There seems to be support for the dominant cultural concepts of feminine and femininity that legitimise unequal power relations between men and women, and make it difficult for women to view themselves, much less to be viewed by others, as an equal of men, or in soccer as valuable as men (Messner, 1994). It is this kind of thinking that arguably perpetuates the lack of progress in gender equity practices in soccer.

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed participants' perspectives on the lack of progress in gender equity practices in soccer, which resonate with much that has been documented in the literature and also emerges in the two other Findings chapters. The chapter further unpacked their suggestions for alternative approaches to promote gender equity practices in soccer which are important for challeging the current lack of progress. While the government sport policy is acknowledged, of concern are the lack of structures to develop soccer at grassroots level to ensure the sustainability of growth for boys' and girls' soccer. It is perceived that the absence of well organised structures for development programmes in soccer could perpetuate the lack of progress in gender equity practices in soccer. Schools are identified as important institutions, particularly primary schools, to encourage and develop an interest in

soccer for boys and girls. It is believed that schools have paid little attention to the development of soccer for girls in different age groups, or to nurture continuity and motivation in various age groups, as compared to boys. This kind of practice in soccer results in a continuing lack of progress in gender equity practices because it is normalised to focus on developing boys' soccer. The focus on primary schooling is perceived as a key strategy to increase girls' 'appetites' for soccer at the same time as encouraging mixed gender soccer practices to instil practices of gender equity at an early age. The curriculum is also recognised as a possible strategy to discuss the topic of gender equity practices in sport, and also make teachers aware of their possible role in reproducing gender stereotypes in sport and particularly soccer through mainstreaming boys' participation in soccer and girls' in netball.

The South African top-down approach to the development of soccer in general and girls' and women in soccer in particular is criticised because the focus is on senior national soccer teams. The importance of developing boys' and girls' soccer at grassroots level is overlooked because the existing development programmes mostly focus on boys' soccer with little focus on girls; consider the continuing different soccer leagues for various age groups for boys, which do not exist for girls. It is ignored that the development programmes for boys' and girls' soccer are not the same, and that this approach to soccer can perpetuate gender inequity practices in soccer. It is proposed that the bottom-up approach might be more appropriate in order to introduce and familiarise players with the issues of gender equity practices in soccer, rather than at a later stage when inequity is already in place and normalised.

In addition, the government's attempt to address practices of gender inequity is acknowledged but of concern is the lack of committed people to implement the policy to make sure that the progress of gender equity practices are implemented and monitored in soccer. The passion and seriousness of the people in soccer organisations and clubs in implementing and monitoring the implementation of the policy is questioned, given continued practices of inequity in soccer. Although the government has tried to address gender inequity in sport, it is however suspicious

that it does not interrogate the continuing bias of the media in relation to the dominance of men's soccer and lack of media coverage for women's soccer. It is believed that the government can intervene and encourage the media coverage of men's and women's soccer, and the lack of intervention generates a sceptism about the government role in promoting gender equity practices in soccer. The parents are also identified as playing a role in encouraging and/or discouraging the boys' and girls' participation in sports. Although it is admitted that sometimes parents might be resistant to allow girls to play soccer because of a lack of practise fields in close to their homes, it is also noted that dominant notions of femininity, in particular the domestication of girls, is one of the reason girls do not participate in sport in general, and soccer in particular.

The role of women in supporting their games has been questioned in the study, and is perceived as playing a role in the continued gender inequity practices in soccer. Women are encouraged to take ownership of their soccer, because they seem to have surrendered the role of developing their soccer, and are reliant on men to develop girls' and women's soccer. Men are arguably invested in maintaining their dominance in soccer, which might shape their agenda and seriousness in developing girls' and women's soccer. While the women's agenda is unclear in soccer, it is also noticed in the literature that women have not yet prioritised the progression and improvement of their soccer. It is unclear whether and how women problematise and interrogate the continuing media bias and lack of support from the sport organisations. Women have been identified as supporting men's games more than women's games, and that is perceived as perpetuating gender inequity in soccer. Participants also argued that the lack of publicised information about women's games might be one of the reasons for the lack of support for women's games. Even though women's games are predominantly free as compared to men's games that always charge an entrance fee, concerns are raised that they receive poor attendance and lack of media coverage. Furthermore, the lack of entrance fees in women's games can also be perceived as perpetuating gender inequity practices in soccer, because women's soccer will not be taken seriously.

Women who play soccer reportedly experience stigmatisation through name calling and questions about their physical appearance and dress. It appears that women who play soccer are 'automatically' assumed to be lesbians and negatively stigmatised within a homophobic, heteronormative society. This perception may also serve to undermine young women's engagement in soccer and serve to fuel parental resistance, given that lesbianism is not well received in most South African communities. Stigmatisation is perceived as promoting gender inequity because negative social attitudes towards women that play soccer can constrain girls' interest in soccer. The sexual orientation, appearance, and dress code of some women soccer players have been identified as responsible for the name calling. This means that there is a socially gendered expected and restricted dress code and performance, including how they walk, for men and women. Consequently, if a woman or man performs out of the socially gendered expectations they are labelled, because they challenge the predetermined notions of appropriate femininity and masculinity.

CHAPTER 8

LESSONS LEARNED AND THE WAY FORWARD: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction

This study explored soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity and the nature of gender equity practices in soccer at four Western Cape universities. The purpose was to gain an insight into the existing practices and to raise awareness of the existing gender equity practices or lack thereof, in soccer in the university context. Considering the focus of the study, the main question for this study has been: What are women's and men's soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices in soccer at four Western Cape universities in South Africa? As discussed in chapters one and three, the little existing research in soccer in general and the marginal documentary materials on women's soccer in particular, resulted in the conceptualisation of this study to understand how issues of gender equity in soccer are viewed at four South African universities. To date, there is no study that has offered an in-depth investigation of gender equity practices in soccer within university contexts in South Africa. Therefore, this study also examines the extent to which gender equity is practiced in soccer within the four universities, in order to contribute to current knowledge in the existing scholarship.

The study used feminist poststructuralism and Dickson's (1990) four principles within a feminist poststructuralist theoretical perspective: language, discourse, power and knowledge, and subjectivity, as lenses for data collection and analysis. In addition, the notion of social construction in relation to gender and sport was used to understand the significance of sport as a social institution that perpetuates the gendered ideologies in wider society through appealing to discourses of the naturalness of men's privilege and domination in society (Haugaa Engh, 2010). First, given the underrepresentation of women's experiences and voices in soccer, and under researched women's soccer in South Africa, the feminist poststructuralism was used for in-depth examination of personal experiences, perceptions,

relationships and contextual meanings of relations of power between men and women who are involved in soccer. It was further used to analyse the way meanings of gender equity and gender equity practices are constructed by soccer stakeholders, and also to question the normalised practices in soccer that are gendered in any way. As discussed in chapter two, the feminist poststructuralism was chosen because it offers researchers the opportunities to problematise and examine the way in which meaning is structured, produced through the discursive and interactive processes of everyday life, and circulates amongst us (Bailey, 1993; Weedon, 2004; Foucault, 1989). Thus, the feminist poststructuralism theory was used to understand men's and women's perceptions, experiences, and meanings of gender equity and gender equity practices as the discursive construction of subjects, knowledge, and beliefs about men's and women's soccer.

Second, Dickson's (1990) four principles: language, discourse, power and knowledge, and subjectivity were used because of the opportunity to critically analyse participants' responses regarding their meaning and everyday experiences of gender equity practices on and off the soccer fields. Considering that for the participants to access, construct, and narrate their understanding and 'reality' on gender equity practices in soccer they used language, it was important to recognise that it was not neutral but was shaped by socio-cultural and political structures. Language is understood as the "social practice" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 18) and in this study it was used by participants to represent their reality, social context, and practices of gender equity in soccer from their perspective, which is never neutral. Similarly, the analysis of discourses was important for this study because it foregrounds social practices that construct some aspect of reality about gender equity practices in soccer from the specific perspectives, because of the socio-historical background of soccer. In particular, when discourses are linked to a wide range of social identities and are embedded in diverse social institutions, they provide the need and the means to reflect on our own taken for granted ways of saying, doing [practice], thinking and valuing issues of gender equity practices in soccer (Gee, 1990).

As discussed in chapters two and three, the knowledge about soccer has been constructed by men for men, and they have power to decide what rules are

appropriate for the game, how resources and sponsorships should be distributed, and who should enjoy media publicity. However, while analysing the data for this study, it was important to be aware of the multiple forms of power that could play a role in shaping participants' consciousness as they explain and made sense of issues of gender equity practices in soccer. It could be argued that some of these multiple forms of power, for example, sexuality, gender, culture, social structure, and social domination shaped participants' perceptions and reflections of the experiences of gender equity practices in soccer within university contexts. Thus the concept of knowledge and power was significant in conceptualising the relationship between language, discourse, social institutions and participants' consciousness during the explanation and narration of experiences about gender equity practices in soccer.

To engage with participants' perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices in soccer in detail, the feminist qualitative approach was utilised (see chapter four). It was used to gain a more nuanced understanding of the research problem, and to provide comprehensive and holistic analyses of the data. The decision was informed by the realisation that feminist research considers that cultural meanings that circulate through men's and women's everyday lives shape their lived experiences and perceptions of gender equity practices in soccer. To analyse the data critical discourse analysis (in relation to feminist poststructuralism theory discussed in Chapter two) was used because of the argument that discourses contextualise participants' prioritised meanings and understandings within the "matrix of social action" of which it forms part of (Fairclough, 1992, p. 11). Thus, critical discourse analysis helped to deconstruct participants' discourses to reveal any taken for granted biases and inequity practices in soccer in the narrations. For the validation process, this study used credibility and trustworthiness, which addresses issues of research instruments and the data gathering instruments that were applied. For this study, the researcher and research assistant represent the research instrument and focus group and individual interview schedules were data gathering instruments. Trustworthiness was maintained through the triangulation of individual and focus group interviews with both male and female players, and also with female players only. Credibility is about prolonging stay in the research field until data saturation occurs, and for this study visiting four universities, watching university and

community league (SAFA) games, and conversing with soccer players while waiting for the games to start represent the credibility of the study.

The key research question for this study was: "What are women's and men's soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices in soccer at four Western Cape universities in South Africa?" To address this question, the study focused on six sub-questions:

1) What are soccer stakeholders' conception(s) and understanding(s) of gender equity?

2) Do the universities have gender equity policies and interventions in soccer, if so what do these include?

3) How is gender equity practiced in soccer at four Western Cape universities?

4) What role do the universities reportedly play in promoting gender equity practices in soccer?

5) What are women soccer players' experiences in soccer at their universities with respect to gender inequities in particular?

6) Why does gender inequity in soccer persist despite government attempts to address it?

In this final chapter I present an overview of the findings from the study. The chapter begins by summarising the findings of the study in relation to the research questions, as described in chapters one and four. This section of the chapter is followed by a discussion of significance/contributions of the study and is linked to wider debates and research on gender and soccer/football and gender equity and equality practices internationally and in South Africa. The implications of the study and the limitations associated with this study are discussed. Finally, the chapter concludes by outlining the possibilities for further research, and proposes more research in other universities and soccer clubs in the community in order to understand the nature of gender equity practices in soccer.

8.2 Summary of findings from the study

The main research question underpinning this study was: "What are women's and men's soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices in soccer at four Western Cape universities in South Africa?" This section reflects on how the study answered this question. It begins by reflecting on dominant discourses that emerged in the narratives of participants when talking about women in soccer: discourses on gender equality; discourses of gender equity as a superficial practice; discourses of 'favours for women' and male bias; and rationalising discourses for continued male dominance in soccer. This is followed by a summary of findings on perspectives on the value and role of gender equity policy and interventions in the four universities and perspectives on the lack of progress in gender equity practices in soccer.

8.2.1 Discourses on gender equality and equitable participation of women in soccer

The first discourse indicated the dominance of equal and same opportunity and treatment, which was disconnected from the understandings of power. This discourse assumed a binaristic understanding of men and women, and argue that these genders were unquestionable. High value has been placed on the role that equality can or should play in South African soccer, suggesting the dominance of liberal feminist and neo-liberal discourse because of the democratic government's Affirmative Action Policy of 2000. The findings suggest the lack of problematising the treatment of women as 'add-on' to the supposedly natural and hierarchical structure of soccer. The second discourse of gender equity as a superficial practice questions the lack of respect for women's soccer, and whether women are seriously recognised and accepted by the structures of soccer organisations. Thirdly, the discourse on 'favours for women' suggests the prevailing male bias in which women's participation in soccer continues to be viewed as secondary and less valuable than men's. This is noted in practices of soccer at universities through the way in which women's teams are provided with minimal support, expected to share or borrow male resources, and lose coaches to men's teams which are always prioritised. The preservation of male power is reportedly further practised in the allocation and distribution of financial support, due to the perceptions of the

management about women's soccer, which consequently shape the treatment of women's teams.

This study argues for the problematisation and interrogation of the reason(s) for the presence of 'many male teams', and questions the role that the universities play in encouraging the growth of women's soccer and the allocation of resources for all teams. The discourse on 'favours for women' and male bias suggests that the attitude and the behaviour of the management possibly address the male participatory and organisational discourses in soccer, which are not well researched in South African soccer, and result in a particular action and practice. The last rationalising discourses for continued male dominance in soccer suggests that gender equality is 'conditional' for women's teams, because the different levels of soccer they are playing at are not considered or valued the same as the men. These discourses are founded on the 'common sense' argument that women soccer players should not expect the same value and equal treatment as male teams since they are not at the same 'level' as men's soccer.
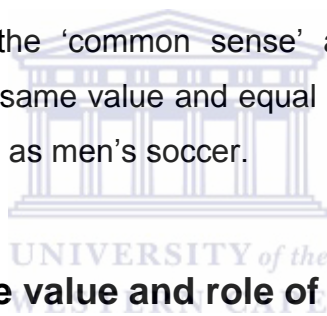
8.2.2 Perspectives on the value and role of gender equity policy and interventions in the four universities studied

The findings address concerns about the lack of gender equity policy in soccer, irrespective of the universities having the gender equity policy. Of interest is that while some administrators have read the university policy, they did not focus specifically on the details about gender equity in sports, and what it entails specifically in relation to soccer. This means they did not prioritise the implementation of the policy in soccer, and seem not to have considered the importance of a specific and directed policy in soccer. Regardless of the universities not having a directed gender equity policy in soccer, they had various interventions to encourage the participation of women. While it is unclear how they ensure the sustainability of women's participation in soccer, they alluded to the fact that the competitions increase and keep women interested in soccer. Of concern for administrators is the challenge to promote women's soccer because of lack of continuity, as women leave soccer before they mature in the sport. It is noted that

administrators did not seem to problematise or address the reasons why women were leaving soccer, but it appears to be something expected without interrogating and considering strategies to keep women playing soccer. The findings also suggest that although players did not know about the policy on gender equity practices, they were aware of practices of inequity in soccer at universities. It was also strongly evident in the findings that women leave soccer because of lack of support and development in the university.

The findings on the experiences of gender (in)equity practices in the universities corroborated the lack of support for women's soccer and women soccer players' experiences of marginalisation and neglect. Women's teams experienced various challenges from the lack of soccer jerseys to transportation to the games to represent the universities. They were expected to understand that the men's team always needed to wear soccer jerseys when they played for their respective universities, and that it made sense that women would sometimes not wear soccer jerseys. More biases were noticed as men's teams were featured in the university newspapers, irrespective of their performance, but women's teams only featured if and when they had won something. It is therefore clear from the findings that women's soccer continues to experience inequity practices in soccer, that women's soccer is devalued and secondary to male soccer, and that men's soccer and men in soccer continue to be prioritised.

8.2.3 Perspectives on the lack of progress in gender equity practices in soccer

The findings suggest that while the government's sport policy is acknowledged, of concern is the lack of structures to develop soccer at grassroots level to ensure the sustainability of growth for boys' and girls' soccer. It is perceived that the absence of well organised structures for development programmes in soccer could perpetuate the lack of progress in gender equity practices in soccer. It is believed that schools have paid little attention to the development of soccer for girls in different age groups, or to nurture continuity and motivation in various age groups, as compared to boys. This kind of practice in soccer results in a continuing lack of progress in gender equity practices because it is normalised to focus on developing boys'

soccer. The focus on primary schooling is perceived as a key strategy to increase girls' 'appetites' for soccer at the same time as encouraging mixed gender soccer practices to instill practices of gender equity at an early age. Schools are therefore identified as important institutions, particularly primary schools, to encourage and develop an interest in soccer for boys and girls. The curriculum is also recognised as a possible strategy to introduce discussions on issues of gender and sport and gender equity practices in soccer, and also make teachers aware of their possible role in reproducing gender stereotypes in soccer through mainstreaming boys' participation in soccer and girls' in netball.

It is also noted in the findings that the importance of developing boys' and girls' soccer at grassroots level is overlooked because the existing development programmes mostly focus on boys' soccer with little attention to girls – consider the continuing different soccer leagues for various age groups for boys, which do not exist for girls. What has been ignored is that the development programmes for boys' and girls' soccer are not the same, and that this approach to soccer can perpetuate gender inequity practices in soccer. It is proposed that the bottom-up approach, rather than the top-down approach, might be more appropriate in order to introduce and familiarise players with the issues of gender equity practices in soccer, rather than at a later stage when inequity is already in place and normalised.

In addition, there is a concern about the lack of passionate, serious, and committed people to implement and monitor the policy to make sure that the progress of gender equity practices are implemented and monitored in soccer. There is suspicion with the government's lack of interrogating the continuing bias of the media in relation to the dominance of men's soccer and lack of media coverage for women's soccer. It is believed that the government can intervene and encourage the media coverage of men's and women's soccer, while the lack of intervention generates a sceptism about the government's role in promoting gender equity practices in soccer. The parents are also identified as playing a role in encouraging and/or discouraging the boys' and girls' participation in sports. The dominant notion of femininity, in particular the domestication of girls, is identified as one of the reason girls do not participate in sport in general, and soccer in particular.

The role of women in supporting their games has been questioned in the study, and is perceived as playing a role in the continued gender inequity practices in soccer. It is important for women to take ownership of their soccer because they seem to have surrendered the role of developing their soccer, and are reliant on men to develop girls' and women's soccer. It is argued that men are invested in maintaining their dominance in soccer, which might shape their agenda and seriousness in developing girls' and women's soccer. It is also unclear whether and how women problematise and interrogate the continuing media bias and lack of support from the sport organisations. The lack of publicised information about women's games might be one of the reasons for the lack of support for women's games, although women have been identified as supporting men's games more than women's games, and this is perceived as perpetuating gender inequity in soccer. Furthermore, the lack of entrance fees in women's games, as compared to men's games that always charge an entrance fee, can also be perceived as perpetuating gender inequity practices in soccer, because women's soccer will not be taken seriously.

The findings further suggest that women who play soccer experience stigmatisation through name calling and questions about their physical appearance and dress. They are 'automatically' assumed to be lesbians and negatively stigmatised within a homophobic, heteronormative society. Stigmatisation is perceived as promoting gender inequity because of negative social attitudes towards women who play soccer, and this can constrain girls' interest in soccer, due to violent attacks. Because the sexual orientation, appearance, and dress code of some women soccer players have been identified as responsible for the name calling, it means that there is a socially gendered expected and restricted dress code, performance, including particular walks, for men and women.

8.3 Significance/contribution of the study

This study is significant because it contributes knowledge about gender equity practices in soccer within university contexts, due to lack of such research in South Africa. Researching the nature of sports and gender practices in sports at university seems not to be popular; this study is significant because it invites more research to be done in this context in order to have more information on the different practices

that take place in various sports. This study has shown that universities have the potential to perpetuate gender inequity practices in soccer, in particular if they are not interrogated and problematised, and the same might be happening in other sports. It is expected that students at universities question knowledge and inequality and inequity practices; this study revealed that student soccer players, particularly women soccer players, took for granted inequity practices that disadvantaged them. Thus this study is significant because it makes men and women soccer players aware of inequity practices they have been taking for granted, and that they perpetuate these practices.

The contribution to knowledge made by this study is the illumination of participants' conception of gender equity, which showed disconnection with the understandings of power. Understanding the conceptions of gender equity enabled this study to elucidate the perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices in soccer in South African universities. While it is known that women's soccer is not prioritised in South Africa, the reasons for this were unknown due to lack of research in this area. This study contributes knowledge that provides explanations for the continuing gender inequity practices in South African soccer generally and particularly at university. It contributes insights into the silencing of women's precarious positions in soccer because of contextual constraints in expressing their experiences. It also contributes knowledge by suggesting interventions and strategies that could be used to promote sustainable gender equity practices in soccer from grassroots developmental level to soccer league levels.

8.4 Implications of the study

The findings from this study have several implications, and this section of the chapter highlights some of these implications. These include implications for policy and practice and for further research. These implications should be understood within the context of the overarching findings of this study.

8.4.1 Implications for gender (in)equity practices in soccer in the university

In the first and third chapters I argued that there was a lack of research that specifically focuses on the state of gender equity practices in soccer in South African universities, in particular that during the apartheid era universities played a role in perpetuating gender discrimination in sports. The results of this study suggest the continuing gender inequity practices in soccer, which are performed in various ways, as a way of preserving men's power. Universities need to make sure that the allocation of resources and distribution of financial support for men's and women's teams enforce the practice of fairness. It is important for the university to provide training and constantly run workshops for management in soccer regarding the importance of implementing and monitoring policies, which might encourage reflection on the individual behaviour. The management (soccer administrators and team managers) need to make sure that men's and women's teams are fairly represented in the mainstream media, and interrogate the language that is used when both teams are reported. This thesis suggests that universities need to play a role in confronting and addressing the historical rules and structure of ideas that created and sustain preference for men's soccer. To attend to the treatment of women as 'add-on' to the supposedly natural and hierarchical structure of soccer, it is essential for the university to destabilise the continuing male dominant structures and practices in soccer, which became the measure of support and participation in soccer for males and females within the universities and society. The encouragement of women's participation in the structures and organisations of soccer in the university, not as window dressing, is important for different discourses in the way soccer is conceptualised and practised.

8.4.2 Implications for men's and women's attitude on gender equity practices in soccer

Considering that soccer fields are contested 'spaces' that have been traditionally and 'naturally' declared for men, it is unsurprising that gender equality is 'conditional' for women's teams. It is critical that men are encouraged to be aware of their behaviour, discourses and attitude towards women soccer players, considering signs of irritation and ego regarding the presence of women in the soccer fields. Women also need to

problematise the usage of forceful language in the soccer fields, rather than take it for granted as men's 'normal' behaviour. In addition, women also need to seriously consider their attitude towards the development and support of women's soccer, because of lack of ownership and prioritising the progression and improvement of their soccer. This thesis argues that there is no sense of urgency for women to challenge and problematise the current practices of gender equity in soccer, in particular when they are perceived as using negative discourse to talk about women's soccer and are not supporting women's soccer games. The thesis suggests that to encourage proper valuing of women's soccer at university and promote gender equity in South African soccer, it is important to reconceptualise soccer from the current understanding that still favours men's discourse.

8.4.3 Implications for stigmatisation of women soccer players

As discussed in chapter three, women who play male dominated sports usually experience name calling because they are a threat to the traditions of those sports. While it might not be easy to change some socio-cultural beliefs, it is important to use mainstream media to educate the society about the dangers of name calling and labelling individuals who play sports that are associated with a particular group. To be exact, considering that soccer is played by children, teenagers, young adults, and adults representing the society, it is important to use different platforms to enlighten them that individual sexual choices, appearance, and dress code have nothing to do with playing soccer, but represent an individual choice. Considering the power that teenagers and youth have in shaping the society's beliefs and behaviour, the schools, universities, and soccer clubs need to play a role in disseminating information that participation in sport usually changes the physical appearance of an individual, but it does not automatically classify an individual in a particular social group. Actually, it is crucial to make the society aware through mainstream media that sport is democratic and does not represent men's lifestyle, because that could result in gender stereotypes and discrimination. The soccer clubs and organisations have an important role to play in challenging and changing the society's beliefs and understandings of soccer as a symbol of masculine culture rather than a sport that can promote gender equity practices.

## 8.4.4 Implications for gender equity policy and practice in soccer

To ensure that gender equity is practised in university soccer, policy plays a crucial role in guiding and evaluating the implementation process and the impact on the game. Similarly, the designing of gender equity policy should seriously consider the continuous interaction and participation of various stakeholders in policy discussions, through visits to the soccer fields and soccer clubs, to gain an insight into their experiences and any challenges they face in their everyday practices in soccer. This would help to engage and address any problems as early as possible, and to formulate intervention programmes that could be introduced to enable soccer administrators, coaches, team managers and players to address the challenges. For the successful implementation of gender equity policy, it is important to select committed, passionate, skilled people, who will constantly monitor the implementation process. Thus, policies on gender equity practice in soccer need to encourage a continuous relationship between soccer administrators, coaches, team managers and players to constantly reflect on their practices on and off the soccer fields, so that consciousness is not only constrained in a specific context.

However, given the paucity of research in this area, it could mean that policy designers lack information on whether and how gender equity is practised in soccer and particularly soccer fields. If research is not done in this area, policy designers will continue to lack information on what is working or not working, and what are challenges or successes in addressing gender equity practices in soccer in the university. It is important that the government encourages universities to persuade students to investigate the relationship between gender and soccer and gender equity practices in soccer in different faculties and departments in order to provide relevant and contemporary information. If the lack of research information on gender equity practices in soccer continues, it would be difficult for policy designers to know what needs to be improved in soccer to overcome the continuous gender inequity practices in soccer.

8.4.5 Implications for soccer development at grassroots level

The development of interest in sport for children from the grassroots level has the potential of promoting sustainable participation in sport at a later age. Schooling,

particularly primary school, also plays a role in instilling the culture of participation in sport for children, which can be nurtured until university level. This thesis argues that the structures that develop soccer at grassroots and school level need to be qualified, skilled, and committed, to be able to motivate children to participate in sport. Without marginalising other sports, considering that soccer is one of the dominant sports in South Africa, and is popular in townships, it should not be difficult for teachers and grassroots development organisations to encourage boys and increase girls' 'appetite' to play the sport. It is the opportunity at an early age to teach children about discriminatory practices in soccer and the importance of respecting each other's game. This information can be reiterated at schools by teachers to ensure that communication is not unidirectional but multi-directional, and teachers should be provided with training and coaching skills. This means that it is important that physical education becomes part of the curriculum and is implemented strictly, in order to inspire children to recognise the role of sports in their development and school performance. In schools, participation in sports should not be perceived as optional but should be promoted as part of the culture of the school, where children also learn about life skills.
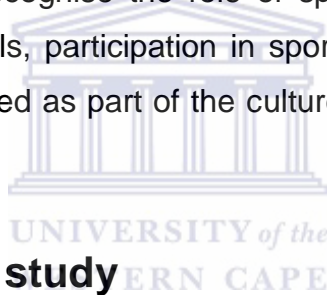
8.5 Limitations of the study

This study was limited to only four universities in the Western Cape province, and could have also included further education training (FET) colleges as part of institutions of higher learning. Considering the limitation of space for this thesis, the four universities could not necessarily be regarded as a small sample, however an analysis of gender equity practices in other provinces could have presented a more holistic picture of the state of gender equity practices in South African universities.

Second, another possible limitation of the study is a tendency to discuss gender in terms of male (boys and men) and female (women and girls). The study assumed *a priori* that human species was unproblematically divided biologically into males and females. Even though it accepted the socially constructed nature of what constituted masculinities and femininities, the study attempted to question the binary divisions of people into two sexes. Third, this study focused on the concepts of gender and socio-cultural background, and overlooked the role of racial and economic

background in shaping participants' responses, in particular that the four universities were established based on racial and economic representation.

8.6 Possibilities for further research

This study establishes that in spite of the experiences of gender inequality practices in sports during apartheid, and the roles that some universities played in perpetuating the government's racial and gender discrimination in sports, research in South Africa and universities has not prioritised investigating the state of gender equity practices in South African universities. The evidence lies in the lack of literature and research that focuses on gender equity practices in soccer at universities, and also in schools and the society. It is important to conduct research in other universities that critically analyse gender equity practices in their soccer teams. In addition, the same study should be done in the community with a focus on soccer clubs, because directly or indirectly they feed players to the universities after completing schooling. Similarly, research should be conducted in schools to gain an insight into the practices that occur on their soccer fields, and understand teachers' perceptions of girls' participation in soccer and their conceptions of gender equity practices in soccer.

Considering the continuing gender inequity practices in soccer, which are also identified in women's senior national soccer teams, research should be conducted with the players investigating suggestions on how to address gender inequity in soccer. There is a great need to encourage soccer players to participate in conducting research about their games, rather than to wait for someone to do research about them, as another way of making people aware of the practices that take place in soccer and increasing information about women's soccer in South Africa. Researching perceptions of the community about the status of women's soccer in South Africa and lack of media coverage, is one of the issues to problematise because they discriminate against women's soccer. Understanding how the society perceives women's soccer and women soccer players could help with information to understand the violence the women experience in the society.

The implementation of the gender equity policy is the responsibility of soccer administrators, coaches (which are dominantly men) and team managers, however there is a lack of research that explores their attitudes and behaviour towards women's soccer, particularly their perceptions of gender equity practices in soccer. In addition, a longitudinal research needs to be done in urban and rural community soccer to understand girls' and women's experiences of participating in soccer; this research can be done in collaboration with women soccer players at universities. Due to different contexts, it is assumed that the experiences might be different and result in reaching information and knowledge. The rural areas are mostly marginalised and the state of sport and soccer in particular is not known, even though it is known that soccer is always played with a plastic or tennis ball. Considering the embeddedness of traditional and cultural beliefs and the strongly defined gender practices in rural areas, there is lack of research to understand whether and how gender and culture shape gender equity practices in soccer.

It is of concern that South Africa is perceived as a soccer nation, however the inequity practices within the sport are taken for granted. Research with senior management in the South African Football Association (SAFA), interrogating and problematising the nature of their structures and their perceptions about gender equity practices in soccer is needed. They are tasked to design and implement policies that address issues of gender equity practices in national soccer, however given the continuing inequity and inequality practices in soccer, it is important to hear their perspective on the current practices in soccer. It should not be the responsibility of universities to write about soccer issues, but soccer players should be encouraged to have a voice using media to communicate and inform the society about the practices in soccer. There is possibly a lack of information about women's soccer because, as mentioned earlier, they are relying on other people to represent their experiences in soccer.

8.7 Conclusion of the study

This study reveals the urgent need for more research to be done on the state of sport in general and soccer in particular in South Africa, focusing on complex gender (in)equity practices that occur at universities. Considering the continuing gender

inequity practices in soccer in the society, it is of concern that researching gender (in)equity practices in soccer within university contexts has received little attention. The study unsurprisingly confirms various gender inequity practices in soccer within university contexts, but of concern is that soccer players ignore these practices due to their conception of gender equity and also normalise men's dominance in soccer and women's marginalisation in soccer.

In addition, the study shows that the participants' conceptions and meanings of gender equity overlook the inequalities of power relations that shape the manner in which individuals understand and make sense of power relations they are part of. In this study, participants' conceptualised gender equity in ways that instituted and reinforced inequitable gender relations, due to the disconnection with the understandings of power relations. Their conceptions further assumed a binaristic understanding of men and women without questioning the socio-cultural and political construction of the genders. This means participants have not challenged the dominant construction of gender ravaged by inequitable gendered social relations. They seem to have had little control to exercise agency in ways that systematically subverted dominant values of gender and gender inequity practices. Consequently, alternative practices of gender equity in soccer appear not to have been conceived by soccer stakeholders, making it important to constantly engage with soccer players in community and university soccer to understand their conceptions of gender and gender equity practices because it seems to shape their perceptions. I noticed that as participants explained and narrated their conceptions and experiences of gender equity practices in soccer, they became aware of the issues and practices they had been taking for granted. This means the more we engage in critical conversations with all soccer stakeholders, the more likely practices of gender inequity could be addressed.

The study made suggestions and created questions to try and implement and answer, acknowledging that it is a process to change traditional and ideological gender inequity practices in soccer. However, this study hopes to have opened new possibilities for more research, while acknowledging the continuing struggles of addressing gender and gender inequity practices in soccer and sports generally.

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APPENDIX A

<u>University of the Western Cape</u>
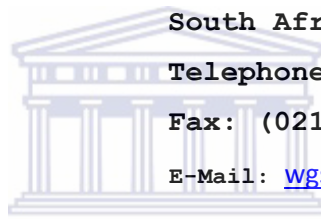
Women's and Gender Studies Programme

Private Bag X17 Bellville 7535

South Africa Telegraph: NIBELL

Telephone: (021) 959 2234/3360

Fax: (021) 959 1273

E-Mail: wgs@uwc.ac.za

Soccer's stakeholder's perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices in soccer at four Western Cape universities in South Africa.

Research consent form

I, the participant, of my free will, enter into participation in this research study with the understanding of the following:

The nature of the research

- The researcher, Ms Thabisile Nkambule, from the University of the Western Cape in Women's and Gender Studies, is conducting the research.
- The research forms part of the requirement for Ms Nkambule's PhD degree, under the supervision of Professor Tamara Shefer at the University of the Western Cape.

My rights as a participant

- I have not been forced, coerced or deceived into participation in this study in any manner whatsoever.
- I have the right to decline participation and to terminate my participation in this study at any point in the research process.
- I will remain anonymous and my name and identity will be kept from public knowledge.
- Any information I reveal during the course of this study shall remain confidential, and shall only be used for the purposes of this research and for publication in Ms Nkambule's dissertation, and relevant or appropriate publications.
- I grant permission for any information I reveal during the interview process to be taped, with the understanding that the tapes and the data contained therein, will remain in the

possession of the interviewer, Ms Nkambule, and will not be released for public consumption.

I……………………………………………………………………. (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   DATE

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Signature of Interviewer   Signature of Supervisor

_____   _____

Thabisile Nkambule   Professor Tamara Shefer

(073) 4935098   (021) 959 2234

APPENDIX B

University of
the Western Cape

Women's and Gender Studies Programme
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INFORMATION SHEET

Soccer's stakeholder's perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices in soccer at four Western Cape universities in South Africa.

This research project investigates soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices in soccer at Western Cape universities in South Africa. The study furthermore intends to interrogate the role of university in promoting gender equity in soccer. The following are the key research questions that the research hopes to answer:

- What are soccer stakeholders' conception(s) and understanding(s) of gender equity?
- Do the universities have gender equity policies and interventions in soccer, if so what do these include?
- How is gender equity practiced in soccer at four Western Cape Universities?
- What role do the universities reportedly play in promoting gender equity practises in soccer?
- What are women soccer players' experiences in soccer at their universities with respect to gender inequities in particular?
- Why does gender inequity in soccer persist despite government attempts to address it?

The study will include individual interviews and focus groups interviews in which six female and male soccer players will hold a discussion on the topic. The focus group interviews will include soccer players of mixed gender, unless you feel uncomfortable being interviewed in a mixed gender group. The focus group interviews will last for approximately one hour and will take place in either a sport club or soccer club on campus. The focus groups will be run in English as the study focuses on students at university level.

Participation in the individual interview and focus group interviews is totally voluntary, and you should only do so if you fully understand the aims of the research and would like to participate in this research. You will also have the right to withdraw from the individual interview and/or focus group or from the research project at any stage. Inevitably, there is a risk in focus groups that confidentiality and anonymity may be broken by other participants. All participants are thus asked to commit themselves to confidentiality and anonymity to avoid such a situation. You will be required to sign a consent form and a confidentiality form at the beginning of the group that will protect you and others in

the group and inform you of your rights as a research participant. My goal is that you will benefit from hearing what others have to say on the issue, and I endeavour to ensure that no harm is done to any who participate in the research process. I am looking forward to having you participate in the group if you so decide.

Contact details: Thabisile Nkambule: Thabisile.nkambule@gmail.com

Cell phone: 0734935098

APPENDIX C

<u>University of</u>

<u>the Western Cape</u>

Women's and Gender Studies Programme
**Private Bag X17 Bellville 7535
South Africa Telegraph: UNIBELL
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E-Mail: wgs@uwc.ac.za

Soccer's stakeholder's perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices in soccer at four Western Cape universities in South Africa.

Confidentiality Commitment Form

I understand that some of the issues discussed in the focus groups which I am to participate in may be of a sensitive nature and/or involve personal experiences of other group members or their families and friends. The research is *not* focusing on personal experiences and the facilitator will attempt to steer the group away from personal disclosures, but there is a possibility that this may happen anyway. I would like you as a participant of the group to commit yourself to absolute confidentiality of whatever is discussed in this group.

I commit myself to keeping all discussions that we have in the focus group confidential and will not divulge any details of any persons here or any persons they may mention to anyone outside of this group:

Signature: …………………………………

Date:…………………………………………..

Place: ……………………………………………

Facilitator/s: ……………………………...........

Witness: ……………………………………

xxx

APPENDIX D

University of the Western Cape

Women's and Gender Studies Programme
**Private Bag X17 Bellville 7535
South Africa Telegraph: UNIBELL
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Fax: (021) 959 1273
E-Mail:** wgs@uwc.ac.za

Date:

The Sports Director
University of the Western Cape Stadium
Private Bag X17
Bellville
7535

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR AUTHORITY AND CONSENT TO RESEARCH MEN AND WOMEN SOCCER PLAYERS AND SOCCER ADMINISTRATORS IN YOUR INSTITUTION

My name is Thabisile Nkambule, currently pursuing doctoral studies in Women's and Gender Studies at the University of the Western Cape. My programme requires that I conduct a research and my area of specialization is Gender and Sports. I am requesting your authority and consent to conduct a research in your institution. My study is **"Soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices in soccer at four Western Cape Universities in South Africa".** The study furthermore intends to interrogate the role of university in promoting gender equity in soccer.

The participation of all soccer stakeholders is voluntary and they may withdraw without any disadvantage to them, if it becomes impossible to continue with the study. Participation will take the form of individual interviews, focus groups interviews, and a review of a sport or soccer document or policy. There will be one individual and focus groups interviews, unless a need arise to do a follow-up in an interview. Individual and focus groups interviews will not take more than an hour. The dates and times for interviews will be negotiated with the participants.

With their permission, I will record the interviews to help me remember what they said. I will summarise them and return to participants to confirm the accuracy of the interviews. I will turn off the tape at any time they ask me to and they may also choose not to answer questions at any time. All the interviews will be kept confidential from other people and will be destroyed when the study is fully completed. I will make up pseudonyms and no other identifying information about the participants will be written to remain anonymous. Findings will be reported and disseminated in cumulative terms, unless otherwise with their written permission.

You may contact me with any questions or additional comments during their participation and at any time after the study is complete on above address or you can contact my supervisor:

Prof Tammy Shefer
Women and Gender Studies Programme
Faculty of Arts
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X17
Bellville 7535
South Africa
Tel +27 (0) 21 959 2234
Cell +27 (0) 822023570

I thank you in advance for your assistance

Yours sincerely

Thabisile Nkambule (Ms)

To be completed by the Sports Director/Administrator/Manager:

I..hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research, and I give authority and consent for soccer players and soccer administrator to participate in this research. I understand that participation is voluntary and they are at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time, should they so desire.

_____   _____

            Signature of Participant   Date

APPENDIX E

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Ms Thabisile Nkambule currently enrolled for a PhD degree in Women's and Gender Studies Department at the University of the Western Cape. The title of the study is: Soccer stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of gender equity practices in soccer at four Western Cape universities in South Africa.

I am requesting access to your university to engage with soccer players in the soccer fields and residences to conduct a research from April 2011. Please find attached all relevant information to help you better understand what the study is all about as well as the type of assistance I will be requiring from you. These forms serves as examples of the hard copies I will come with during the visit in the institution signed by my Supervisor. The collected data will be used strictly for study and Conference presentations.

Please feel free to contact me using the Wits email address, as I am currently employed in the institution, should there be anything you wish to ask regarding the study. Your participation will be greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance and looking forward to your favourable response.

Yours Sincerely
Ms Thabisile Nkambule (student number: 2873271)
073 493 5098
(011) 717 3049

Email: Thabisile.nkambule@gmail.com

APPENDIX F

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

SOCCER PLAYERS

1. Please tell me about yourself
   - In which Province are you from?
   - Your school background
2. Can you tell me how you came to be a soccer player?
3. When you think of your soccer experiences, what stands out in your mind?
4. What impact did playing soccer have in your life?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is your general understanding of gender equity? i.e. the meaning of gender equity.
2. With this understanding in mind, would you say gender equity is practiced in soccer in your University?
3. How is it practiced (if yes); What do you think are the challenges (if no)?
4. What are your experiences (if any) of gender (in)equity practice(s) in soccer in your university?
5. Do you know of an existing gender equity policy in soccer in your university?
6. What role do you think the university can play in promoting gender equity in soccer?
7. What role can you play in ensuring that gender equity is practiced in soccer?

APPENDIX G

SPORTS ADMINISTRATORS' INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself:

   - In which Province are you from?
   - Could you please talk briefly about your soccer background

2. With these experiences in mind, which experience(s) stands out for you?

3. How did you come to work in this institution as a sport administrator in soccer?

4. What are some of the duties of the soccer administrator?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is your understanding of gender equity? i.e. the meaning of gender equity.

2. The Amendment of Act 110 of 1988 (in 2006) talks of policies for the promotion of [gender] equity, representivity and redress in sport. Is gender equity promoted in soccer in your University? If yes How and if not Why not?

3. To what extent is gender equity practiced in soccer in this university?

4. Do you have a gender equity policy in sport and soccer in your institution?

5. What challenges, if any, of gender equity practices have you identified in soccer in your university?

6. In your opinion, do soccer players know of the existing, if any, gender equity policy in soccer in this institution?

7. Based on your experiences, what could be done to improve gender equity practices in soccer in your institution?

APPENDIX H

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTONS

1. Let us briefly talk about your understanding of gender equity. What does it mean in general?
2. Now, in soccer, what does gender equity mean?
3. What role, if any, does gender equity play in soccer?
4. How does your University promote gender equity in soccer?
5. Based on your experiences as players, how has men and women soccer been treated in your University?
6. What are the causes of different treatments, if any, between the two genders? Depending on the response.
7. What challenges have you identified as influencing gender (in)equity promotion in soccer in this university?
8. Have you been informed by the University about the gender equity policy in sport and soccer?
9. What do you think could be done to improve gender equity practices in soccer in your university?