

**Educators' and Learners' Perceptions of Gender  
and Sport in a secondary school in the Umlazi  
South District, Durban**

by

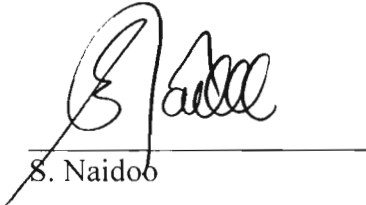
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**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of a  
Master of Education Degree at the Faculty of Education  
University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban**

**February 2007**

## PREFACE

I, Saraspathy Naidoo, hereby certify that this research project, conducted under the supervision of Prof. Deevia Bhana at the Faculty of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for acquisition of any degree or diploma at another tertiary institution. Where use was made of the works of others, these have been duly acknowledged in the text.



S. Naidoo

February 2007

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

Prof. Deevia Bhana

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **ABSTRACT**

Within the new South African curriculum Physical Education (PE) or school sport has been integrated into Life Orientation (LO). The promotion of gender equality in school is embedded within LO. Not only is sport perceived as an investment in health but at the level of policy it is hoped that school sport can play an enormous part in redressing gender equalities.

This study is an analysis of the perceptions of Life Orientation (LO) sport educators and grade ten learners towards school, sport and gender at a predominately black working class secondary school in Durban. By using a qualitative approach and drawing from interviews with educators and learners in Brookdale High (a pseudonym), their perceptions towards gender and school sport were elicited. Five educators who teach grade ten LO sport were selected to form part of this study and individual interviews were conducted with them. Five boys and five girls in total from grade ten classes were randomly selected and focus group interviews were conducted.

The study concludes that despite the underlying premise that gender equality in LO sport, there is very little evidence from this study that gender equality is being considered seriously at Brookdale High. It is argued that school sport is a regulatory institution which stereotypical gender roles are played out. It is further argued that racial stereotypes with regards to soccer, volleyball and netball are also played out. LO sport educators argue that LO sport is a marginalised area of teaching and is being overlooked by the school and the National Department of Education. Gender in their view is not an important consideration and familiar stereotypes prevail. As far as the learners are concerned while there is evidence that boys and girls are open to gender equality in the sports field, there is overwhelming evidence from this study that school sport is another area for the perpetuation of gender equalities.

At the same time the social context of the school precludes the development of sport at a broader level. There is lack of resources and very little, if any financial investment into growing sport at the school. These broader contexts within the school helps in defining and regulating perceptions of sport which are not gender fair.

In demonstrating how uneven gender power relations manifest in sport I highlighted the need for gender to be recognised as issues for boys and girls in the sports field. Sport is very closely connected to the gendering process as it demarcates differences. The construction of masculine and feminine identities in school sport is done in complex and contradictory ways.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents,  
Mrs and the late Mr M. Pillay.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly I wish to thank God for granting me the wisdom, courage and strength to undertake this study in my specialised field of Gender and Sport.

To Professor Deevia Bhana, as my supervisor and mentor, your expert guidance, insight, support and inspiration was unbelievable. Thanks for really opening my eyes to the theoretical world of Gender.

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To all who should have been, but were not singled out by name, special apologies and thanks.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   | <b>Page</b> |
|---|-------------|
| <b>CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY</b>                       |             |
| <b>1.1 Introduction</b>   | <b>1</b>    |
| <b>1.2 Motivation of the Research</b>                                   | <b>3</b>    |
| <b>1.3 Physical education as Life Orientation</b>                       | <b>4</b>    |
| <b>1.4 Aims of the Study</b>  | <b>5</b>    |
| <b>1.5 Research Questions</b>   | <b>6</b>    |
| <b>1.6 Framework of study</b>   | <b>6</b>    |
| <b>1.7 Masculinity and femininity as social constructions</b>           | <b>9</b>    |
| <b>1.8 The complexities of gender issues and gender equity in sport</b> | <b>10</b>   |
| <b>1.9 Rationale for the research methods used</b>                      | <b>10</b>   |
| <b>1.10 Definition and clarification of key concepts</b>                | <b>11</b>   |
| <b>1.11 Overview of the thesis</b>                                      | <b>13</b>   |
| <br>  |             |
| <b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW: AN OVERVIEW OF GENDER AND SPORT</b>  |             |
| <b>2.1 Introduction</b>   | <b>14</b>   |
| <b>2.2 Theoretical Perspectives</b>                                     | <b>14</b>   |
| <b>2.2.1 Liberal feminism</b>   | <b>15</b>   |
| <b>2.2.2 Radical feminism</b>   | <b>15</b>   |
| <b>2.2.3 Marxist feminism</b>   | <b>16</b>   |
| <b>2.2.4 Socialist feminism</b>   | <b>16</b>   |
| <b>2.2.5 Post-structural Feminism</b>                                   | <b>17</b>   |
| <b>2.3 Gender, race and class in Sport</b>                              | <b>17</b>   |
| <b>2.4 Feminist Theories: Connections between Gender and Sport</b>      | <b>19</b>   |
| <b>2.5 Gender, Sport and Schooling</b>                                  | <b>20</b>   |
| <b>2.6 Research on Masculinities</b>                                    | <b>23</b>   |
| <b>2.7 Bodies, Gender and Sport</b>                                     | <b>24</b>   |
| <b>2.8 Coeducational Physical Education</b>                             | <b>27</b>   |
| <b>2.9 Learners' selection of gender appropriate activities</b>         | <b>29</b>   |

|             |  |           |
|-------------|--|-----------|
| <b>2.10</b> | <b>The role of PE and LO sports educators</b>  | <b>30</b> |
| <b>2.11</b> | <b>Why gender and sport issues need to be taken seriously by policymakers and educators?</b> | <b>30</b> |
| <b>2.12</b> | <b>The organisation of Sport in South Africa</b>   | <b>31</b> |
| <b>2.13</b> | <b>Chapter summary</b>   | <b>32</b> |

### **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS**

|             |   |           |
|-------------|---|-----------|
| <b>3.1</b>  | <b>Introduction</b>                                       | <b>33</b> |
| <b>3.2</b>  | <b>The research design</b>                                | <b>33</b> |
| <b>3.3</b>  | <b>The qualitative research approach</b>                  | <b>34</b> |
| <b>3.4</b>  | <b>The interpretative paradigm</b>                        | <b>35</b> |
| <b>3.5</b>  | <b>Background of school</b>                               | <b>35</b> |
| <b>3.6</b>  | <b>Sampling plan</b>                                      | <b>36</b> |
| <b>3.7</b>  | <b>Criteria for selection of participants (educators)</b> | <b>37</b> |
| <b>3.8</b>  | <b>Criteria for selection of participants (learners)</b>  | <b>39</b> |
| <b>3.9</b>  | <b>Information sources and instrumentation</b>            | <b>39</b> |
| <b>3.10</b> | <b>Conducting the interviews (learners)</b>               | <b>40</b> |
| <b>3.11</b> | <b>Conducting the interviews (educators)</b>              | <b>41</b> |
| <b>3.12</b> | <b>Data analysis and presentation</b>                     | <b>42</b> |
| <b>3.13</b> | <b>Ethical issues</b>                                     | <b>43</b> |
| <b>3.14</b> | <b>Possible limitation of the study</b>                   | <b>43</b> |
| <b>3.15</b> | <b>Chapter summary</b>                                    | <b>44</b> |

## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

|              |   |           |
|--------------|---|-----------|
| <b>4.1</b>   | <b>Introduction</b>   | <b>45</b> |
| <b>4.2</b>   | <b>Educators' Perceptions of Gender and Sport</b>                   | <b>46</b> |
| <b>4.2.1</b> | <b>Sport and gender as a marginalised subject at Brookdale High</b> | <b>47</b> |
| <b>4.2.2</b> | <b>Facilities and fair play</b>                                     | <b>49</b> |
| <b>4.2.3</b> | <b>Impact of Coeducational sport on gender</b>                      | <b>50</b> |
| <b>4.2.4</b> | <b>Male educators, sport and masculinity</b>                        | <b>53</b> |
| <b>4.2.5</b> | <b>Female educators and views about boys and girls in sport</b>     | <b>54</b> |
| <b>4.2.6</b> | <b>Bodily shame and showers</b>                                     | <b>56</b> |
| <b>4.3</b>   | <b>Learners' Perceptions of Gender and Sport</b>                    | <b>57</b> |
| <b>4.3.1</b> | <b>Boys and Girls Negotiating Sport and Gender</b>                  | <b>60</b> |
| <b>4.3.2</b> | <b>Racialising Perceptions of Volleyball, Netball and Soccer</b>    | <b>61</b> |
| <b>4.3.3</b> | <b>Masculine identity and the culture of boys' spaces</b>           | <b>66</b> |
| <b>4.3.4</b> | <b>Girls, femininity and resistance to sport</b>                    | <b>66</b> |
| <b>4.3.5</b> | <b>Bodies, sport and gender</b>                                     | <b>68</b> |
| <b>4.3.6</b> | <b>Learners' responses on showers</b>                               | <b>70</b> |
| <b>4.4</b>   | <b>Chapter Summary</b>  | <b>71</b> |

## **CHAPTER FIVE: IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

|            |  |           |
|------------|--|-----------|
| <b>5.1</b> | <b>Educators</b>   | <b>72</b> |
| <b>5.2</b> | <b>Learners</b>  | <b>75</b> |
| <b>5.3</b> | <b>Implications for Girls</b>                                | <b>75</b> |
| <b>5.4</b> | <b>Implications for Boys</b>                                 | <b>76</b> |
| <b>5.5</b> | <b>Changing the way sport is perceived in Brookdale High</b> | <b>77</b> |
| <b>5.6</b> | <b>Implications of the study</b>                             | <b>79</b> |
| <b>5.7</b> | <b>The way forward</b>                                       | <b>79</b> |
| <b>5.8</b> | <b>Conclusion</b>  | <b>81</b> |

**Bibliography**

**82**

**Appendices**

# **CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

## **1.1 Introduction**

School sport is a key site for producing and reproducing gender inequalities. The need to draw attention to long-standing inequities in the policies and practices of Physical Education (PE) in South African schools and address the roles that educators and learners, can play in either reinforcing or challenging gender equality in this highly gendered curriculum is a must. This study aims to investigate the gendered nature of sport amongst grade ten learners and sports educators at a predominantly black working class secondary school, Brookdale High (all names are pseudonyms) in Durban. At the outset it must be noted that the term PE was historically used to denote sport in the South African educational system and for the purpose of this study it would continue likewise while Life Orientation (LO) in the new curriculum incorporates PE as LO sport. Schools and PE departments are powerful social and patriarchal institutions structured along dominant lines that work to reproduce gender inequalities. School sport, for Paechter (2001) is, essentially, a regulatory institution through which stereotypical gender roles are played out. The schooling process defines and regulates what is socially acceptable through adherence to the required gender regimes through the activities on offer. Messner and Sabo (2005) argue that sport is a highly gendered institution through which gender inequalities are being produced.

In South Africa, sport is strikingly important and is highly racialised. Historically, participation and resourcing in school sports was racially marked and continues to be so notwithstanding the emerging context of change and development (Bhana, forthcoming). Quite often in formerly black schools (Indian, Coloured and African) several soccer or makeshift cricket pitches might be available and very few rugby fields, tennis courts, netball courts and swimming pools as juxtaposed to the former white schools. This study is premised on the need identified by the Gender Equity Task Team Report (1997) to draw attention to long-standing inequities in the policies and practices of sport in South African schools and the role that schools, learners and educators can play in either reinforcing or challenging gender equality.

In demonstrating how uneven gender power relations manifest in sport, I would highlight the need for gender to be recognised as issues for boys and girls in such

arenas. My approach is more towards greater integration in sport, rather than polarize the experiences of boys and girls in sport. In advocating integration, it becomes clear that the difference within groups of boys and girls are more important than those between such groups. Currently school based sport in the curriculum is represented by LO which has a component of sport, has replaced PE. LO is an important area for study, as it the only experience of physical activity gained by young girls and boys.

LO is the study of the self in relation to others and to society. It applies a holistic approach. It is concerned with the personal, social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, motor and physical growth of the learner, and the way in which these dimensions are interrelated and expressed in life. L.O is a unique subject at the Further Education and Training (FET) which was implemented in 2006 in grade ten. There are four areas of focus in this subject, namely,

Learning Outcome 1: Personal Well-being

Learning Outcome 2: Citizenship Education

**Learning Outcome 3: Recreation and Physical Well-being (my emphasis)**

Learning Outcome 4: Careers and Career choices.

For this study I would be focussing on Learning Outcome 3, as it is the only outcome that focuses on the sport for the learners, hence it would be referred to as LO sport. School sport is recognised as an integral, extra-mural, co-curricular component of the programme. Learners are encouraged to participate continuously in recreational activities, physical exercises and sport for lifelong well-being. At the outset, my argument is that school sport is highly gendered in spite of the optimists who claim that barriers to girls' full participation in sport have been removed (Kirk 1999). The inability to recognise the lasting influence of the gendered history of PE has serious consequences for learners' opportunities in PE and LO sport.

## 1.2 Motivation of the Research

The proposed study is based in a predominantly black working class school which was formerly Indian only. Brookdale High is situated in an industrial area, where job opportunities for previously disadvantaged sectors are increasing. This explains the change in the racial demographics of the school which now has a majority of black learners as many black parents are moving into the area that was predominantly Indian while many black learners travel to school from township areas. The provision of sports in the school bears the mark of apartheid as resources are limited due to financial constraints. Most schools in the surrounding township schools near Umlazi district do not have proper sporting facilities, let alone specific sports fields for male and female codes of sport like netball courts and separate volleyball and basketball courts. Popular codes of sport like soccer take precedence over these less favoured codes played by the minority of learners both girls and boys. Racial perceptions for selecting gender appropriate activities will be investigated. Currently sport occupies an important part of school policy in South Africa where black schools have historically been disadvantaged. Promoting gender equality in school sport is part of redressing historical inequalities and thus contributing to nation-building and sporting success. Sport is perceived as an investment in health, social, mental, moral well being and the productivity of the youth. Because of its visibility, school sport can play an enormous part in redressing gender inequalities and discrimination (Renold 1997).

My research interest stems out of a personal recognition that school sport is a highly gendered practice within the school curriculum. I am a former physical education teacher and am uniquely placed to question the sensitive relationship between gender and sport at my school. Having completed the Gender and Curriculum module in the Master of Education qualification I have become highly aware of the literature in gender and sport and am able to link in better ways my understandings of what is actually happening in practice.

In terms of policy, school sport has received mandatory input from two policy frameworks:

1. Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) and Life Orientation (LO) exposes learners to, and encourage them to participate in, recreational and physical activities to enhance well-being. School sport is recognized as an integral, extra-mural, co-curricular component of the education programme.
2. The Department of Sport and Recreation Act in South Africa in White Paper 1997 advocates the pervasive theme of “Getting the Nation to Play” but the current situation in school sport is dismal.

### **1.3 Physical Education as Life Orientation**

The status of PE in South African schools reflects the complexities and conflicts which characterize any education system in a process of transition. In terms of the RNCS policy document PE no longer has a unique placing; rather it is incorporated in the Learning Area LO sport. The focus of this learning area is ‘to equip learners for meaningful and successful living, in a rapidly changing and transforming society’ (Sitzer 2001). In light of the FET implementation in 2006 in grade ten, it is compulsory that all learners do LO as part of the core curriculum till grade twelve. The subject is mostly taught by non-specialist PE educators and workshops form the only basis of LO training. Many specialist PE educators have been absorbed into the academic programme (Solomons 2002). This has been the case for many South African educators due to rationalisation, redeployment and specifically with the removal of PE from the curriculum. Also the misconception that LO is a non academic subject thus the excess educators could be accommodated in a ‘soft’ subject like LO.

My argument is that PE lessons and future LO sport present an important arena for the construction and consolidation of dominant and subordinate masculinities and femininities and this cannot be ignored. Schools and sports departments are micro-societies with their own rules of operation, but are still part of a larger context and it is gendered. Debates continue regarding appropriate strategies for effectively providing PE to boys and girls, as attitude of commitment, acceptance of own capacity and ‘body image’ are cited as impeding factors. Central to these debates are the types of activities

on offer, concerns about the kit, public displays of the body, appearance, and the nature of coeducational contexts in PE lessons (Coakley & White, 1992; Satina *et al.*, 1998).

#### **1.4 Aims of the Study**

The overall aim of the study is to investigate the perceptions of educators and learners regarding the construction of gender identities in sport. In so doing, this study seeks to determine how educators and learners negotiate gender practices within the context of sport. P.E represents a space that accentuates the relationship between gender and physicality (Hills 2006). The overt curriculum has been shown to rely on traditional notions of gender and the body. For example, in co-educational contexts, male-female relations may prove problematic (Milosevic, 1996; Chepyator-Thomas & Ennis, 1997; Williams and Bedward, 2001). These practices highlight a traditional perception that sport is a male preserve and the subsequent incompatibility of femininity and physical activity participation. Gender-based ideologies regarding essential differences between boys and girls have been shown to permeate the thinking of many PE educators and to influence the practices that occur in lessons (Scraton, 1992; Wright, 1995; Satina *et al.*, 1998; Hunter, 2004). Subsequently, PE represents a field where the understanding of the gendered physicality and PE continue to be actively negotiated and continue to influence boys' and girls' experiences and participation.

The decision to focus on secondary school education reflects my own teaching experience. I also feel that this period of schooling encompassing adolescence is a crucial time for exploring the lifelong project of gender construction. In demonstrating how uneven gender power relations manifest in sport I would highlight the need for gender to be recognised as issues for boys and girls in the sports field. Sport is very closely connected to the gendering process as it demarcates differences. Competitive sport is also implicated in construction of masculinity that emphasizes strength, fitness and the body. More recently, Garrett (2004) found that girls continued to evaluate their physicality in relation to idealized norms of femininities such as slenderness and tone with less valuing of physical skills related to PE.

## 1.5 Research Questions

Based on the aims of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are learner's perceptions of gender in school sport?
2. What are PE and LO sport educators' perceptions of gender in sport at school?
3. How do educators and learner perceptions of sport and gender at school impact on gender equality?

## 1.6 Framework of study

There are two main areas that frame this study. Firstly, it is based on a growing body of evidence suggesting that masculinity and femininity are socially constructed. Secondly, in understanding the relationship between gender and power in sport, I would situate my research in post structural feminist theory. Central to post-structural feminism is the assumption that realities are socially created and positioned. In educational interaction, it focuses on how boys and girls construct their identity in relation to each other and to the teacher. Post-structuralists have focused on power and knowledge and how individuals are constituted as subjects and given unified identities (Petersen, 2003). By examining the everyday lives of boys and girls from a post-structuralist perspective makes this possible because it offers a method for understanding such diverse subjectivities. As other researchers have 'noted' post-structuralist theories provide the means to deconstruct the traditional concepts of masculinity and femininity to reveal the range and fluidity of masculinities and femininities (Rhedding-Jones, 1996).

In South Africa, the post-apartheid democratic transition has been accompanied by changes in the gendered order of society (Reid and Walker, 2005). School sport provides a suitable arena for this enactment of society's expectations and values. The schooling process defines and regulates what is socially acceptable through adherence

to the required gender regimes that be and through the activities on offer. PE and LO sport lessons present an important arena for the construction and consolidation of dominant and subordinate masculinities and femininities. How children learn construct and enact masculinities and femininities is clearly an issue for education and sport, which needs to be explored further. Paechter (2006) argues that researchers working in gender and education need to take much more account of the specificities of children's bodies.

The ideal types of bodily usage expected within PE and LO sport can be regarded as generally located in traditional understandings of male and female sports. Therefore, the different bodily usages encouraged by secondary school sport, both permit and support the development of particular masculinities and femininities. The work of Bourdieu using the body as physical capital, and subsequent reinterpretation of his work prove useful for examining the processes through which girls and boys understand experience and negotiate gendered physicalities in sport (Hill 2006).

Surrounding the sport and PE culture are gender power relations that limit individual involvement. Although educators' and learners' bodies are not exactly ignored in schools, they are clearly not the main focus of attention. The main way in which bodies feature in schooling is as things to be policed, to be subdued and got out of the way (Foucault, 1997 and Paechter, 2004), so that one can get on with the main purpose of schooling, the education of the mind. However, in PE, the body is overtly explicit and the only object of education. So bodies matter: this is something that we cannot escape. If we are to understand how children learn and construct masculinities and femininities in school, we need to have a radical re-conception of the gendered body in which the body is given some attention. The importance of sport as a leading definer in the formation of masculinities has been recognised by a number of writers (see, for example, Corrigan 1979; Kessler *et al.*, 1985; Messner & Sabo 1990; Whitson 1990; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Connell 1995, 1996, 2000; Hayward & Mac an Ghail 1996; Parker 1996a, 1996b; Bromley, 1997; Fitzclarence & Hickey 1998; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Lingard & Douglas, 1999; Martino 1999).

Particularly in sports, there are many occasions where the body is literally displayed and this has the potential for the individual to be exposed to negative emotional experiences of shame and bodily embarrassment (Scraton 1992). The recognition of the body as a contributory factor in shame is equally significant in boys and highlights the importance of incorporating this aspect of the physicality of the body within any study of youth sport. The influence of the body within the area of physical activities is becoming increasingly apparent and may provide a way of addressing some of the problems associated with gender specific investigations. With reference to Hill (2006) there is a 'disinvestment' in potentially life enhancing, socially rewarding and healthy activities if gender in sport is overlooked. In LO sport the unforeseen consequence of co-educational physical activity teaching made the significance of gender more apparent, frequently intensifying rather than dissipating inequality. The influence of the body within the area of PE and LO sport is becoming increasingly apparent and may provide a way of addressing some of the problems associated with the decline in sports participation in secondary schools.

The dynamics between gender and PE and LO sport have obvious bearing upon the ways in which boys and girls will be positioned in the context of sport. Marginalisation is a reality for many girls but also for many boys in sport. Expressions of femininity are often demonstrated by resistance to PE and LO sport in a similar way that expressions of masculinity are demonstrated through sporting prowess and resistance to 'passive' academic work in the classroom (Paechter 2003). For example in my school, the boys are eager to play volleyball during my English periods as a reward for having completed sets of prescribed work. The touchy subject of girls' participation in soccer is often ridiculed in my school in spite of the hype surrounding the 2010 World Cup to be hosted in S.A and despite the official support of the South African national women's team- Banyana Banyana. Bourdieu (2001) notes that girls' who enter male domains to subvert the gender order; are subject to cautionary criticisms as it is perceived outside the realm of 'normal' experience.

For some theorists like Paechter (2003), school sport operates as a means of presenting broader social constructions of gender identity. Consequently, the relationship of girls and femininity to PE is more complex, partly because the agenda is set by the boys and interest in sports is excluded for girls by their male peer group. Many researchers on sport have noted how particular types of masculinities are constructed and reconstructed through the institution of sport (Bhana, 2005; forthcoming, Morrell 2005, Lesko 2000, Connell, 1995, Messner and Sabo, 1995). Messner reveals that sport is an important organising institution for the embodiment of dominant hegemonic masculinities, viewing the language of sport as the language of domination (Messner, 1990. p.96). I use Connell's definition of hegemonic masculinity where one group sustains a leading position in social life which in terms of gender relations entails the domination of men and the subordination of women.

### **1.7 Masculinity and femininity as social constructions**

Gender is not experienced and constructed in a vacuum, but rather in a gendered world, in gendered institutions. In addition to families and workplaces, the school is one institution that creates gender differences and produces gender equality. As this study took place within the school context, some comment on gender construction and the role that school plays in sport is appropriate. Schools, like any institution, are thoroughly gendered in their own organisation and practice (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998, Kimmel, 2004; Mills, 2001; Morrell, 1998). The school as an institution maintains historically reproduced rules, routines, expectations, relationships and rewards and deploys resources and space and actively shapes what is happening within it. Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) argue that there is no aspect of schooling that is not articulated to some extent by the gendered relations within it. This is crucial to understanding schools as sites for the construction of masculinities and femininities. This process is congruent with the interpretative perspective used in this study which seeks to understand how the social world of a person is interpreted, understood and experienced. Therefore, to enhance the understanding of the data, I attempted to examine the discourses of gender and sport.

## **1.8 The complexities of gender issues and gender equity in sport.**

According to Francis (2000) multiple masculinities and femininities can never be viewed in isolation from the many other dimensions of socio-cultural and economic life that shape our identities. The dynamics between gender and issues of class, ethnicity, ability, sexuality, age and religious and cultural values have obvious bearing upon the ways in which men and women will be positioned in the context of PE. Marginalisation is a reality for many women but also for many men in PE. Francis (2000) notably makes the point that hegemonic notions of masculinities and femininities may be positioned at the top of the hierarchy, with other forms located below them. Francis' work thus prompts us to seek to avoid the polarisation debates and to stress the dynamic nature of gender and gender relations in PE. There is a need to develop pedagogy in LO sport that is anti-sexist and aims to change deeply held sexist beliefs and values. Thus anyone seeking to advance equity in sport will be aware of these issues of positioning and where the subject is located in a policy process that is inevitably highly political.

South African sport is important to many people in the country as it can assist in the process of breaking down class and race barriers. "Our young democracy witnessed the ability of sport to act as a catalyst to bring people together, share excitement and build a nation" (South African minister of Sport, Steve Tshwete, quoted in Nauright, 1996: 2). As a result of sport being popular in South Africa, it is taken up enthusiastically by learners, particularly those in well-resourced, middle class, schools Under resourced schools like Brookdale High experience problems that have an impact on how educators and learners perceive sport. This construction of gender identities is riddled with difficulties and contradictions with race and class as contributing factors.

## **1.9 Rationale for the research methods used**

### **A Qualitative approach**

This study employed a descriptive research design using qualitative methodology in order to explore the construction of gender identities in sport by learners and educators

in Brookdale High School. Descriptive studies aim at describing a problem, although such studies move beyond the description to examine why the observed pattern exists and their implications (Barbbie and Mouton, 2001). Qualitative researchers emphasize the importance of the social context for understanding the social world. Its essence is two fold: a commitment to some version of the naturalistic, interpretative approach to its subject matter and the ongoing critique of the politics and methods of post-positivism. According to Cohen et al (2001) feminist research seeks to deconstruct traditional commitments to truth, objectivity and neutrality and replace this with a different substantive agenda – of empowerment and equality.

Within the qualitative framework, this study utilized the hermeneutic, interpretative framework which is concerned with how the world is constructed, interpreted and experienced by people in their interactions with each other and the wider social world systems (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Data collection methods comprised group interviews with learners and individual in-depth interviews with educators. Data analysis entailed exploring perceptions of physical activity, gender and physicality in context of school sport. This will be further elaborated in Chapter Three. A narrative analysis allowed me to gain insight into the process and context as it explores the cultural strategies through which educators and learners make sense of sport. In selecting a combined research approach afforded me the opportunity to draw from personal experience as I am already familiar with the sporting environment.

### **1.10 Definition and clarification of key concepts**

The concept of gender is a popular means of discussing the similarities, differences and conflicts that exist between the sexes. It has emerged as a more favourable vehicle for discussing sex relations and the context within which they exist, as the concepts of masculinity and femininity were often viewed in isolation from each other. Chandler, Cronin and Vamplew (2002) confirm that by using gender as a method of investigation, a wider and more useful context is provided that includes both sexes. Sport is an arena where gender is of utmost importance, and one because of history, the different sexes have gendered roles. Sport helps to construct gender identities and affords an avenue for the maintenance of the ideology of gender difference.

Identity, according to gender studies definitions, 'is a concept which enables groups to come together around the articulation of shared experience' (Waring, Stravropolos & Kirkby, 2003: 36). R. W. Connell describes gender as not something that exists in bodies, but as the effects of bodies, behaviours and social relations. Thus gender identity for boys and girls is constituted from the way in which they construct their masculinities and femininities by, for example, their participation in activities and the manner in which they behave towards others. Sport is an arena in which and an activity through which boys and girls construct their identity.

Paechter (2006) notes that the problem of shifting definitions is exacerbated by our inability to define either masculinity and femininity except in relation to each other and to men and women. Sport has been so male dominated and studies of masculinity have been important within sports studies. Ways of being a man are referred to in literature by the terms 'masculinity' and 'masculinities'. Connell (1995) suggests that rather than attempt to define masculinity as an object, we ought to focus on the processes and relationships through which men and women gendered lives. Connell (1987: 85) has argued that that 'images of ideal masculinity are constructed and promoted most systematically through competitive sport'.

A central issue in debates relating to feminism and gender, femininity can be defined as the measure of being a woman. Sport, it was believed, was about strength and masculinity. It was not a pursuit designed for women, and their participation would challenge beliefs held about their gender. Girls' apparent alienation from PE and sport is more adequately explained in terms of gender. Girl's lack of priority given to sport has to do with the wider cultural expectations of appropriate feminine behaviour (Kay, 1995).

The argument of what actually constitutes a school sport is contentious. Sport has a great cultural resonance as it serves to bring people together and is central to their identity. According to Chandler, Cronin and Vamplew (2002) "a definition of sport as a structured, goal-orientated, competitive, ludic, physical activity embraces most

activities generally recognised as sport”. Historically, PE has been premised on a commitment to separate and different curricula for girls and boys in schools (Scraton 1992). In the South African curriculum this has always been the norm. South African school sport is undergoing transformation with the phasing out of PE (in 2008) and the introduction of LO sport (in 2006). However, with the implementation of LO, the combination of sexes in PE lessons is inevitably due to limited teacher resources, time-tabling issues and lack of gender awareness.

### **1.11 Overview of the thesis**

The purpose of Chapter One has been to introduce the reader to gender and sport and to discuss the processes by which learners construct their masculine and feminine gender identity. Chapter One provides a general overview of the study including the motivation of the research, aims of the study, theoretical framework and research questions. The research design is explained and a rationale for the qualitative methods incorporating the interpretative paradigm is outlined. The relevant concepts used in the thesis are clarified.

Chapter Two reviews the available literature on gender and sport in school, issues on the physicality and demonstrates how uneven gender power relations manifest in sport participation of boys and girls.

Chapter Three addresses the rationale for adopting the qualitative methodological approach for the study. Focus is on the research design, sampling plan data collection methods, data analysis, protection and anonymity of research participants and a possible limitation of the study.

Chapter Four presents and discusses the findings of the study according to the main themes that emerged from the data.

Finally, Chapter Five summarises the implications, recommendations and conclusions of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW: AN OVERVIEW OF GENDER AND SPORT**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the literature on gender and school sport, particularly with regard to the construction of masculinity and femininity, and is written in accordance with the research questions listed in Chapter One. Particular emphasis is given to international and South African literature on topics of gender, sport and schooling. A theoretical framework through which feminist analysis is explored is defined.

### **2.2 Theoretical Perspectives**

The main theoretical approach will centre on a feminist perspective with initial consideration of the various theories that could contribute to an understanding of gender relation and PE. It should be noted that all feminist analysis begins from the premise that gender involves inequality and oppression, an understanding of which provides the basis for political action and change. Feminists question and challenge the origins of oppressive gender relations and attempt to develop a variety of strategies that might change these relations for the better (Mannathoko, 1992).

In South Africa, the post-apartheid democratic transition has been accompanied by changes in the gendered order of society (Reid and Walker, 2005). South Africa needs to equalise school sporting structures and resources but the need for more research in gender sport and schooling is of paramount importance. Through the work of Hargreaves (1997, 2000) more is known about the contribution to the anti-apartheid movement by Coloured female sports-activists through their membership of the South African Council on Sport (SACOS). These sportswomen, many of whom were educators upheld the SACOS principle of “No normal sport in an abnormal society”. Despite the negative effect this had on their own sporting development and that of the young sports-people whom they had coached, they preserved against all odds (Hargreaves, 2000).

Feminist activists and scholars acknowledge the historical significance of gender politics for the democratization process. Five feminist approaches bear relevance here: the liberal perspective, the radical perspective, the Marxist perspective, socialist perspective and post-structural perspective.

### **2.2.1 Liberal feminism**

The primary characteristic of liberal feminism is its emphasis on sex discrimination, 'equal opportunities' and on 'women's rights' (Scraton 1992, p11). Attention is centred on the differentiation of activities- the socialisation of girls in 'female activities', for example netball and rhythmic gymnastics, and boys into 'male' activities, for example soccer and cricket. Prior to the implementation of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) most schools in South Africa adopted this stance, including Brookdale High School. This approach to gender and PE tends to see the 'problem' to be in the attitudes and practices of the female pupils and women PE educators (Weiner 1985). However, as critics of this position argue, reforms at the micro level of individual educators and pupils through consciousness-raising and anti-discriminatory practices may provide some benefit for those involved but will fail to produce long-term solutions. In our educational sector the Ministry of Education has appointed a Gender Equity Task Team (GETT) led by a full time Gender Equity Commissioner to propose a complete strategy to counter and eliminate sexism among other issues throughout the education system.

### **2.2.2 Radical feminism**

Patriarchy is central to radical feminism and is defined most usually as an all-pervasive system of male power domination (Millet 1971). Radical feminists argue that male sexuality functions to control girls and women in work, sport, leisure, social space and schooling. Through PE girls learn a female physicality which emphasises appearance, presentation control (desirable 'femininity'), while boys are encouraged to develop physical strength, aggression and confidence in their physical prowess (desirable 'masculinity') (Lenskyj 1986). It is these connections between physical activity, sexuality, physical and gender power relations which are central to the theoretical

approach. For many radical feminist educationalists the initial step towards this challenge must involve a girl-centred organisation. Traditionally in a secondary school level, girls' PE was conducted in separate sphere controlled by women. However, the move towards co-educational PE as in LO sport in South African schools and the changes in teacher training over past few years (Solomons 2002) have brought into stark relief the issue of single-sex provision from a radical feminist theoretical standpoint.

### **2.2.3 Marxist feminism**

The main stress of Marxist writers in PE is on the part it plays in the reproduction of capitalist values (Hargreaves 1986). PE is seen to have developed with the emphasis for boys on character-building elements of physical activity and the centrality of competition. PE for girls is seen to be premised on the relationship between physical health and motherhood. Contemporary PE is placed within this historical context, recognising that through reinforcement of femininity and masculinity, it functions as a main determining agent in the reproduction of a sexual division of labour. The major criticism of this analysis, including that pertaining to PE, is that it tends to ignore or under-theorise the concept of patriarchal domination and control (Scraton 1992). This has led to the next theoretical position to be considered - socialist feminism.

### **2.2.4 Socialist feminism**

In PE socialist feminist theory highlights the importance of historical analysis in identifying the roots in contemporary teaching. Ideologies of masculinity and femininity, particularly those relating to physicality, motherhood and sexuality, are central to an understanding of the relationship between gender and PE (Cockburn 1983). However, the early experiences of girls and boys in PE are seen also to be dependent on their class location. The main critics of this position argue that the theorizing of the relationship between gender and class remains under-developed. Scraton (1992) states that unless ideologies of masculinity and femininity (incorporating physical power relations, sexuality and sexual divisions of labour) are challenged and altered in and through PE, then gender divisions and inequalities will continue to be produced and

reproduced. Finally, a criticism that has been levelled at all feminist theoretical researchers, especially in the South African context, is that the politics of racism and PE and the complex inter-relationship of gender have been neglected.

### **2.2.5 Post-structural Feminism**

The voices of psychoanalytic feminism (Kristeva 1982) and post-structural feminism theories (Weedon 1987) among others are of increasing significance. Post-structural feminism seeks to analyse in more detail the workings of patriarchy in all its manifestations as it views social relations in terms of plurality and diversity instead of unity and consensus as viewed by traditional feminists. Central to post-structural feminism is the assumption that realities are socially created and there is a close link between oppression and practices of the individual and society at large. Post-structuralist feminism assumes that there are no essences of masculinities and femininities that they only exist as stereotypical opposites constructed in relation to each other. In educational micro interaction, they investigate how boys and girls construct their identities in relation to each other and the teacher.

## **2.3 Gender, race and class in Sport**

There is little work in PE theory that considers race, and the limited amount of research that does investigate gender, race and PE has tended to concentrate on a cultural approach (Carrington et al. 1987; Carrington and Williams 1988). This work is problematic, in that it focuses on how gender differences in school PE and community leisure activities may be heightened by ethnicity. International research shows that there is an identification of stereotypical perceptions held by many educators that South Asian boys are very good at cricket and enthusiastic about weight training and self-defence. This confirms other racial stereotyping which assumes that Afro-Caribbean naturally excel at certain sporting and athletic events. Furthermore, the research by Carrington and Williams (1988) emphasises the cultural pressures on Asian girls, exerted by parents, which restrict their participation in co-educational activities (especially swimming), their involvement in extra-curricular pursuits and the problems associated with 'suitable' dress for PE. The ways in which race and class impact on

perceptions of sport for boys and girls, is especially important within the context of this study.

To understand gender relationships between youth it is imperative to understand the youth culture that that informs these relationships. Mayer (2000: 72) defines culture as 'enduring norms, values, customs and behavioural patterns common to a particular group of people'. However, what is missing from South African research concerning gender, race and PE is a thorough analysis of the politics of race and racism, and the complex interrelationship of gender and race. Research in South Africa with regards to the learners' location of sport in their lives and the processes by which they construct their masculine and feminine identities is limited with the exception of Morrell (2002), Bhana (2005), Alegi, Nauright (2004) and Chandler (2002) who focussed on masculinities. Scraton (1992) points out that in PE there is a danger that research and analysis identifies a problem which is seen to relate to a cultural difference. Yet in relation to PE the issue for pupils and educators from culturally distinct background centres, not only on stereotyping and teacher-pupil expectations, but also on the reinforcement and reproduction of institutional racism through PE teaching.

Work in South Africa shows that sport is strikingly important in South Africa-often viewed as a national religion and is highly racialised (Bhana, 2006; Morrell 2001; 1996). Gender, race and class remain important in understanding the divisions in sport. South African schools thus bears the legacies of apartheid policies with sport like rugby, cricket and swimming maintaining a high white class/middle class profile. Rugby became one of the crucial cultural practices whereby white males asserted their domination over women and over all other groups in South Africa (Nauright and Chandler, 1995). Participation and spectatorship in soccer, on the other hand was important in fostering a resistant working class black masculine identity. Here sport is regarded as a means of claiming space, of generating community identity and cohesion and of resisting ruling class oppression (Alegi, 2004). Many aspects of gender cut across racial divisions, but the extent to which racial inequalities and oppression interact with gender in South Africa remains under-researched and under-theorised.

In considering who plays sport, why and with what effect, one needs to consider the context and the importance of race, class and gender. In the South African school context, competitive sports, because they are implicated in constructions of masculinity that emphasize strength, fitness and the body (rather than sensitivity, learning and aesthetics) are associated with misogyny and homophobia (Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003; Lesko, 2000; Renold, 2001). Morrell (2005) argues that sport unites boys, but also divides them. It unites them because South African society is fixated on sport and because participation and interest in sport are constitutive elements of masculinity. It divides them because boys play different sport and understand their participation differently.

In conclusion to this introduction to feminist theoretical analysis, I would add that there is recognition that feminist theory cannot be categorised neatly into the various sections. Scraton (1992) confirms that that theory is fluid and changing and theory develops from previous ideas and knowledge. Having viewed the theoretical perspectives on feminism, the next section discusses main theoretical perspectives relation to gender.

My study mostly utilized the post structuralist theory and focussed on gender, race and in the South African context.

#### **2.4 Feminist Theories: Connections between Gender and Sport**

Critical feminist theorists are concerned primarily with issues of power and the dynamics of gender relations in social life. Critical educational research examines and interrogates: the relationship between school and society – how schools perpetuate or reduce inequality; how power is produced and reproduced through education; whose interests are served by education and how legitimate these are (e.g. the rich, white-middle class males rather than poor, non-white females) (Cohen *et al* 2000). The purpose of sports is grounded in the values and experiences of men are defined to celebrate the attributes and skills associated with dominant forms of masculinity in society (Birrell, 2000).

According to Birrell (2000) research done by those who use critical feminist theories generally focus on one of the following:

1. Reasons for exclusion of girls from participating in sport.
2. How can gender equity be achieved without promoting sports that privilege some girls over others?
3. How participation in sport involves the production of gendered ideas about physicality, sexuality and the body?

Gender is culturally transformed in a life-long process with ambivalences and contradictions (Lorber 1994). French science reporter Natalie Angier (2000) has interpreted gender as a system of knowledge and demonstrated that how the signs of the body and the biological 'facts' are used to reinforce the prevailing gender ideology. Gender always has an individual and an institutional side. 'The social reproduction of gender in individuals reproduces the gendered social structures; as individuals act out gender norms and expectations in face-to-face-interaction, they are constructing gendered systems of dominance and power' (Lorber 1994: 7).

## **2.5 Gender, Sport and Schooling**

Gender is a central organising principle of social life, and gender influences how we think of ourselves and others, how we relate to others and how social life is organised at all levels. The enactment of gender in sport and the gendered structures of sport can be best described using a constructivist approach to gender.

In school, as in the wider world, some forms of knowledge are more powerful and confer more status than others. Carrie Paechter (2000) sums up this well using Foucault's work of how power and knowledge are so intertwined that there can be no knowledge without power and vice versa. Thinking beyond PE may involve school curricula viewing PE more broadly and establishing alliances that enrich questions that are asked and the knowledge that is brought to bear on equity issues.

PE and future LO sport lessons present an important arena for the construction and consolidation of dominant and subordinate masculinities and femininities. The ideal types of bodily usage expected within PE can be regarded as generally located in traditional understandings of male and female sports. Therefore, the different bodily usages encouraged by secondary school PE, both permit and support the development of particular masculinities and femininities:

In secondary schools in particular, PE lessons are an important arena for the displaying and acting out of masculinity and femininity, particularly those forms of which could be described as hyper masculine and hyper feminine (Paechter 2003).

According to this argument, much of the PE lessons are an important arena where specific gendered performances are expected and encouraged. This is particularly the case, for children where there is more uncertainty about what constitutes correct or appropriate performances. These identities, masculine and feminine, are not simply different but also may be oppositional. In PE the oppositional factor is intensified, with the hyper-masculinity of the male sporting hero being juxtaposed frequently with under-developed female figure.

For some theorists like Paechter (2003), school sport operates as a means of presenting broader social constructions of gender identity. Consequently, the relationship of girls and femininity to PE is more complex, partly because the agenda is set by the boys and interest in sports is excluded for girls by their male peer group. Expressions of femininity are often demonstrated by resistance to PE in a similar way that expressions of masculinity are demonstrated through sporting prowess and resistance to 'passive' academic work in the classroom (Paechter 2003).

Gender differentiation is reflected in the way educators behave towards pupils, and pupils towards each other and their educators. It is ever present in the hidden curriculum. PE remains the most gendered and segregated subject in the school curriculum particularly in secondary schools (Scruton 1992, Kay 1995, Flintoff 1995). PE is bound to draw attention to the differential ability of girls and boys and 'it is more

likely to conform to traditional gender stereotypes rather than challenge it' (Kay 1995). It is not surprising that boys and girls do not arrive on the secondary PE starting line together. The alienation of girls from sport in their middle and later years of secondary schooling is often in contrast to some pupils' much more enthusiastic involvement in the immediately preceding years (Kay 1995). Scraton (1993) points out that PE is reinforcing gender power relations with boys reproducing their dominant roles and girls learning their subordination.

PE as an aspect of schooling fits into society's male and female 'power relations'. In liberal feminist approaches to PE, attention is centred on the differentiation of activities i.e. the socialisation of girls into 'female' activities for e.g. netball and gymnastics, and boys into male activities like football and cricket. Schools and PE departments are powerful social and patriarchal institutions structured along heterosexual lines that operate to suppress alternative ways of being and performing. From a liberal feminist perspective, future non-sexist practice derived in increased opportunities and a concerted challenge to discrimination and the raising of consciousness as an effective challenge to stereotyping (Scraton, 1992).

The tendency to ignore gender in school sport is a serious problem when we deal with fairness and equity issues in sports. This is because complete fairness and equity cannot be achieved in sports unless we as educators change the gender ideology that has been used in the past to organise, play and make sense of sports. According to Coakley (2003) the two category gender classification exists in cultures where there is an emphasis on equal rights and freedom of expression and actions for men is more restrictive than it is for women. Because masculinity comes with greater chances of reaching a high level of power and influence, boys have more to lose collectively if they do not conform to gender expectations. Girls, on the other hand have less to lose and more to gain if they push boundaries, although they must do so carefully. This is why boys are teased for being 'sissies', whereas girls are praised for being 'tomboys' on the sports field (Laberge and Albert, 1999).

## 2.6 Research on Masculinities

Sporting success was a key signifier of successful masculinity and high performance in sport and games (both on the field and in the playground) was generally the single most effective way of gaining popularity and status in the male peer group. Sport not only provided a way of measuring a boy's masculine accomplishment against each other, but also against the wider world of men. The importance of sport as a leading definer in the formation of masculinities has been recognised by a number of writers (see, for example, Corrigan 1979; Kessler *et al.*, 1985; Messner & Sabo 1990; Whitson 1990; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Connell 1995, 1996, 2000; Hayward & Mac an Ghail 1996; Parker 1996a, 1996b; Bromley, 1997; Fitzclarence & Hickey 1998; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Lingard & Douglas, 1999; Martino 1999). Television programmes and magazine articles offer the boys images, models and fantasies of what being a 'proper' man is all about. Boys are strongly encouraged to be active, physical, competitive, aggressive and so on, and it is seen by many as an entry into the world of men.

Some studies of PE in secondary schools suggest that not all boys enjoy the tough masculine culture which surrounds competitive games playing (Parker 1996). Boys (and male PE educators too) bring a wide range of culturally divergent masculinities to school yet PE forces a particular version of masculinity on them. It is up against this imposed masculinity that that boys struggle in order to develop their own gender identity (Skeleton 1998). For example some boys become victims of the macho PE

culture and are effectively excluded from PE activities. It actively constructs dominant and subordinate physical masculinities in boys i.e. masculinity premised on a physical power and strength. Through the imposed of a particular view of masculinity, therefore, PE excludes some boys from the PE curriculum. This is evident in most South African schools, where certain team sports are placed on a pedestal to the detriment of others. For example, some middle class schools still favour rugby over soccer, while in my school volleyball and soccer take centre court.

PE offers boys a context within which they can claim a source of power given the social power available in and through the academic curriculum which is not available to them (Connell 1992). Although masculinity is constructed against femininity a question that needs to be asked is whether hegemonic form always needs to produce subordinate forms of masculinities to maintain it self. Gender equity is not just about female issues; equity also involves creating options for boys to play sports that are not based on an extreme power and performance model. Sports that emphasize aggression and domination often lead to self-destructive orientations as in chronic injuries, an inability to relate to the opposite sex and a compulsive concern with comparing oneself with other men (Burstyn, 1999; Young, 1997).

## **2.7 Bodies, Gender and Sport.**

The damaging myths and stereotyping about the participation of boys and girls in PE and sport have largely gone unchallenged. These prejudices centre on issues to do with the athletic body, heterosexuality and physicality. As the body is central to PE, and the key vehicle for the expression of subject knowledge it is continually exposed and open to the gaze of others. Traditionally, it has been schooled along restricted and prescribed gender regimes (Scraton, 1992; Talbot, 1992). Accordingly, pupils and educators learn and recognise the required feminine and masculine codes for acceptance within PE and schooling more generally (Clarke, 2001). These codes have to be made sense of within the confines of heterosexuality.

PE and LO sport provides a situation where ‘the body’ is on show and therefore at its most vulnerable. This is evident in the recognition by women educators that many young women have to face comment and abuse in mixed settings at swimming galas and athletic meetings. However, this ‘public possession’ of, or public control over women’s bodies is not a ‘natural’ development but a biological inevitability. It is part of hegemonic masculinity whereby men can gain and maintain control over women, not only in relation to their sexuality, but also in relation to the use of social space (Scraton 1992). This conflict between body image and ideal femininity is emphasised in PE. The work of Bourdieu and subsequent reinterpretations of his work prove useful in

understanding the concept of 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977.p.72) which is developed in conjunction with an individual's social context and has a tendency to reinforce the social order. Researchers have linked the concept of habitus to gender binaries that associate sporting prowess or 'muscularity' with hegemonic masculinity (Gorely et al., 2003; Hunter, 2004; Shilling, 2004).

Drawing on Bourdieu's notion of 'embodied' capital as a subdivision of cultural capital, Shilling (1991, 1993) contends that it is possible to view the body as possessing a 'physical capital', the production of which refers to the ways bodies are recognised as possessing value in various social settings. It seems inevitable to me that in age which has the rise of the body as a project, PE and LO sport educators are faced with enormous challenges in the present period as the result of the body's symbolic significance in the formation of self identities.

Sport participation does provide girls with opportunities to connect with the power of their bodies. Because one's physical identity and sense of power are grounded in a person's body and body image, sport participation can help girls overcome the feeling that their bodies are objects. Developing physical skills can give girls the confidence that comes from knowing that their bodies can perform with physical competence and power (Birrell and Richter, 1994).

It is important to recognise the significance of girls' early experiences of physical activity and it is often within the context of school PE lessons, where understanding of the individual sporting identity is developed. It is interesting to note that what were initially regarded as lesser concerns of management and educators, such as specific uniforms for PE lessons and the location of change rooms or showering facilities, were found to be significant aspects in girls' actual enjoyment and progression in school sport (Cockburn and Clarke 2002). Recognition of individual experience of the body has often been overlooked in favour of broader policy driven issues regarding educational provision in PE. In particular, there has been a conspicuous lack of empirical research about the bodies of children, even though childhood would appear to be a time when work on the body, and by the body, is relatively intense as physical development gets into its stride (Prout, 2000).

In consequence, PE and LO sport provides the opportunity to be a source of embarrassment by way of being an activity where the body is fore-grounded (like swimming and gymnastics). Uniforms can often be revealing and communal showers can be another source of unwanted display of the naked body. The exercise of power is evident, for example, when educators see pupils protesting at dress and behaviour codes, and being victimized by each other when their bodies fail to live up to prevalent standards of femininity or masculinity. For instance, it has been suggested that acknowledging the role of the body in shaping the way society constructs an understanding of individual and social identity is vital (Paechter 2003, Scraton 1993).

Scraton (1992) incorporates sociological explanations, which describe the influence of everyday knowledge and language in the regulation of bodies, and demonstrates how they can be applied to particular practices found in PE. What becomes apparent is that bodily performances play an important role in the experience of PE, not only in terms of bio-mechanical dexterity but more in the way that social bodily performances become central to whether a sport is enjoyed or not (Bedward and Williams 2000).

## 2.8 Coeducational Physical Education

Research in the US on coeducational physical education shows that prior to the passing of Title IX in 1972 by US Congress as part of the Educational Amendments, most PE classes in US were sex segregated. The purpose of Title IX was to ensure that girls received the same educational opportunities as boys and this mandated that PE classes be offered on a coeducational basis. However, Title IX is perhaps most widely known for the dramatic increases in participation rates among girls and women in sport in US (Acosta and Carpenter 2000).

While coeducational PE was originally mandated to ameliorate the conditions and quality of PE for girls, researchers have found differential participation patterns and perceptions when comparing coeducational PE to single sex PE (Griffin 1984). In studying participation patterns of girls in a coeducational middle school PE unit, found that the majority of the girls exhibited one of the four non-assertive behaviour types: giving up, giving away, hanging back and acquiescing. On the other hand, Lirgg (1993) found that in comparison to single sex classes, coeducational PE classes can benefit boys more than girls as it increased the boys' self-confidence. Many PE educators believe that participation rates for girls were higher when classes were single sex and they provided various reasons for the decline in mixed settings such as lessons were geared towards boys' interest; girls concerned about how they were perceived by boys; and that the physical, mental, emotional and social challenges of puberty are too overpowering in a coeducational setting for optimal learning (Griffin 1985; Lynn 1999). Consequently, in schools, more support is given to those who display talent in the form of physical ability and expertise in the sport played. This can often lead to many sports ultimately favouring boys in mixed schools.

Scruton (1985); Flintoff, (1993) maintain that in shifting the balance away from coeducational PE which offered opportunity to blur the boundaries of separate male and female PE activities and processes, it is evident that girls lose out in coeducational PE owing to boys control over the activity, space and educators attention. PE as sport hardens up the boundaries between what PE is considered appropriate for girls and

boys. It thus creates a clear male/female dualism which is necessary for heterosexuality. Working to improve the opportunity of girls in PE must ultimately depend on linking issues of gender to issues of sexuality.

In South Africa most PE classes continue to be sex segregated due to time table allocation of the PE specialist educators in each school. However, in light of RNCS, a non specialist educator could be teaching both sexes in one class thus providing a shaky foundation from which to address the diverse educational needs of both boys and girls. As from 2006 LO sport was not marketed well to answer the following controversial questions that need to be addressed:

- Should boys and girls play sports together?
- Do coeducational sports reveal how similar we are, or do they unveil essential differences between boys and girls?

These debates don't go away or get 'resolved', and that is because sport continues to be more than a place to play and recreate. Sport is a key terrain of contest for gender (and race, class and sexual) relations (Messner, 2002).

More support is given to those who display talent in the form of physical ability and expertise in the sports played. This can often lead to many sports ultimately favouring boys in a coeducational setup. The male version of PE is not a totalising discourse which means that while it has achieved dominance, there are spaces for educators and students to practise alternative forms of PE that do not ascribe to the values of stereotypically masculinised PE. Studies of coeducational sports point to additional paradoxes: when men and women play sport together, there are highly visible moments of gender transgressions that challenge gender ideologies. However, the formal rules of coeducational, as well as the ways that players 'do gender', tends to reaffirm gender boundaries and ideologies of natural difference (Henry & Comeaux, 1999; Wachs, 2002, 2003).

In a world of rapidly changing gender relations, there is an encouragement that boys and men to value risk taking and violence, to tolerate pain and injury and to treat girls and women as peripheral to men's activities, or as sexualised objects of consumption

(Messner, 2002). Violence in sport is not limited to boys and men. However, research reveals that if we want to understand violence in sports, we must understand gender ideology and issues of masculinities in culture (Messner 1992). In South Africa Bhana's (2005) study of six to ten year old boys at a township school in Durban, found that verbal and physical harassment against girls was rife. Even at this young age, power over girls dominated the gender processes within the school. Likewise Morrell (2005) examined the links between school sport and violence by looking at their views about sport participation, gender relations, the body, and gender equity. He concluded by suggesting that while sport is sometime associated with competitive, aggressive and violent masculinities, it may also offer the opportunity for gender work.

## **2.9 Learners' selection of gender appropriate activities:**

Amid the long-standing debate about the nature and purposes of PE in schools, comparatively little research has examined the ways in which PE is viewed by young people themselves. According to the Smith and Parr (2007) study set which set out to explore young people's views on the nature and purposes of PE from a sociological perspective in the belief that a more adequate understanding of the process of PE requires us to appreciate something of the ways in which the subject is viewed and experienced in reality by the pupils in schools. The main finding of the study was that young people held an amalgam of views regarding the nature and purposes of PE. For the most part, it centred upon perceptions of fun and enjoyment and the extent to which sociability is recurrently generated in lessons. The paper concludes by arguing for the need to engage more in the realities of PE as a practice, and to develop a more adequate understanding of what PE is for the young people involved, not least if government, policy-makers and educators are to provide a more valuable and meaningful PE curriculum for them.

Motivation to participate in sport varies along age and gender. The central interest of adolescence (age 13-19) to take part in PE seems to be 'fit for fun', and 'to keep oneself healthy and fit' because these are the most important motives for them (Baur and Burrmann 2000: 77). Nevertheless gender differences prevail: female adolescence

report 'physical well-being', 'to shape one's figure' and to and 'to relax' as most important motives; male adolescents, on the other hand, most frequently stress the importance on 'performance', 'thrill' and 'suspense' (Baur and Burrmann 2000: 77).

### **2.10 The role of PE and LO sport educators**

It is not merely what is taught under the banner of coeducational PE that is problematic in terms of equal opportunities; it is also the ways in which PE is taught. Educators' attitudes and behaviours are frequently such that they continue to reproduce and reinforce gender stereotypes (Scraton 1993; Talbot, 1993; Flintoff, 1996a, 1996b). Talbot (1993) notes: 'While educators of PE may claim that they espouse equality of opportunity for all children, their teaching behaviours and practices reveal entrenched sex-stereotyping, based on common sense notions of what is suitable for girls and boys, both in single-sex and mixed-sex groups and school' (p.74). Not only do 'male educators and PE teaching continue to reinforce and reproduce dominant masculinities including ideologies of male sexuality, physicality, homophobia and misogyny (Scraton, 1993, p. 147), even women PE educators are prone to stereotypical views about activities for girls (Scraton, 1992).

### **2.11 Why gender and sport issues need to be taken seriously by policymakers and educators?**

Anyone seeking to advance equity in PE will be aware of these issues that turn our attention back once again to matters of 'position' and where we can locate ourselves in a policy process that is always and inevitably highly political (Ball, 1990; Penny and Evans, 1995; Taylor et al., 1997). Recent critical texts on education and feminist critiques of schools have neglected PE as a subject area which contains strong gender messages. Scraton (1992) questions the contributions of PE to the reinforcement of images of femininity and the development of gender appropriate behaviour among girls.

Much of the writing on girls' physical activity has tended to explore the negative aspects of exclusion from what is considered a male arena of sport. Although important

and relevant, this position has often resulted in a plethora of descriptive accounts of women's exclusion which could be seen as consolidating existing gender divisions without taking into account other social factors like age, the body, geography, economics and race (Tannsjo 2000). The social interpretation of biological sex does continue to influence the way PE and physical activity is constructed for boys and girls.

The fact that PE curriculum content can clearly be seen as problematic is important. There is a great deal of evidence that PE seen positively by some children and negatively by others. For example, Tinning (1991) points out that the message often given is that one can only succeed in a competitive environment if there is a loser, that girls are inferior to boys in matters of the physical, and that the slim mesomorph is the only acceptable body shape and so on. Girls are less active than boys and girls level of physical activity decreases as they move through secondary school. Encouraging girls to be become more active should be a priority. PE and LO sport educators should take a more reflective view of the organisation and the presentation of their programmes in order to challenge the gender ideologies reflected in many existing PE curricula.

## **2.12 The organisation of Sport in South Africa**

During 1994 and 1995 a new sports culture was developed for South Africa. The Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR) was restructured and received status as an independent government department. The Government of National Unity (GNU) appointed a Minister of Sport and Recreation. This signified the importance attached to the role of sport in the reconstruction and transformation of the new democratic South Africa and in uniting a nation. The newly democratised DSR prioritised race above gender. It adopted a radical approach in transforming racial inequalities, but a liberal approach in dealing with gender inequalities in sport. Currently the DSR focuses on junior sport but does not involve them with school sport as yet. However, there are numerous projects which have been instituted to supplement the PE programme, especially in the Black townships and other areas previously

marginalised during the apartheid era. One project which was initiated by the Department of Education and Sport and Recreation is called ‘stepping stones’.

It develops competencies amongst unemployed young women and men who have completed their school careers, to teach sports skills at school level. They assist in the PE classes or with sports programmes after school (Solomons 2002).

A liberal feminist approach to gender equality in sport in South Africa is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, the link with equal opportunity model does not allow for the diversity which exists amongst South Africa females. The situation is further complexified by the enormous disparity in access to sports-necessary resources which still exists amongst South African females. The liberal approach presupposes the existence of a common notion of gender equality which is not a reality in South Africa (Albertyn 1994). Research done by Hargreaves (1997) and Jones (2001a) has revealed a willingness amongst South African sporting females to find spaces in which to pursue gender equality despite their diverse backgrounds. In addition, many women in the country would argue against an independent women’s organisation because that would be something separate from struggles which affect their people as a whole, such as racism (Beall *et al.* 1987). It is possible that there are enclaves of South African sportswomen who are creating female-friendly environments for women and girls to enjoy the benefits of sports participation.

### **2.13 Chapter summary**

In Chapter Two I have provided a comprehensive account of international and a somewhat limited research on South African literature and their application to the study of gender and sport. Learners’ perceptions differ in how they develop their identities, which can impact both negatively and positively on the outcome of schooling. The various theoretical debates emerging from the research, contributes to an increased understanding of gender as a central construct in school sport.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

### 3.1 Introduction

This study investigated the perceptions of educators and learners relating to gender and sport. In order to investigate this I chose a qualitative rather than a quantitative methodology. Further since a small pool of participants was studied this strategy was adopted with the aim of gaining as much insight to the practices and discourses relating to this specialised field. This chapter describes the research methods, the research design and the tasks undertaken in each of the four phases of the research process to achieve the objectives. To accomplish the goals of study and to adequately answer the research questions, a combined method of data collection and data analysis were employed. This is in keeping with the contention of Henning et al (2004) and Durrheim (1999) that the groups of methods chosen must be coherent and represent a good fit as to deliver data and findings that suit the research question. The research design, sampling plan, fieldwork, data collection methods, data analysis and presentation, protection and anonymity of research participants and a possible limitation of the study will be discussed.

### 3.2 The research design

A research design should be seen as “a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research’ (Durrheim, 1999: 29). As explained in Chapter One, this study employed a descriptive research design. This design allowed me to emphasize in-depth description of individual and group responses and recurring responses within the sample. The present research is based on an interest in exploring the perceptions of educators and learners on gender and sport in their school. The study paints a picture of how gender in sport is emerging as an important aspect of the curriculum that shows sport is not always addressing gender equity and that there are contradictions. By exploring the perceptions of educators and learners towards gender and sport at a predominantly black working class school in Durban, I was able to argue that it does impact on gender equity.

### 3.3 The qualitative research approach

Qualitative research may be described as a “generic approach in social research according to which research takes as its departure point the insider perspective on social action” Babbie and Mouton (2001: 270). This approach focuses on the importance of listening and is concerned with seeing the world from the perspectives of the research participants (Cohen et al, 2001; Silverman 2000). To further validate my decision to embark on a qualitative inquiry, I examined some important characteristics of the qualitative approach.

The qualitative framework served as a guide for me to explore how social experiences were created and given meaning. This means asking the “what, how and why” questions, with the awareness that *what* is talked about cannot be separated from how it is talked about. In keeping with the post-structural perspective on gender is the assumption that realities are socially created and positioned. In educational interaction, it focuses on how boys and girls construct their identity in relation to each other and to the teacher. Poststructuralists have focused on power and knowledge and how individuals are constituted as subjects and given unified identities (Petersen, 2003).

Qualitative research is particularly orientated toward exploration, discovery and inductive logic (Patton, 2002: 55-56). Qualitative design is holistic in that the process of collecting and examining different aspects of the data, the research attempts to construct a full picture. Progress in the field of PE, needs to be researched since there has been so little research into gender and sport in South Africa. It is important to examine and highlight the practices inherent within sports which deter some learners from participating. Sports provision in LO needs to be adapted to encourage and accommodate both boys and girls. There is a shift from a positivist paradigm which employs a quantitative research design to an interpretative /constructivist paradigm associated with qualitative research designs and is described as contextual, experiential, socially relevant, and inclusive of emotions and events as experienced (Mertens and McLaughlin, 2004).

### **3.4 The interpretative paradigm**

As explained in Chapter One, within the qualitative approach, this research utilized the hermeneutic, interpretive framework which sees the world as constructed, interpreted and experienced by people in their interactions with each other and wider social systems. Cohen et al (2000) draws on the work the German philosopher Habermas to discuss the emancipatory, ideological critical style which is a feature of feminist research. A critique of the ideology seeks to uncover unconscious, vested interests revealing to participants how they contribute to perpetuating a system which keeps them either empowered or disempowered. Learners are also influenced by a variety of factors when constructing their identity on the sports field, for example the media, their educators, peers and their sexuality.

By examining educators' and learners' perceptions of the gendered nature of sport was seen as a starting point to creating an awareness of the unequal power relations. This study highlights significant areas for interventions to create attitudinal and behavioural change, and to promote fair play on the sports field. It also highlights the inadequacies, which do exist in the current sport platform that most school sports are traditional male sports that best serve male participants. Also the contradiction that gender equity prevails in PE and LO sport lessons. The question that needs to answered is, "How can educators and learners actively come together to help create, and sometimes challenge, gender structures and meanings?"

### **3.5 Background of school**

As mentioned earlier I decided to conduct my research in the Umlazi District, in Southern KwaZulu-Natal, as I was already familiar, having taught twelve years in this district. The school is in a highly industrial area that is characterised by poor health and welfare facilities. The area has no recreational facilities for young people. The only sporting facilities are soccer grounds. There are no other sporting structures that promote club activities for learners. The investigated school is 42 years old and was an Indian school until 1994. Seventy percent of the learners are African that come from a

lower income background from the neighbouring townships. These learners experience transport difficulties if they remain after school hours for sporting activities. The Indian learners make up twenty percent while the other ten percent come from the Coloured population. Brookdale High has always enjoyed a reputation of being a well disciplined and well organised school.

Brookdale High school has the basic amenities of one sports ground which have two marked soccer fields, which doubles up as a cricket field as well. The Pavillion area which is a seating area surrounds this facility. On the other extreme end of the school, there is one tar netball court without any seating arrangement. Spectators linger on the banks to watch matches. Situated between the blocks are two volleyball courts (one male and one female) yet the female one doubles up as the basketball court as well. The school makes use of a community swimming pool for their galas but for safety reasons PE lessons were not conducted in the pool as it was also open for the public as well. By understanding the gendered basis of sports practices during PE lessons the social spaces in which sports occur is to a great extent characterised by gender inequalities. The play ground, as many researchers have indicated is often heavily sex segregated (e.g. Delamont, 1980; Ross & Ryan, 1990; Thorne, 1993). The playground or sports field is a highly visible arena where identities are formed and re-formed, destroyed and contested.

### **3.6 Sampling plan**

Qualitative studies usually employ a form of non-probability sampling, such as accidental or purposive sampling, as well as snow ball and theoretical sampling (Sarantakos, 1993). Since the researcher, in this study, had opted for a qualitative case study approach, a non-probability sampling plan seemed best as it was less restrictive and made no claim to representativeness (Sarantakos, 1993). Within the scope of non-probability sampling, the research adopted the purposive sampling strategy for the study. This seemed the most appropriate method, because it allowed the researcher to use her judgement in identifying the participants. PE and LO sport educators and Head of Department (H.O.D) of Humanities were selected to form part of the sample. This method of non-probability sampling was also deemed most suitable, since it enabled the

researcher to select unique cases that were especially informative for the research questions as the cases provided a rich 'contextualised' picture of the educational phenomenon under study (Mertens and McLaughlin 2004:96).

### **3.7 Criteria for selection of participants (educators)**

Educators that were selected to form the sample group had to meet the following criteria:

1. They must be LO sport or PE grade ten FET educators.
2. They could be qualified PE educators or non specialists.
3. Sample must include both male and female educators.

The rationale behind selecting PE and LO sport educators was the importance of having acquired relevant knowledge pertaining to gender relations on the sports field. Biographical questionnaires (Appendix D) were quickly and easily completed to gauge some demographic information and insight about the participants in a non-threatening way (Mertens and McLaughlin, 2004). Aspects such as age, gender, teaching experiences, qualifications and class allocations were ascertained. The purpose of collecting personal information is to learn more about the research participants, particularly if the researcher plans to make claims about why particular results were observed (Mertens and McLaughlin, 2004). The biographical questionnaires provided a simple descriptive approach of describing the participants in the sample.

Table 1 provides a summary of the relevant details of the selected participants which was gleaned from biographical questionnaires.

TABLE 1

| <b>Educator's name</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Teaching Experience</b> | <b>Race</b> | <b>PE Qualifications</b> | <b>Lessons Per week</b> | <b>Coed classes</b> |  |
|------------------------|------------|----------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Mr Ram                 | 36         | 19                         | Indian      | B.Paed(Arts)             | 10                      | Nil                 |  |
| Mrs Cass               | 38         | 21                         | Indian      | B.Paed(Arts)             | 10                      | Nil                 |  |
| Mr Duma                | 43         | 26                         | Black       | H.ed (H.S.S)             | 5                       | All                 |  |
| Mrs Neem               | 42         | 25                         | Indian      | B.A                      | 5                       | All                 |  |
| Mr Raj                 | 46         | 29                         | Indian      | B.A(hons)                | No PE lessons           | n/a                 |  |

It should be noted that PE lessons in grade 11 and twelve still appears once a week on the school timetable while grades 8,9 and ten have combined LO sport lessons once a week. Mr Ram and Mrs Cass are the appointed PE specialist educators and teach the PE lessons in sex segregated classes. Mr Duma was seconded to Brookdale as a Human and Social Science educator (H.S.S) but due to allocation shortfalls he had to teach LO sport. Mrs Neem is a qualified Home Economics educator for the past 12 years at the school, however, due to subject choices, she was accommodated in LO sport. Mr Duma attended grade 10 LO FET workshops and is currently the grade co-ordinator. He is responsible for drawing up the written and practical assessment tasks. Mention should be made that LO is a diverse that incorporated two other Learning Outcomes as well. Currently, the subject LO has three periods per week. Mr Raj is the H.O.D for Humanities which includes LO as part of its department. Although Mr Raj does not teach LO (as his expertise lies in history), he oversees the department allocations, arranges departmental meetings and conducts quality assurance inspections.

### **3.8 Criteria for selection of participants (learners)**

There was only one criterion for learners to be met that are they had to be in grade ten and they formed a mixed sample of boys and girls for a focus group interview. At Brookdale High there are five classes of grade ten, two learners (one boy and one girl) were selected from each class. Bloor et al (2001) cautions that because focus groups generate a high volume of data, the number of groups needed to be kept to the minimum. The sample therefore comprised a mixed group of ten learners with a racial breakdown of four black, four Indian and two coloured boys. The girl's group comprised of five Indian, four black and one coloured. The average age of learners in grade ten is sixteen.

### **3.9 Information sources and instrumentation**

In keeping with the interpretative paradigm which emphasizes rich experiential data and depth of understanding issues, the primary forms of data collection in this study were focus group interviews and individual in-depth interviews.

Provision was made at Brookdale High school for the interviews between the interviewer and the learners to be held in a private space. This was successfully accomplished, with interviews being held in vacant classrooms. Interviewing is a form of questioning characterised by the fact that it employs verbal questioning as its principal technique of data collection (Mertens and McLaughlin, 2004). Arrangements were made with the principal to utilise the literacy period and the first period for the group interview. Duration of the group interview with the learners was one and half hour. The medium of English was preferred by all participants and the interviewer ensured that questions were structured such to accommodate the second language speakers.

Educator's interviews were conducted during their free periods in their class rooms. A single interview was conducted with each participant, with the length of the interviews varying between 45 and 60 minutes. The interview with Mr Duma was the longest as he

was most informative about the grade ten LO requirements and expectations. Interviews with Mr Ram and Mrs Cass revolved around the traditional PE syllabus and the change to LO that was forth coming. Henning's (2004) view that single interview methodology is advantageous as it extremely difficult to gain the same ambience in subsequent interviews, was found to be correct. Provision was made for possible follow-up interviews but it was not necessary as the interview content was sufficiently covered within allocated time. All face to face interviews were audio-taped with the permission of the participants, subsequently transcribed.

### **3.10 Conducting the interviews (learners)**

#### ***Why focus group interviews?***

A defining feature of using focus groups for research is the use of interaction between research participants to generate data. Qualitative data is gathered from a focused discussion to enhance understanding of the topic of interest (Krueger & Casey, 2000, Kitzenger and Farquarhar, 1999). Expanding this definition, Waterton and Wayne (in Crossley, 2002: 1481) characterize focus groups as vehicles for providing insight into the 'relational construction of beliefs', that is, the way in which stances, values and identities are developed and negotiated in relation to responses of others. Especially when interviewing learners, these interactive processes allow for spontaneous responses from members of the group that ease the involvement and participation in the discussions. In focus groups, more attention is given to the participants' opinions and interaction, this decreasing the influence of the interviewer over the group interview process (Madriz, 2000).

In choosing focus groups as data collection methods, I took cognizance of the limitations mentioned by some researchers. Focus groups have the disadvantage of sometimes taking place outside of the settings where social interaction typically occurs. However, in this study, all the group members attended the same school and where fairly well known to one another which provided for comfortable interaction amongst members.

The questions were carefully constructed and were mostly open-ended. Aspects covered in the focus group included their experiences and area of concerns with regard to gender and sport in school. The questioning route was designed to provide triggers for discussions rather than for use as a prescriptive structure for the interviews (Hyde et al, 2005). Clarifying concepts was essential as learners had their own understanding of certain concepts. Gender was initially perceived only as a female construct and PE was not part of their vocabulary as LO sport was part of their curriculum from primary school.

### **3.11 Conducting the interviews (educators)**

#### *Why in-depth individual interviews?*

This combination of methods of data collection has been strongly supported by Henning et al (2004), Bloor et al (2002) and Michell (1999). The combination of methods also afforded me the opportunity to cater for learners and educators as dictated by the topic. The decision to use an semi-structured, one-to-one interview to obtain primary, salient data in this research study stems from the need for an in-depth probe into the teaching practices of PE and LO educators (Appendix A). In this regard, interviews were preferable to the use of questionnaires, so that emotions, experiences and feelings of the participants could be adequately explored and captured, rather than just being reported in a word or two (Denscombe, 1998). In addition, interviewing in this study was controlled by the researcher to avoid bias as far as possible and could be tailored to answer the research questions posed (Sarantakos, 1993). Although the interviewer had a set of pre-determined questions, the interview was guided by rather than dictated by it.

To Cohen et al (2000) interviews are a principal means of gathering information about what a person knows (knowledge), what a person likes or dislikes (values and preferences) and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs). The interviewer attempted

to obtain the participants view on gender and sport in school, construction of gender identities that reflect society's expectations, the implementation of FET in 2006 and its impact in sport and their views on co-educational classes during LO sport. It was anticipated that the interviews would yield sensitive information, and that during the course of obtaining the data from the participants, they might become uncomfortable when revealing their view points. Hence, during the interview, the researcher was more able to incorporate careful handling and even some detailed examination to encourage openness and honesty, whilst maintaining a relaxed, non stressful atmosphere. The interviewer had certain issues that had to be addressed but was able to be flexible in terms of the order in which questions were considered, and more importantly, was able to let the participant develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised (Denscombe, 1998). In this way, the interview is useful as it gives a detailed picture of a participant's attitude, beliefs, perceptions or accounts of topic (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont, 2002).

### **3.12 Data analysis and presentation**

Qualitative research is based on the theoretical and methodical principles of interpretative science (De Vos et al., 2002). In this study, one of first steps in analysing the vast quantities of information obtained during the data collection phase, entailed transcribing the taped interviews so that the data could be approached in an objective, unbiased manner on the part of the researcher, so that specific meanings and themes could be picked out (Hycner, 1985).

This data was then summarised, coded and categorised to reduce the bulk into smaller units of relevant information that could be more easily understood (Sarantakos, 1993; Kvale, 1996). In this study, Kvale's (1996) 'meaning categorisation' approach was employed. The interview was coded into categories. Long statements were reduced into simple categories such as '+' or '-', indicating occurrence or non-occurrence of a phenomenon; or to a single number along a scale of numbers, for example, 1 to 5, to indicate a strength of a phenomena. In this manner, the bulk of information was

reduced, whilst maintaining the important aspects of the data (Kvale, 1996). In qualitative data the data analysis is almost inevitably interpretative of a social encounter (Cohen et al, 2000). The data was then organised around central themes and points thus making it understandable with reference to the point of view of the participant.

### **3.13 Ethical issues**

#### **Protection of the research participants**

An interpretative researcher is guided by a code of ethics, but the choice is ultimately up to the individual regarding the application of these ethics and researchers have a moral and a professional obligation to behave ethically (Cohen and Manion, 2000). In accordance with ethical principles of research, none of the participants were forced to participate. They were also informed that they had the option to withdraw at any stage. Since the research involved learners, consent forms were sent for parental consent, confidentiality and anonymity were stipulated and further clarified (Appendix C). Educators also signed consent forms (Appendix B) and were assured that their identities would be withheld from public knowledge, and their names would not be used in the research. Although the researcher taped each interview, participants were assured that the data would remain with the researcher. Permission was also obtained from the KwaZulu –Natal Department of Education (Appendix E) and from the principal of the participating school (Appendix D ).

#### **3.14 Possible limitation of the study**

A possible limitation in the study was that the researcher is a working colleague of the educator participants. The sample group of educators were familiar with and had a working relationship with the researcher. This relationship could have biased the educators' responses. However, the researcher attempted to minimise this limitation by emphasising that the research was lacking on educator's perception of sport and gender in schools currently. Sport and gender are prioritised aspects of a holistic education system in South Africa but complications and contradictions still exist. Objective

responses would benefit all concerned in the promotion of school sport and elimination of gender biased episodes.

### **3.15 Chapter summary**

This chapter has explained in detail the research methods employed in an effort to achieve the aims of the study and to adequately answer the research questions. A rationale for using the qualitative research method and the interpretative paradigm discussed. The four phases of the research process were explained, namely, preparation, and planning, data collection through focus group interviews, data collection through individual in-depth interviews, and analysis of data. The advantages of the methods chosen for the study and the limitations, as well as the ethical consideration were explored.

Chapter Four will present a detailed account of the results and discussions of the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Introduction

This study examined the perceptions of educators and learners towards gender and sport at a predominantly black working class school called Brookdale High in Durban. This Chapter will present the results of the study that were obtained from the interviews with five educators and ten learners. It is clear from the findings of this study that school sport provides an important arena for the production and reproduction of gender power relations. Sport, is a highly gendered institution as is the school and together they combine to produce a fertile environment for the production of gendered identities. However, the findings will go on to show the production of these gender identities and the ways in which gender power relations are manifested within teacher and learner perceptions of sport do not happen in simple ways. There is far more complexity. Firstly, there is some evidence that gender identities are far more fluid and changing. However, familiar perceptions of gender and sport at the school still prevail with boys and girls complicit in the construction of these identities.

Under broad themes of analysis, the educators and learners perspectives are discussed separately. Direct quotes from the participants appear in italics. SND are my initials and refers to the interviewer at all times. For clarity I use the subjects PE and LO sport interchangeably, because PE will no longer appear on the time-table from 2008 but would remain as part of LO that will deal with sport. Educators were interviewed individually but their responses at times, appear together, for organisational purposes for this study. There are two main sections in this study: Educator Perceptions of Sport and Learner Perceptions of Sport. These main sections are presented under the following sub-themes:

- Sport and Gender as a marginalised at Brookdale High
- Facilities and fair play
- Impact of Coeducational sport on gender male educators
- Sport and masculinity
- Female educators

The learners section includes the following sub-themes:

- Selection of Gender appropriate activities
- Boys and girls negotiating sport and gender
- Racialising perceptions of volleyball, netball and soccer
- Masculine identity and the culture of boys' spaces
- Girls, femininity and resistance to sport,
- Bodies, sport and gender

This chapter observes the perceptions of PE and LO educators and grade ten learners on gender and sport in their school. Currently gender in sport is emerging as an important aspect of the curriculum that shows sport is not always addressing gender equity and that there are contradictions. By analysing the perceptions of educators and learners towards gender and sport I was able to argue that such perceptions do impact on how gender and sport are connected at Brookdale High School.

#### **4.2 Educators Perceptions of Gender and Sport**

Educators were amongst the most active supporters of the South African Council on Sport (SACOS) in its struggles against the apartheid government, especially during the 1970's and 1980's. South African black educators, Indian and Coloured have devotedly lived up to the SACOS credo, "No Normal Sport in an Abnormal Society" and this particular social position is embedded within their meanings of sport. By rejecting any (apartheid) government funding or joining government funding sports clubs, these educators persevered to ensure all races had access to sports participation. With democracy came the struggle to ensure that equality and access to equal opportunities with respect to sport irrespective of race, class and gender. This fight for equal access to sport, in terms of resources (facilities and equipment) and selection of gender appropriate activities seems to be ongoing at Brookdale High.

In determining how educators negotiate gender practices within the context of sport in Brookdale High, I examined how educators privilege boys' activities over girls'. PE represents a space that accentuates the relationship between gender and sport. The

tendency for educators to ignore gender in school sport is a serious problem with regards to fairness and equity issues for all learners in sports. This is because fairness and equity cannot be achieved in sports unless educators change the gender ideology that has been used in the past to organise, play and make sense of sports.

#### 4.2.1 Sport and Gender as a marginalised subject at Brookdale High

It is significant that throughout this research, gender and school sport has received little attention in South Africa. However, within many educational circles, PE and now with the introduction of LO sport in FET in 2006, has remained of low status academically and consequently been viewed as having no obvious or significant relationship to the future world of work and sexual division of labour. This view was shared with both PE and LO educators in the study and they also felt that since the subject was still a non-examination subject in FET. Policy documents clearly indicate that method of assessment is mostly Continuous Assessments (CA) with no examinations which leads to such conclusions. The non-specialist LO educators already felt pressurised getting learners to participate in sport and at the same time direct attention to gender related aspects of the lesson seemed problematic.

As summed up by Mr Duma's comments:

1. *"firstly it's an effort to get learners to play sport then to organise the boy's activities (privileging boys sport) and also deal with girls that do not want to participate or the others that want to play games ( further reinforcement of a marginalised subject), gets too much at times."*

In the above it is clear that sport is viewed by educators in complex ways. Gendering in PE and LO sport is closely connected to locale of the academic status. Gender is not prioritised in the light of teacher frustrations due to:

1. teaching PE or LO which is not their specialist subject.

2. teaching a subject that does not have much support and was always marginalised.
3. teaching sport as marginal subject which relates to the policy which includes sport in LO and how it is then constructed as being marginalised.
4. the way in which learners non-participation and refusal to participate in PE feeds into or reinforces the marginal status of sport.
5. then having to organise sport for boys and dealing with girls who resist playing sport.

From the educators' responses it was clear that the importance of the subject was not addressed adequately in a coeducational setup in school, as the academic requirements were placed in the forefront.

Another important dimension of gender and sport was the issue of health:

2. Mrs Cass: *Children playing sport should be priority in any school, especially as time when health and well being is of national concern...obesity is common...alternative lifestyle for children with drugs related problems in Durban.*

Clearly, Mrs Cass sees the benefit of sport for all learners irrespective of gender as sport is seen to be important for the development of a healthy lifestyle. In the context of the national concern with overweight and obese children and adults and the context of drugs in Durban, Mrs Cass highlights the priority that sport should play in any school. However, the marginalised status that sport receives in the school as noted by Mr Duma above makes sport as a priority in schools very difficult. PE and LO educators persuade learners to participate in sport but this is not possible due to the negative perceptions of learners and other educators at Brookdale High.

### 4.2.2 Facilities and fair play

As mentioned in Chapter Three Brookdale High is an under-resourced school in terms of sports facilities and equipment available to the learners which impacts on both the educators and learners attitude towards sport. Within this constraint there is another important factor that disadvantages some learners even further, that is gender equity in terms of facilities and availability and distribution of equipment. This was evident from both the PE educators' responses:

SND: *What are your views on the facilities at school and availability of equipment? How does this impact on your lessons?*

Mrs Neem: *We can't change the layout of the physical structure of the school now but it is obvious that the boy's sport has more space to practice and we (educators) share equipment. We try not to do the same code during the term but that's problematic.*

Mr Ram: *Equipment will always be a sore point for management ...finances. Lesson wise, it is problematic as during LO both the boys and girls are playing together and for obvious reasons we don't let them play against each, so equipment does pose a problem in coeducational classes. Hopefully, the school can restructure its physical layout to accommodate more space for the girls to participate.*

These responses echo the sentiments of Gender Equity Task Team (GETT) report in 1997. To begin the process of implementing gender equity, the Department of Education took a lead in the country to appointing a Gender Equity Task Team (GETT). According to the GETT report, South African education is riddled with gender inequities that impact negatively on girls and boys, women and men-but especially on the quality of life and achievement of women (Wolpe et al, 1997). The report noted that gender differentiation in access to sporting facilities and equipment, or spaces suitable for special intervention maybe required ensuring that girls' physical activity needs, as well as their right to equal access, are maintained. It is important that schools

acknowledge, promote and celebrate-in comparable ways-female and male sports. Policy issues around the allocation of resources are being challenged and campaigns mounted to alter them.

This was evident at Brookdale High, although girls have their own volleyball court but that doubles up as a basketball court for the boys as well. It was noted by the educators that only the girls that received Provincial colours in volleyball that ventured out to play with the boys during the breaks while the majority preferred to be spectators. The soccer field was a no go area for girls during the breaks and they experienced same problems during PE and LO sport lessons. By dominating the main space of the playground, the boys are emphasising their importance of sport. Messner reveals that sport is an important organising institution for the embodiment of dominant hegemonic masculinities, viewing the language of sports as the language of domination (Messner, 1990, p.96).

The social and cultural differences in South Africa impacts on the sports field where there a domination of space by boys. According to Paechter (2000) gendered access to positions of power arises, through the curriculum offered or denied to particular groups. Spatial dominance and ownership of the soccer field are viewed positively or negatively by some educators and learners. This is not in keeping with the recommendations of GETT report and it is a contradiction of fair play.

### **4.2.3 Impact of Coeducational sport on gender**

South Africa has had a long tradition of sex-segregated teaching training of PE, as men and women were traditionally trained separately in colleges and universities. This situation preserved gender duality within the profession and it was the norm during the practice of PE. Brookdale High school has had a history of single-sex classes been taught since its inception as there are male and female PE specialists. During the interview, the H.O.D explained that school policy had dictated that since both educators (and they were fairly young educators) were retained during the redistribution and redeployment process in 1997 it was mandatory that classes have to combined (boys

and girls separated from two classes to form one unit), to cater for single-sex lessons during PE lessons. The female PE educator, Mrs Cass summed up her feelings on this matter:

*During my first year of teaching, PE lessons were separate and that was the way we were taught at school and at university this issue was not even considered. I think because everyone expected it to be like that. But this from this year, the allocation was different, in grade eight and nine, LO was dished out as single units to anyone as filler periods. Mixed lessons are just not right especially if it is not handled by specialist PE educators who understand the dynamics involved in teaching adolescents about their bodies and movement.*

As Williams and Bedward (2001) suggest those teachers' decisions about PE often rely heavily on stereotypical understandings of gender and culture that may not accurately reflect girls' experiences, concerns or desires. This study shows that there was an enforcement of gender related practices that was emphasised, irrespective of whether they were single-sex or coeducational classes. As noted by Mrs Cass that teaching of coeducational lessons should be handled by specialists if it is to benefit both boys and girls equitably.

Mixed sport classes has been proclaimed as a progressive move towards the fulfilment of a complete equal opportunities policy in schools offering equal access across all of the curriculum. But this ad hoc policy adopted in some schools is really not the ideal. The Department of Education should have clear guidelines about the teaching of LO sport as a coeducational or sex-segregated class, so that it is a national policy. Many PE educators believe that participation rates of girls are higher when classes are single sex (Griffin, 1985; Lynn, 1999). They provide various reasons for the decline in mixed settings, including that sports and games are geared more toward boys' interests since PE became coeducational; that girls are overtly concerned about how they are perceived by boys; and that the physical, mental, emotional and social challenges of puberty are too over-powering in a coeducational setting to provide an environment conducive for optimal learning (Lynn, 1999).

Responses from educators' in-depth interviews alluded to girls being conscious by the boys' presence but they tried to find alternative ways of addressing these complicated situations.

*SND: What are your personal views on coeducational classes in LO and is there an impact on gender relations?*

*Mr Ram: Personally, I'm from the old school of thought where sport activities were conducted separately and there are benefits to that because girls are generally not comfortable in their kit next to the boys. BUT there seems to be a shift with the FET implementation in LO sport because there is only one educator. Nobody really addresses the gender relations at school which I think is very important in sport. Management should be mindful of these implications as sports participation is at an all time low and ...*

Coeducational LO has the potential to make educators and pupils alike address issues of sex discrimination, gender inequalities and equal opportunities. The movement towards coeducational LO has not automatically brought with it the development of equal opportunity for girls or even boys. To aggravate these difficulties, the subject LO sport in the FET phase, 'privileges' boys team games and sport, threatens to reinforce a vicious circle of gender-typical attitudes. In response to these challenges and perhaps further complicating the issue, is that the PE educators separate boys and girls for sport or fitness activities.

When Mr Duma (who attended FET workshops) was questioned about his views on coeducational LO classes, his response was:

*Mr Duma: It seemed 'practical' that they (boys and girls) play together where I can monitor them. I don't know much about teaching about coeducational lessons...*

Mr Duma felt that it was inevitable that mixed classes was on the cards for LO. He was not totally comfortable with this arrangement and he explained that due to the setup of

the netball courts he could not let the girls go on their own while the boys played soccer on the other end.

For both PE educators who always taught sex-segregated classes claimed that the most popular activities tended to be traditional, i.e. sex-stereotyped games. Boys played soccer and girls played netball. Thus, it becomes apparent that although the two PE educators appear to agree with the principles of gender equity, their practices continue to reinforce gender differentiation which in turn produces gender inequalities. However, the two LO educators due to coeducational classes allowed mixed team activities. It is, then, not merely what is taught under the banner of coeducational PE that is problematic in terms of equal opportunities, but also the ways in which it is taught, primarily in terms, of the consequences of mixed-sex grouping but also in terms of the educators themselves (Scraton, 1993; Talbot, 1993; Flintoff, 1996a, 1996b). This study shows that there was an enforcement of gender related practices that was emphasised, irrespective of whether they were single-sex or coeducational classes. This is in contradiction of what coeducational lessons should provide in terms of equality of opportunity for learners.

#### **4.2.4 Male educators, sport and masculinity**

Studies of PE teacher training have already established that hegemonic forms of masculinity are reinforced and reproduced both in the hidden curriculum (Flintoff 1997) and the informal student culture (Skelton 1988). Feminists are concerned whether male and female PE educators whose own masculinities and femininities identities are anchored in their own 'athletic' prowess which they impose on their learners. Since I am a working colleague of the educator sample I am aware of their sporting accolades and when questioned about it, Mr Ram (an excellent sportsman) responded:

Mr Ram: *Well as a sportsman I cannot impose or compare my own er talent or level of skill with the learners but can I teach them specialised aspects...*

SND: *Do you think educators are aware of how their identities impact on the learners who view them as role models?*

Mr Ram: *PE educators have difficulties motivating learners to do sport but the ones that excel really look up to you and when they see you demonstrating or playing, they get impressed that we can even spike a volleyball or play soccer... I think the learners look up to their educators as kind of role model so to say but to say they (learners) are influenced by their teacher's identity I don't know...*

From Mr Ram's participation in sport is seen as a male activity because they (learners) are exposed more to males (even educators and sports heroes on television) occupying this dominant position. In order to identify the significance of gender in the teaching of sport various aspects of contemporary sport needs to be investigated. Research into gender and schooling (Sander and Sarah 1980; Arnot and Weiner 1987) suggest that it is the institutionalisation of gender ideas and images which reinforces the means by which gender differences can be taken for granted. Male PE educators, like Mr Ram play a huge role in learners' sport as they are easily influenced at this young age. Participation in PE and LO sport is enforced primarily through compulsion and discipline especially for the boys.

This process creates powerful gender ideologies which can be identified in the policies, priorities and practices of schooling. Although masculinity is constructed against femininity a question that needs to be asked is whether hegemonic form always needs to produce subordinate forms of masculinities to maintain it self. At Brookdale High, Mr Ram's masculinity provides a site where female learners feel that sport is seen as only a masculine activity.

#### **4.2.5 Female educators and views about boys and girls in sport**

The female educators at Brookdale High did experience adjustment problems in the coeducational setup of LO sport, as indicated in the transcript below:

*Mrs Cass: for years I have been teaching PE as an all girl class but with the inclusion of boys to the lesson the girls are disadvantaged. Boys are more aggressive, competitive and somehow demand more of the educator's time. There must be a change in the methodology of teaching PE.*

The female educators were hesitant and concerned about the restructuring of the classes. They felt the shift from traditional syllabus to OBE teaching of LO as a combined lesson for boys and girls warranted a change in teaching methodology. They explained the learning outcomes in LO which embraces inclusive education by providing opportunities, alternative methods of instruction and flexible assessment for learners who experience barriers to learning and participation.

Learners are perceptive about their educators' abilities which are judged as part of their ability to teach the lesson. The female educators did not see their non participation in sport during Games Day as an indication that they could not teach the relevant skills as their male colleagues. As observed by Hills (2006) most girls resent their exclusion from soccer and perceive it as an incompatibility between their experiences and those of their teacher. The transcript below fits in with the above claim:

*Lana: it's boring in LO sport cos our maam says that playing soccer with the boys leads to injuries and she wouldn't allow that.*

*Sally: and we don't like playing only with girls cause we don't dribble that well.*

*Nosipho: I think maam does not like teaching soccer and cricket to girls...*

The interview transcripts suggest the existence of strong images and ideas about girls' capabilities. While both female educators agreed that girls are capable of the basic physical skills to play soccer, but disapproved of the contact aspect that was inevitable during the game with boys. The male PE educator commented that it was a tradition at the school to have a girl's soccer match as a 'curtain raiser' before the inter class boy's final soccer match. He was clear on the point that during PE lessons learners were sex segregated so mixed teams for soccer was not possible. However, according to LO educators, during the LO sport lessons learners are in mixed classes and they enjoyed

soccer (at times) with minimal issues pertaining to gender relations. Therefore I summed up that some girls enjoyed playing soccer in male educator's LO lesson whilst other girls were not permitted to play soccer in the female educator's lesson. Female educators hold and promote expectations based on gender stereotypes.

Another serious form of resistance to PE and LO sport according to the female educators was that attendance to lessons was of great concern as '*petty excuses*' were given by learners.

*Mrs Neem: Girls not doing PE is unacceptable. The excuses we get range from stomach aches, weather, forgetting their kit, menstrual days... but the boys are more disciplined with their attire.*

Other reasons for inactivity included continuous health issues, unsuitable weather, school pressures, dissatisfaction with PE class, reluctance to get sweaty and inconvenience of sporting provision. This is in keeping with Sallis and Owen (1999) notion of perceived barriers to physical activity that are beginning to emerge in research. It appears that adolescents are not just acquiring adult patterns of sedentary habits, they are also thinking about exercise, including reasons (or excuses) for not being active. Brookdale High was particularly 'successful' in maintaining participation through firm discipline with the majority of girls.

#### **4.2.6 Bodily shame and showers**

This aspect of sport was considered because it is an issue which consistently produces negative responses from both boys and girls and has been identified as important in other research (Measor 1984; Scraton 1992). Sport provides a situation where 'the body' is on show and therefore at its most vulnerable, like in change rooms yet it is overlooked or dismissed by educators because it is not part of the actual lesson. Adolescence is a vital period in the lives of learners, where the body and sexuality is of importance thus impacting on their participation in sport. Educators should be tolerant

and sensitive towards learners' issues about their bodies, which may not always be positive.

This was in keeping with responses from both boys and girls and educators perceptions. Shower facilities were available, in theory at Brookdale High. However, reasons like restricted time, inadequate facility (no shower doors), and that showering created unnecessary worry and tension for boys and girls, were given for non-showering. PE educators felt that children should shower at the end of lessons for hygiene reasons but were sensitive to the learners' decisions. As the PE female educator, Mrs Cass commented:

*The showers are practically never used because it becomes embarrassing because they are so self conscious and embarrassed. I don't force girls through showers. I think it is one way to put girls off PE.*

The male PE educator did not insist on showers being compulsory after PE due to time constraints and discipline problems '*boys will be boys if left unattended in the showers*'. Although personal hygiene is important aspect of sports participation, educators encouraged learners to carry toiletries to prepare themselves for the next class period. This is one crucial aspect of the relationship of PE to young people's developing sexuality in sport and requires further investigation. This area of conflict between body image and the ideal must be recognised how it contributes to the learners' perception of sport.

### **4.3 Learners Perceptions of Gender and Sport**

There was evidence in Brookdale High that boys and girls are offered different activities on the basis of their gender and even when they are presented with the same curriculum content, boys tend to dominate in many sports. It must be noted that these grade ten learners only participate in LO sport as PE was not part of their time table in 2006. The

issue of gender in sport is a complex area and not all that shines, is necessary just a social prejudice towards one sex over another sex.

The findings reveal how uneven gender power relations between learners manifest in sport at Brookdale High. At the outset of the interview when I asked the grade ten learners their reasons for selection of activities, I expected to hear about the school set aside gender appropriate codes for them.

Tamy: *I think that we (boys and girls) want to play the same kind of games but teacher don't allow that.*

Nosipho: *I think that all games must be separated into boys and girls cos the boys are better than us.*

Sameer: *Everybody should be allowed to play whatever they want do*

Siphiwe: *Freedom is good...*

The responses of the learners immediately showed that there was no one reason common to all, why their selection was influenced by gender. Their answers reflected that gender equality was important while some felt that gender appropriate activities were the way forward. “Freedom is good” is testimony change. Tamy, Sameer and Siphiwe disrupt dominating discourses which position boys as privileged. It was evident in Brookdale High that boys and girls are offered different distinct activities on the basis of their gender which works to discount and make more difficult the realisation of sport for all irrespective of gender. In other words the regime at Brookdale High School reinforces Nosipho’s claim that sport should be separated in gender specific ways and obstructs the notion that “freedom is good”.

Boys will therefore continue to dominate in many sports since Brookdale High School does not offer support for the equality of genders in sport. Some girls were relieved that football was not included in their lessons. Although most girls acknowledged that some girls played football, some perceived it as a predominately male activity and viewed their exclusion as acceptable and expected within the field of PE.

Sasha: *It's ok for some girls to play soccer but mostly it's for boys and netball for girls.*

By the time learners enter secondary schools, they have developed clear activity preferences. For instance, dance, gymnastics and swimming is shown to be either loved or hated by learners during their adolescence. The reasons for dislike or non participation cited were teaching approaches and the presence of boys (Bedwards and Williams, 2000). What becomes apparent is that bodily performances play an important role in the experience of PE. Lack of ability is a contributory factor, but there are many social situations which emerge which that have the potential to cause humiliation. Elements that are considered essential towards the performance of a sport, such as competition, bodily performances, display of ability, wining or losing are often overlooked in terms of how this impacts upon individual self-esteem.

In the analysis, the focus group responses indicated that LO sport was vital for physical well-being and fitness. From learners' discussion *'fun and enjoyment'* was part and parcel of the outdoor activities. LO sport lessons are coupled with cheers and laughter that stem from sheer exhilaration with competing against one another. This aspect of coeducational sport in LO generated as much discussion as I hoped as there were diverse responses from the learners. All grade ten learners in 2007 have LO sport as a single class unit, there is no combining of classes. It should be noted that these learners come from a coeducational LO sport in grade eight and nine. Most of the girls interviewed preferred single-sex classes and claimed that they could participate in most of the boy's activities on their own while the boys claimed that mixed lessons were acceptable but the girls need to be more competitive. Most common reasons given by girls for wanting separate lessons include *'not comfortable with boys'*, *'aggressive and dominating behaviour of some boys'*, *'boys are stronger'*, *'boys get most of the teacher's attention'*.

### 4.3.1 Boys and Girls Negotiating Sport and Gender

The following transcript reveals some of these exclusionary practices experienced and witnessed by some of the girls:

*Nicol: In primary school we allowed to take part in boy's sports as well as being mixed during PE lessons. Here in high school girls only play netball and volleyball and boys get more opportunities such as cricket, soccer, basketball, tennis...*

*SND: Do the rest of you agree with that?*

*Sasha: OH, Yes it's so unfair that the boys get more codes than us. I think that the boys think that we can't play soccer or cricket.*

*SND: Really!*

*Kevin: That's not true. Girls can play whatever they wish to play but not with the boys cos that would not be fair.*

*SND: So when and where can the girls play soccer?*

*Collin: Well, during the LO period if they want to but both fields are occupied by the boys, so er maybe they can practice on the sidelines or the corner spaces.*

*They need to be more competitive.*

The above section shows clearly how boys and girls reinforce and negotiate, and resist the gendered nature of sport. These messages echo Choi's (2000) observations that the enjoyment and aptitude for sports that both boys and girls exhibit, should not be coded as masculine or feminine, as this limits understandings of physicality. Both males and females experience and enjoy characteristics of physicality and physical activity such as challenge, movement, and social relations. But several participants, at different points in the discussions, displayed ambivalence about the notion of tradition and challenged conventional hegemonic practices that have become the norm on the sports field.

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performances play an important role in the experience of PE. Lack of ability is a contributory factor, but there are many social situations which emerge that have the potential to cause humiliation. When questioned about school team selection Siphwe responded:

*“well... the best make the team and the others know that.”*

This acceptance of being the best at sport is important for boys constructing their sporting prowess and exclusion of others is not considered. When school teams are chosen, the boys learn another form of exclusion. They learn to exclude those boys who are not good enough to play in their team.

In addition, these girls feel that educators have low expectations regarding their skills and capabilities to perform as they are always compared to the boys. Girls' motivation to participate or even to excel at sport is dictated by the educators and boys presence during the lesson. These findings show that what appears as being a natural occurrence is in fact socially constructed. While boys and girls may play together during LO sport or during lunch time, when it comes to organised sport, girls are excluded. Boys are learning to exclude girls from sports participation. At Brookdale High there is no exception as there is contradiction between what learners perceive as acceptable by social norms and their own enactment of that perception.

#### **4.3.2 Racialising Perceptions of Volleyball, Netball and Soccer**

As mentioned in Chapter Three all learners were interviewed in a focused group which allowed for open discussion among the different racial groups.

##### **African girls**

Four black female learners formed part of the focus group and initially they seemed reserved but when the topic of netball was introduced they responded enthusiastically.

They mentioned that netball was their (African girls) most popular code. It was the only code of sport played exclusively by girls at Brookdale High. However, when the boys did play netball it was purely played for fun. Two of the participants are players in the school u16 netball team and they were informative about peculiar issues pertaining to selection criteria and level of play.

*SND: Why is netball so popular with the African learners?*

*Nosipho: I think because we play netball everyday in breaks and LO and we like it cause we win all the class matches.*

*SND: And the Indian girls?*

*Nosipho: They like volleyball because they are good there and they don't play school netball.*

*SND: why?*

*Keta: All the school teams have only black players and we train together ...*

*Sasha: But these girls (African) are excellent and we (Indian) can't keep up but with volleyball it fine.*

Although most of these learners reside in the neighbouring townships and due to transport problems they cannot stay in after school for practice. Yet for school matches they gave their full support and promote the code of netball in school. What this discussion shows is the way in which the racialisation of sporting codes occurs. Indians and African girls collude to make volleyball an Indian female sport and netball an African female sport respectively. There is acceptance rather than resistance to this familiar pattern. An important consideration was the nature of girls' friendships which was highly racialised. While not within the broad ambit of this study, girls at Brookdale High School often had friendships within the same racialised groups. While this is changing and there is evidence of different friendship formations, the issue of gender, race and class are clear. Many of the African girls live outside Merebank, whereas the Indian girls live around the same area, meet after school walk home and even meet during the weekends. African girls are also seen to be coming from a lower working class background without the ability to afford some of the more extravagant weekend outings and fashion that Indian girls could clearly afford.

### **Indian girls**

A common code of sport enjoyed by most Indian girls at all levels was volleyball. All five participants enjoyed volleyball as opposed to netball and wished they were good enough for school teams. From my experience at the school, Indian girls at Brookdale High dominated this scene with the school boasting Provincial players every year.

*SND: why are certain girls so passionate about volleyball?*

*Tamy: our school is the BEST in the zone in volleyball and we have the most Natal caps than other schools.*

*Sasha: our girls enter all the tournaments and we win. We even beat Parkside (an ex model C school). That's really bad!*

*SND: Are there any African learners in the school team?*

*Tamy: no cos they (African) most play netball but in my class Nosipo plays.*

What was interesting between the two races was the preferences and to a certain extent ownership of codes. Another participant mentioned that tennis and chess were also selected by Indian girls if they did not like volleyball. However, as explained in the section above the choice of sport was highly racialised with girls opting for a code of sport that was socially comfortable and through which friendships and pleasure could be engendered. The fact that Nosipo plays volleyball is a clear example that membership to particular codes of sport are not racially fixed

### **Indian boys**

Although the four Indian boys were equally fanatical about soccer and volleyball but like the girls code preferences were selected along racial preferences .i.e. African boys excelled at soccer and Indian boys were on top with volleyball. This acceptance of exclusionary practices was not answered adequately but it was an accepted practice at Brookdale High. Once again in terms of school team composition along racial lines it

echoed the learners' preferences and friendship patterns which were highly racialised. The boys were complimentary about each others skills and there was no resentment shown, just a preference of which code they could identify with as revealed in the extract below:

*SND: So the Indian boys excel and enjoy volleyball and reasons for this would be?*

*Sameer: It's just that everybody likes to play different sport and soccer is fun but it's really hard with all that running. Volleyball is quick action.*

This is evident in most South African schools, where certain team sports are placed on a pedestal to the detriment of others (Morrell, 2005). For example, some middle class schools still favour rugby over soccer, while in Brookdale High school volleyball takes centre court. Having been a predominantly Indian school and now emerging with changing racialised patterns it is interesting to note how volleyball still gets more support at the school. The majority of participants enjoyed talking about their school's prowess and competitive streak in winning most of the boy's inter-school volleyball tournaments. Mention was made of the local derby against an ex Model C school that always fell prey to their school. PE offers boys a context within which they can claim a source of power given the social power available in and through the academic curriculum which is not available to them (Connell, 1990).

When further probed to ascertain more on the racial preferences I became aware that this practice was the accepted "norm" at Brookdale High. Sameer's comment that "everybody likes to play different sport" is quite telling of the racialised patterns of sport not only inside the school but outside.

### **African boys**

Certain sporting activities embody aspects of physical hegemonic masculinity such as strength, agility, prowess and control over the body (Burstyn 1999). The African boys

interviewed were passionate about soccer and held high expectations of their potential to play for Bafana Bafana in 2010. Boys participate in sport for a variety of reasons-for public recognition, for social networks, for strong lean bodies, for the prospect of professional success and for enjoyment (Morrell, 2005). As noted by Alegi (2004) African boys playing soccer locks into a long history of black urban culture which esteems physical prowess. At Brookdale High soccer provides an experience for most black boys which is connected to racial and ethnic identities.

A lengthy discussion took place around the code of soccer, in which most of the African boys were passionate about. The boys could easily identify with their role models and favourite teams. The four boys could not reason out the racial domination of soccer at school but they simplified as it being '*for the love of the game*'.

SND: *So you boys like playing soccer at all times?*

Siphiwe: *We play soccer at every opportunity we get, even in our free periods...*

SND: *What about the rest of the boys that don't play soccer?*

Siphiwe: *Hmm! all boys like soccer even if they are not good at it cause ... (laughing) boys play soccer at different levels...*

Andile: *Maam soccer is like played everyday, during the breaks, after school and at home. We all go for selection and the BEST make the teams.*

The responses of the African boys immediately showed that sport, in particular soccer played a part in defining who they were. Identity is produced in everyday school contexts and the game of soccer is one way for African learners to produce their gender identity. African boys hook onto soccer, unknowing at this young age, as if their identity depends on it. The image of sportsmen portrayed on television, is emulated and copied by the boys at Brookdale High combined with a great deal of pleasure, passion and power.

### 4.3.3 Masculine identity and the culture of boys' spaces

Masculine identities are constantly produced and recreated through social practices associated with schools, and in relationships between groups and individuals. Hegemonic masculinity is characterised by the exercise and control of power (Kaufmann 1994). School structures may even reward students who embody particular dominant forms of masculinity, such as sporting prowess (Edley and Wetherelle 1997). Kenway (1996) suggests that regardless of the particular form of masculinity boys adopt, it tends to be ultimately aimed at the acquisition of power, be it physical, cerebral or through the exercise of authority.

SND: *How do boys view other boys in relation to sport participation?*

Collin: *It's a big deal cos although we play together we like seriously compete against each other. There's no real problem if everybody plays but if boys don't do sport then...then something wrong!*

Karl: *Everybody likes sports stars, so good players are very popular at school. Everyone wants to be cool, like me!*

Siphwe: *If you've got talent then its ok but soccer stars are in demand.*

Boys grow into a world in which sport is a significant component of masculinity. According to Karl who attributes sports performance to his masculinity and his identity, is simply reinforcing that all boys play sports. Like Collin, most boys are expected to play, or else face the stigma of not being 'real men'. Hegemonic masculinity linked to toughness and power, plays a major role in the accepted, dominant masculinity. For black boys like Siphwe, soccer provided a means for career opportunity and they are aware how marketable they are.

### 4.3.4 Girls, femininity and resistance to sport

Sports, more than other subjects on the curriculum, encourages girls to be more 'vigorous', 'vibrant' and to develop 'good health' but often within the constraints of an ideology of the physical which sets limitations on female activity and physical contact

and concentrates attention on personal appearance. This study also highlights some aspects of the girls' PE which involve resistance and negotiation to the structures of gender. As demonstrated in the transcript below:

SND: *It appears that non-participation in sport is common among girls. Is that true?*

Lana: *It's not entirely true but a lot of girls just don't like doing PE.*

Nosipho: *Girls are too lazy to run in the sun in front of everyone and they bring notes.*

Tamy: *I honestly think that PE female educators should be as strict as the male teacher then everybody would be scared...*

Tamy was the most vocal against those girls not participating in sport during LO because they complained that it was *'too demanding and they were not interested anymore'*. According to the other girls' reasons for inactivity was that some girls were lazy to change, or disliked the activity, the weather and their appearance. Unlike others Tamy seemed confident and comfortable competing with boys during the breaks and during lesson time. Sports continue to be seen as affirming of stereotypes of masculinity and femininity, and as spheres in which gender prejudices can be confirmed but Tamy shows how these stereotypes can be broken. Her views, while not dominant but her views certainly go against the majority of the girls

According to Coakley (2003) girls initial experiences of sport, that is school based PE, have been shown to be a source of girls' resistance to involvement in sport. For the culture of femininity so important to school girls, it did not fit with what they perceive as an offer from PE:

- (a) the development of muscle
- (b) sweat
- (c) communal shower/changing facilities
- (d) 'childish', asexual kit
- (e) low status activities.

All girls do not accept passively the definitions of femininity which place them in a weaker and physically subordinate position (Scraton, 1993). An interesting issue was raised by a female Indian learner, Tamy, who enjoyed playing volleyball and cricket with the boys' school team because they offered some kind challenge as compared to other boys and girls.

*SND: How girls view the other girls in relation to sport participation?*

*Lana: some girls think that they are just too good and they can show off with the boys.*

*Tamy: That's not true. I think that girls think that boys are the best in everything but I can play with the boys especially the school team players cause they are really good.*

*Lana: But we can't play with them (boys) cause they spike on us and ...that's not fair!*

The data indicate that girls perceived PE and LO sport as a space where the gendered body has contested meanings and that their perceptions of the relationship between gender and physicality served to inhibit and enhance their desires and capacities to participate in physical activity. Of all the cultural practices sport is arguably, the one that most prominently serves to demarcate the genders. By contrast interest in sport is aberrant within the confines of conventional femininity. Sport and femininity are set up as conflicting systems so that reassurance has constantly to be offered that despite an involvement in sport, girls are also feminine (Coakley 2003).

#### **4.3.5 Bodies, sport and gender**

Bodies are important and bodies matter. Playing sport means that bodies are continually in motion and on show. The obvious problem of kit during mixed-sex classes became evident during my experience as a PE educator was, that the only embarrassment obviously experienced by most girls through the wearing of shorts. While this highlighted the problem faced by the girls it could have been remedied as the girls had

the freedom to wear tracksuit pants. These girls felt that they spent more time pulling their shorts down and shuffling with their t-shirts. This placed limitations on the girls' concentration and skills acquisition. The young women were acutely aware of their sexuality in this situation and were embarrassed and intent on 'protecting' their appearance and presentation of self (Scraton, 1992).

Issues relating to PE uniform created a situation where many girls presented notes to exclude themselves from lessons, and thus received a minimal amount of taught PE each week. Furthermore, girls' uniforms may reflect the belief that girls do not need to be dressed as though physical activity is a normal part of their school day. The unsuitability of some uniforms for activity becomes a factor in perpetuating such belief, since girls may be too embarrassed to move outside passive behaviour.

At Brookdale High school much time was spent enforcing the correct sport kit which involved lining up in silence outside the change rooms before moving to the actual sport lesson. When I interviewed the learners about their kit, it was clear that the school wanted to maintain standards of discipline and proper appearance. However, the LO female educator explained that it was an effort to instil disciplinary measures on the girls if they did not adhere to proper PE kit (shorts and T-shirt) so the school code of conduct had to be adapted in 2000. The girls are now allowed to wear track pants if they so desire. Reasons cited were embarrassment, bodily shame and public humiliation at being forced to change in the presence of others.

SND: *Are there any areas of concern that you experience during LO sport with regard to attire that you wish to discuss with me?*

Tasha: *I use tracksuits most of the time because I don't like shorts but most girls wear tracksuits because it's more comfortable.*

SND: *Is there a problem with shorts?*

Nosipho: *I think tracksuits are better, you know, because some of us are big size and, and the boys tease us.*

SND: *Really boys, what seems to be the real issue surrounding kits.*

Sameer: *The boys always wear shorts cos Mr Ram is really, really strict and that's not a problem.*

Tamy: *girls don't want to change in front of everyone else then its easier to wear tracks.*

The obvious problem created by mixed setting was the embarrassment experienced by learners who are not comfortable and confident about their body. Even boys are, at times targeted about their lack of physique as mentioned by Karl:

*Hey, even boys get name called about their legs and chest so girls should feel bad.*

On the other hand, the majority of boys had no major issues with their kit. The male PE educator mentioned that discipline had to be maintained at all times. Subsequently, debates continue regarding appropriate strategies for effectively providing equal opportunities and experiences for girls within the PE context (Coakley & White, 1992; Scraton, 1992; Satina *et al.*, 1998).

#### **4.3.6 Learners' responses on showers**

SND: *Why are the showers not utilized after PE?*

Sameer: *Nobody ever showers after PE cos there is so many learners and less showers but I think nobody wants to.*

SND: *Why?*

Tamy: *Maam, the truth is that everybody is shy and embarrassed about showering in front of others.*

Lana: *also we need more time and we have to rush. So there are other issues.*

It was unanimous that all ten participants agreed that showering at school after sport was 'a definite NO, NO!' The girls complained about being sweaty when doing sport.

Another reason for non-participation but refused to shower with the other girls present in change room. There was more giggling than actual discussions surrounding this issue mainly due the girls being embarrassed in the presence of boys during the interview. The girls claimed that it would be ideal to shower if there were fewer girls and better facilities. The boys interviewed felt that by showering it was time consuming as it lessened the time for PE but they also did not seem too keen on the idea as well. It was clear that learners have issues surrounding their body image and were conscious of others.

#### **4.4 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I provided a comprehensive discussion of the findings of this study in terms of educators and learners views supported with research findings. The main argument in this study is that both teacher and learner perceptions of gender in sport reinforce and polarise gender identities in ways that are not helpful to the goal of achieving gender equality but as this study shows there are small disruptions to gender stereotyping. What was evident was the entrenchment of patriarchal practices on the sports field and the intersection with gender, race and class at Brookdale High. Educators are aware of gender domination but are unable to eradicate such practices on their own. The complexities of secondary school PE is unique, it is simply not about numbers and types of sports played, but it is implicitly related to pupils' and educators' gendered attitudes, behaviours and experiences. A significant recurring theme across the analysis was that gender inequality was still part of this marginalised subject. There is a need in the South African education system for more in-depth cultural research which would provide analyses of pupils' perceptions and expectations about gender and LO sport.

Chapter Five will present the implications for future practices, recommendations to consider and conclusion of the study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

This study examined the perceptions of educators and learners at Brookdale High, an under-resourced predominantly black school situated in Durban. By using qualitative methods and listening to the participants in both individual and focus group interviews, I tried to understand their position in terms of their perceptions of sport and gender. The analysis highlighted the importance that gender and sport plays in the construction of identities. The dominant themes and challenges that emerged from their perceptions of gender and sport have particular implications for future teaching of LO sport as PE would be phased out from 2008. The perceptions of educators and learners towards gender and sport produce and reproduce gender inequalities but these perceptions are not uniform as there is evidence of contradiction. Conclusions are drawn based on the findings, and implications of the study for future inventions, and future research.

In this Chapter the data is presented under headings of summary for educators, learners, implications of the study, the way forward and concluding points.

### **5.1 Educators**

The Department of Education policy now ensures that PE is included as part of LO sport (Department of Education, 2002b). Educators have a role to play in creating curricula that allow learners to experience equitable practices on the sports field. LO educators, however face the challenge of ensuring that their subject is accorded the status it warrants as a compulsory core subject. The implementation of FET in 2006 has had numerous problems which impacted on educators' dilemma on interpretations of LO. With regards to this study, teacher training workshops were inadequate in providing specific guidelines to LO as a component of sport. Yet expectations rank high as the end result and policy directives on outcomes and assessments are clear in that all learners are equipped with the necessary Life skills to manage sport as a lifelong activity and an awareness of Gender discrimination that is stipulated in Learning Outcome 2: Citizenship Education (National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10-12, 2003).

From the findings it is clear that typical stereotypical images of masculinity and femininity are both embedded in and openly promoted by respective male and females PE and LO educators in Brookdale High. It is important that pupils experience a wide variety of activities in LO, so that they can use these experiences to help them make decisions about present and future lifestyles. There needs to be real opportunities for girls and boys in coeducational classes which would require LO educators to develop greater sensitivity to the specific regime at the school. However, PE educators work within contexts that have historically silenced the importance of PE which has already impacted on future LO sport teaching. Apartheid education and resistance to apartheid sport meant that PE did not receive full attention in predominantly black schools.

The situation exists today that many black schools do not have the resources to engage fully with the policy commitment to ensure equality. Educators also feel overwhelmed by their existing work loads and don't have necessary training to deal effectively with gender issues. Translating policies into action remains a major challenge. Educators need to understand the impact of gender in sport and move towards addressing and promoting a curriculum that benefits all. LO encourages a teaching and learning environment that recognises that people are diverse and have different strengths and weaknesses.

Implications for future LO sport teaching, therefore, includes:

- Incorporating inclusive practices that move beyond stereotypes and account for the diverse range of girls' and boys' experiences, interests and needs.
- Acknowledging the important role of friendship and peer relations in girls' decisions about physical activity participation.
- Developing opportunities to gain insights into girls' and boys' perceptions and concerns about physical activity participation.
- Develop an understanding of sexuality and gender and the centrality of the body in the formation of gendered identities and social inequalities.
- Understand the persistent racialisation of particular codes of sport.

If sport is to sustain a school curricular, presence in this compulsory Learning Area LO, then these issues have to be confronted, and rigidity and resistance to change overcome. Policy makers, decision takers, committees, administrators, other subject colleagues and parents need to be convinced that LO is an authentic educational activity. Hence, it seems reasonable to suggest that sport should have a role to play over the full life-span, i.e. 'from cradle to grave' (Boileau et al, 1994, p.7). If we are to understand how children learn and construct masculinities and femininities in school and other contexts, we need to have a radical reconception of the ways of thinking about sex and gender and treat individuals as embodied (Paechter, 2006).

For as long as gender reform focuses on subjects, educators, learners and other modernists structures of schools that obfuscate difference, meaningful learning and the impact of gender equity initiatives in LO sport will fail to produce significant advances and sport will become more alienating for more students. This is not the way forward, instead of polarising the experiences of boys and girls, educators should strive towards integration. Changing gendered power relations and deep rooted norms and values requires more than simply working with boys and girls. It calls for developing approaches that also work with those whose actions and attitudes affect gender equality in negative ways. The influence that LO educators potentially have in promotion of gender equality in sport has yet to be capitalised upon.

In South Africa the time is opportune for researchers to be seriously engaging with the question of what a genuinely inclusive curriculum should look like as instead of a culturally specific and exclusionary one. LO acknowledges that participation in recreation and physical activities are influenced by ideology, beliefs and worldviews (National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10-12, 2003). The South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 advocates a schooling system free of racism, sexism and all forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance.

The Department of Education appears to be tackling the gendered curriculum in schools, but gender and sport seems to have been overlooked. If educators are to engage

with sport and gender, it is imperative that they have knowledge of the issues raised above. While educators have been offered and have engaged with many workshops orientated towards new curriculum, HIV/AIDS and Assessment Standards, there has been little or no effort from the Department of Education to offer such guidance to LO teachers with regards to sport. At the same time it is imperative that the Department of Education ensures equality of resources throughout schools so as to broaden the opportunities available to learners.

## **5.2 Learners**

I was interested to know how learners perceive and conceptualize their understanding of sport and gender and the implications this has for delivering positive and relevant LO sport programmes for future implementation. The learners' responses from this study suggest that sport represents a key site for exploring learners' constructions and negotiations in gender. Also the school was not seen as a supportive environment that facilitated equal opportunities for both sexes.

Sports that are played by boys only do run the risk of not just excluding the participation of girls but of strengthening divisions between boys and girls and widening the gap between them (Swain 2000).

## **5.3 Implications for Girls**

Sport at Brookdale High is an integral site for the construction of feminine identities. LO sport can serve as a source and support mechanism for girls by encouraging their participation in all activities offered at school and by providing opportunities for girls to have more positive, empowering experiences of physicality during LO sport.

Girls may acknowledge or recognise inequalities but behave in ways that reinforce, rather than challenge, traditional power relations. This does not augur well in producing

the envisaged learner that will be imbued with values and acts in the interests of a society-based on respect for democracy, equality and social justice as promoted in the South African Constitution. This requires that educators continually engaging with girls' understandings of sport and encourage and facilitate meaningful participation.

It is young people's current level of physical activity which gives cause for concern and, the PE profession should foster active lifestyles from an early age. Girls are less active than boys and girls' physical activity decreases as they move through secondary school. Encouraging girls to become more active should be a priority. PE educators should take a more reflective view of the organisation and presentation of their programmes in order to challenge the gender ideologies reflected in many PE curricula to make a change for LO sport.

The girls felt restricted and marginalised by a system that does not realise their anxiety and disappointment in the presence of boys during sport. By working with girls to challenge their stereotypes about sport, about the body, about their resistances to LO sport will be minimised. However, the perceived alignment of teachers with boys during the co-educational lessons is a cause for concern. Lack of confidence in bodily appearance and public humiliation in the change room can be minimised by providing equal opportunities and experiences for girls within the LO sport context.

#### **5.4 Implications for Boys**

The long-standing relation between participant and spectator which were set up on gender lines has severely impacted on the gender process whereby males are viewed as the actors while females are the support or spectators (Hills 2006). It is clear that the gender construction is not a passive process but a negotiated one where there is an invested interest. Boys at Brookdale High struggle to find an identity and acceptable masculinity, but being actively involved in sport seems to supply an outlet. In selecting boys' sport they are aware of race, gender and class but they do not question it rather they accept it.

The responses from the majority of the boys interviewed indicated that they valued equality with females and challenged traditional norms, adding weight to the perception of the fluidity and the contextual nature of gender. This is helpful to the goal of achieving gender equality but as this study shows there are some difficulties to gender stereotyping. On the other extreme, while it seemed acceptable to play with girls during LO sport but when it comes to organised sport, girls are excluded. Boys are learning to exclude girls from sports participation.

This thesis finds that sport, and in particular soccer and volleyball, is central feature of boys' construction of masculinity at Brookdale High. The uneven gender power relations between learners manifest in boys' domination of major spaces on the ground during LO sport and lunch time. The processes of masculine development are invested in sport. Thus, reasons cited for participation of sport vary but at the heart of the matter it helps in the construction of their identity. Sport was therefore an integral part of their identity; building up their own and comparing themselves to others.

### **5.5 Changing the way sport is perceived in Brookdale High**

Gender equity involves more than inventing new ways to define and perform masculinity and femininity. It also depends on changes in how sports are defined, organised and played. Currently, LO affords the means to provide sporting opportunities, experiences, and new ways to evaluate success and enjoyment of sport.

Strategies for achieving fairness and gender equity in school sport would be to develop:

- Programs promoting lifetime sport participation and emphasising combinations of competition and partnership.
- Programs bringing boys and girls together in shared sport experiences that promote new ideas about gender relations.
- Promoting a holistic curriculum that has the same requirements for boys and girls.

- Policies that ensure all LO and interschool sporting activities offered to both boys and girls.
- Examine and highlight the practices inherent within sports which might deter children from participating.
- Sports programmes should reflect local cultural needs if they are to engage and sustain all learners.

Any strategy concerned with raising participation among learners need to remember that neither the girls nor boys are ‘the problem’; rather, the difficulty lies with the ways in which the LO sport lessons are constructed and presented. LO sport can serve as a resource and support mechanism for girls and boys by encouraging their reflections on the impact of social and cultural discourses and practices relating to appropriate forms by providing opportunities for them to have more positive, empowering experiences of physicality and physical activity.

South African researchers have begun to catch the glimmer of the powerful and subtle ways in which gender has been and continues to be a basic social organisation. Education is part of a wider society; hence a ‘gender-sensitive’ perspective is not a blueprint for education that will answer all our questions. It is, rather, a perspective that constantly reminds us to question the way in which learners and educators make sense of and respond to a sexist culture. Educators at Brookdale High need to pay more attention to gender, not ignore it. We need to inquire further into gender differences, not try to rid of it. Gender differentiation is reflected in the way educators behave towards pupils, and pupils towards each other and their educators. It is ever present in the hidden curriculum.

According to Coakley (2003) gender equity in sports is internally tied to ideological and cultural issues. Gender equity will never be complete without changes in how people think about masculinity and femininity and in how sports are organised and played. Because of the prevailing gender ideology and the fact that sports have been shaped by the values and experiences of males, real and lasting gender equity depends on change.

My findings indicate that gender inequity is evident in PE and LO sport lessons much to the awareness of the educators and learners at Brookdale High.

## **5.6 Implications of the study**

This study highlighted that sport is a major site for the construction of gender identities which impacts negatively on some. The research findings at Brookdale High have implications for sectors involved in striving for gender equity at school structures. This study provides a clear illustration of the intersection between gender and sport. Therefore, in addressing these issues, a multi-pronged approach is advocated. A starting point in developing interventions is to move away from stereotyped notions of masculinities/domination and femininities/subordination in sports. The nature of sport in school is an important aspect in the lives of children. Thus greater awareness and sensitivity to their experiences requires further investigation.

Schooling sites emphasise patterns of hierarchies, exclusion and power and provide a platform for the performances of masculinities and femininities. Thus it seems most appropriate that gender-related interventions occur at school, which can provide an effective channel to reach the broader community. While my study focused on secondary school learners, I acknowledge, as highlighted in Bhana's (2002) research, that gender power positions and struggles surface at a much earlier age in schooling. Therefore considerable attention needs to be given to developing interventions appropriate to younger learners in primary schools so that it carries to secondary school and later becomes part of life.

## **5.7 The way forward**

Although the GETT report does not highlight the gendered nature of sport per se and its impact on a holistic education but its recommendations for sports has implications for PE and LO. Guided by the theme "Getting the Nation to Play" the White Paper suggests that sports in schools can "present the child with life skills in a way that is surpassed by any other activity (Department of Sport and Recreation, 1997). An emphasis in the

school curriculum on the experience of lifestyle management will enhance active healthy living skills for the future.

With the inclusion of PE in LO sport comes at time when South Africa demands sporting excellence in all arenas, especially school sport which serves as an indicator to the strength of our national teams. This learning area must deliver in its outcomes so that sport is not placed on the backburner in favour of other academic subjects. It is important that pupils experience a wide variety of activities in LO, so that they can use these experiences to help them make decisions about present and future lifestyles. There needs to be real opportunities for girls and boys in coeducational classes which require LO educators to develop greater sensitivity to context. However, educators need to be awakened from past frameworks that ‘silenced’ the importance of PE and the impact of gender on it and move towards addressing and promoting a curriculum that benefits all.

In answering the question whether school sport, as perceived by these educators and learners in Brookdale High promote gender equity, there is nothing to suggest that sport per se promotes gender equity, in spite of the Department of Education interventions with regards to policy change. The participants’ views about gender equity in sport are by and large accepting. From the competing discourses that emerged from the learners’ interviews, it was encouraging as it reflects the possibility of change. Likewise educators must challenge traditional notion and their own biases to move in the direction gender equality. It has been suggested that sport, despite its consumerism, competitiveness and violence, has to be an arena of gender equity work (Flizclarence and Hickey, 2001; UN 2004).

Sport also occupies an important part of school policy in South Africa where black schools have historically been neglected. Promoting “Sport for All” is part of readdressing historical inequalities and contributing to nation-building. The implications for policy lie with the concern to use school sport to promote social equality that would transfer into adulthood. By encouraging this generation to discuss gender equality issues, change in the longer term is likely to be facilitated. It must be noted that gender

issues do not only pertain to female learners and educators, instead it should conceptualise as applying to both boys and girls.

## 5.8 Conclusion

From this study one may draw the following conclusion that PE and LO sport educators are trying to embrace the principles of gender equality in their sports lessons. They are adapting their teaching and providing alternatives to meet the demands of FET requirements while acknowledging the numerous challenges. Learners are aware about gender differentiation that exists in the school context but are not very flexible to handle such situations. This study shows that boys and girls identities are not fixed, but fluid and malleable. There are huge contradictions where gender and sport are considered. Learners from grade ten onwards in 2006 will be equipped with life skills to transform their gender relations during the LO sport period. Changing gendered power relations and deep rooted norms and values requires much work. The possibility for school sport to develop in progressive and pro-feminist directions with learners' socialising together with the acceptance of their sexuality instead of degrading each other must be advocated by educators.

I wish to conclude by stating that:

Every educator has to begin the essential process of change if we wish to be the kind of educator envisaged within the National Curriculum Statement, namely lifelong learners, researchers, mediators of learning and "key contributors to the transformation of education in South Africa" (Department of Education, 2002b: 9). This outcome would result in respect for democracy, equality, human dignity, and social justice as promoted in the Constitution. Only then can we, as educators aspire to the motto of "Fair Play" in every sense of these words.

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## **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A: Interview Questions (Educators)

APPENDIX B: Interview Questions (Learners)

APPENDIX C: Letter of Informed Consent

APPENDIX D: Letter of Informed Consent

APPENDIX E: Biographical Questionnaires

APPENDIX F: Letter of Permission from  
Department of Education

## **Annexure 1: Interview Questions**

As the data will be collected from semi structured interviews with 10 grade ten learners (5 boys and 5 girls) and 2 Physical Education (PE) and 2 Life Orientation (LO) facilitators and one Head of Department, participants will be encouraged to be open about their views and experiences in sports. The following questions will be used to guide me to raise particular issues with each participant.

### **EDUCATORS**

What is your current teaching load in terms of PE and or LO?

*Try to establish frequency of interaction with learners on the sports fields.*

What is your understanding of gender and sport in school?

*Explore the participant's view of the role of gender and sport in the curriculum.*

How did the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) in respect to sport impact on your own teaching and assessment?

*Explore the participant's view on OBE and LO and its influence on all grades.*

Has the incorporation of PE into LO affected in any way your teaching and the manner in which your department develops and refines its learning programmes?

*Explore the way the participant feels about this and his/her views of whose responsibility it is to develop the curriculum for his/her learning area. Explore the role the participant thinks that s/he has to play in the development of the curriculum.*

What are your views on co-educational classes in LO?

Does the availability of resources impact on your teaching of boys and girls differently?

*Ascertain resources and facilities available at school.*

Why do you think that many girls opt out of physical activities and sport from grade ten?

Why do you think that many boys and girls select 'gender-appropriate' activities?

How would you comment on boys' and girls' physical capabilities in sports activities?

How do your own expectations of 'masculinity/femininity' influence your teaching?

Why do some learners with positive reinforcement and encouragement, become involved and 'successful' in less gender stereotyped activities such as rock climbing?

What influence did you have as a positive role model to your learners?

Do you think that the construction of gender identities that reflect societies expectations are enacted in your lessons?

What are your views on the issue of sexuality, physicality and physical contact in your lessons and school sport?

How would you comment on participation rates of boys and girls in extra curricular activities and inter school fixtures?

Could you identify some limitations in teaching PE/LO?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

## **Annexure 2: Interview Questions**

### **LEARNERS**

How would you compare your primary school sporting experiences to grade ten?  
*Try to ascertain differences and similarity in sports and LO*

What do you think is the purpose of LO and PE in school?

What are your expectations during LO (sport) lessons?

Are there any areas of concern that you experience during LO sport that you wish to discuss with me?

*Explore issues like availability of facilities, equipment, kit, choice of activities, etc*

Do you think that participation in physical activities and school sport is important?

*Explore whether learners can correlate physical activity to a culture of life long participation.*

How do boys/girls view the other sex participation in sport?

*Explore gender appropriate selection of sport.*

Do you think your appearance, in terms of your body image, is important in sport participation?

*Explore the issue of physicality and sexuality in sport.*

What are your views on boys and girls combining for LO sport lessons?

Do you think that activities offered to boys should be also offered to girls and vice versa?

Do most learners participate in swimming galas, as this code is very popular in your area due to the various swimming clubs available?

*Explore learner's participation in out of school activities as opposed to participation in school activities with regards to swimming.*

What impact does your LO facilitator have on your lesson and on the promotion of sport in school?

Do you think that boys and girls are treated differently during LO lessons?

In terms of personal hygiene, showers are available in your respective change rooms, does this help in this regard?

*To explore learner's perceptions and concerns about the use of showers after lessons.*

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

**Annexure 2:**



**LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT**

**Dear Participant**

I am very grateful that you have agreed to participate in this study which is being conducted for my Masters in Education Programme. I am registered at the University of Kwa Zulu Natal (Edgewood) and my supervisor is Prof. D. Bhana, a senior lecturer in the Department of Gender studies. Should you wish to contact her at any stage during this project, her contact details are as follows: [Bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za) or 031 2602603.

My study aims to investigate the gendered nature of sport amongst grade ten learners and sports educators at your school. Through this study I am hoping to understand how boys and girls construct their identities in sport. Your responses will be treated confidentially and your anonymity will be maintained at all time.

Your selection for the participation for this project depended on your subject allocation and your involvement in school sport. As you are aware, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage without any negative or undesirable consequences to you.

Once again my grateful thanks in anticipation of your participation. Please would you sign declaration below to acknowledge that you have read and understood the implications of your participation in this project.

**DECLARATION:**

I ..... (full name of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of my participation in this research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time should I so desire.

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Regards**

**Annexure 3:**



**LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT**

**Dear Parent/ Guardian**

I am currently an educator at Merebank Secondary School and a part-time student at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (Edgewood) completing my Masters in Education. My supervisor is Prof. D. Bhana, a senior lecturer in the Department of Gender Studies. Should you wish to contact her at any stage during this project, her contact details are as follows: [Bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za) or 031 2602603.

My research that I will be conducting in school involves randomly selecting learners from grade ten learners for an interview. The focus of my study revolves around how learners experience sport and behave during Life Orientation classes. Through this study I am hoping to understand how boys and girls construct their identities in sport. Your child/ward participation in this research will not in any way disadvantages her in any way as the interview would take place during the Life Orientation lesson. Your child/ward responses will be treated confidentially and his/her anonymity will be maintained at all time.

Kindly note, that you are free to withdraw your child/ward from the project at any stage without any negative or undesirable consequences to your child/ward.

Once again my grateful thanks in anticipation of your child/ward participation. Please would you sign declaration below to acknowledge that you have read and understood the implications of your child/ward participation in this project.

**DECLARATION:**

I ..... (full name of parent) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of my child/ward participation in this research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw him/her from the project at any time should I so desire.

Signature of Parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Regards**

### **Annexure 3:**



DATE: 1 October 2006

**The Principal  
Merebank Secondary School**

### **LETTER OF PERMISSION**

Kindly note (as per our discussion) that I would be conducting my research at Merebank Secondary School as a part requirement of my Masters in Education Programme. I have already applied to the Department of Education for permission to conduct my research in Merebank Secondary School and it would be forth coming My supervisor is Prof. D. Bhana, a senior lecturer in the Department of Gender Studies. Should you wish to contact her at any stage during this project, her contact details are as follows: [Bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za) or 031 2602603.

My study aims to investigate the gendered nature of sport amongst grade ten learners and the perceptions of Life Orientation facilitators at your school. Through this study I am hoping to understand how boys and girls construct their identities in sport. Educators and learners responses will be treated confidentially and the anonymity of the school will be maintained at all time through this study.

Thanking you.

---

(S. Naidoo)



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL  
ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATALI  
PROVINSIE KWAZULU-NATAL

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Imibuzo: M Francis  
Nevrae:

Reference:  
Inkomba: 0208/06  
Yezwayalo:

Date:  
Usuku:  
Datum: 17/10/2006

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to serve as a notice that Saraspathy Naidoo (203520779) has been granted permission to conduct research with the following terms and conditions:

- That as a researcher, he/she must present a copy of the written permission from the Department to the Head of the Institution concerned before any research may be undertaken at a departmental institution.
- Attached is the list of schools she/he has been granted permission to conduct research in. however, it must be noted that the schools are not obligated to participate in the research if it is not a KZNDoe project.
- S Naidoo has been granted special permission to conduct his/her research during official contact times, as it is believed that their presence would not interrupt education programmes. Should education programmes be interrupted, he/she must, therefore, conduct his/her research during nonofficial contact times.
- No school is expected to participate in the research during the fourth school term, as this is the critical period for schools to focus on their exams.

*Bong'athaba*

for SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL  
KwaZulu Natal Department of Education



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL  
ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATALI  
PROVINSIE KWAZULU-NATAL

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HEAD OFFICE

Emqheleko:  
Imibuzo: M Francis  
Nawee:

Reference:  
inkomba: 0209/06  
Verwysing:

Date:  
Usuku:  
Datum: 17/10/2006

To: Saraspathy Naidoo

**RE: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Please be informed that your application to conduct research has been approved with the following terms and conditions:

That as a researcher, you must present a copy of the written permission from the Department to the Head of the Institution concerned before any research may be undertaken at a departmental institution bearing in mind that the institution **is not obliged to participate** if the research is not a departmental project.

Research should not be conducted during official contact time, as **education programmes should not be interrupted**, except in exceptional cases with special approval of the KZNDoe.

The research is not to be conducted during the fourth school term, except in cases where the KZNDoe deem it necessary to undertake research at schools during that period.

Should you wish to extend the period of research after approval has been granted, an application for extension must be directed to the Director: EMIS.

The research will be limited to the schools or institutions for which approval has been granted.

A copy of the completed report, dissertation or thesis must be provided to the Research Directorate.

Lastly, you must sign the attached declaration that, you are aware of the procedures and will abide by the same.

for SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL  
KwaZulu Natal Department of Education